



Università
Ca'Foscari
Venezia

Master's Degree programme
in Language and Management to China

Final Thesis

**The advertising of Western fashion brands in China:
some case studies**

Supervisor

Prof. Giorgio Francesco Arcodia

Co-supervisor

Prof. Tiziano Vescovi

Graduand

Beatrice Gobbi

Matriculation number

867560

Academic Year

2021 / 2022

The advertising of Western fashion brands in China: some case studies

Table of contents

Abstract	p. 2
前言	p. 3
Introduction	p.6
Chapter 1. Advertising in China	p.9
1.1 The Evolution of Chinese Advertising	p.10
1.2 Chinese Advertising media	p.14
1.3 Characteristics of Chinese Advertising	p.17
1.4 Laws and Regulations	p.20
Chapter 2. Western Advertisement Campaigns in China	p.22
2.1 The Role of Culture	p.25
2.2 Social Media	p.28
2.3 'Orientalism'	p.29
2.4 'Westernness' and brand perception	p.30
2.5 The Role of translation	p.30
2.6 Offensive advertising	p.33
2.7 Conclusions	p.36
Chapter 3. Case Studies	p.37
3.1 Dolce & Gabbana	p.38
3.2 Nike	p.50
3.3 Burberry	p.62
3.4 Bulgari	p.68
3.5 Dior	p.72
Conclusions	p.77
Acknowledgements	p.81
References	p.82

Abstract

Nowadays, thanks to the increasing disposable income, the rapid development of the economy and the rapidly growing middle class, China is a very attractive market for foreign companies.

In order to effectively reach Chinese consumers, it is fundamental for foreign brands to understand the characteristics of Chinese advertising and Chinese consumer habits. Moreover, they must have an accurate understanding of Chinese culture and language to avoid transmitting offensive messages, which could have negative effects on the products or the brands itself, or even lead to boycotts.

Since the differences that we can find between Chinese and Western culture and values are copious and vast, standardizing advertising often is not the best option.

Through the analysis of five fashion brands that published advertisement campaigns that were considered offensive in China (Dolce & Gabbana, Nike, Burberry, Bulgari and Dior), we will illustrate the importance of accurate research of the target market culture in the advertising industry.

This research aims to find the cultural errors made by those brands and tries to offer a solution to the problems, with a focus on individuating the most frequent causes of advertising failure in China.

Keywords: Advertising, China, West, Culture, Brands

前言

目前，由于中国经济快速发展、中产阶级的生活水平迅速提高、中国人的工资也越来越多。因此，中国市场吸引许多外国公司投资与加入。

如果这些公司想在中国市场上取得成功，那么了解中国营销的特殊性、中国广告业的特点、掌握中国消费者的日常需求和消费习惯就非常重要。

因此，外国公司必须了解和掌握中国语言和文化。如此，它们一边可以通过具体广告与营销行动提高商品的吸引力，一边有机会减少传递罪过广告讯息的可能性。由于这样的讯息不受消费者的欢迎，所以有可能会造成负面影响，甚至导致消费者抵制广告中的产品，甚至是整个品牌。

进入外国市场之前，公司首先要做的就是选择使用哪种营销行动策略。基本上有三种策略：标准化、本地化，并且有标准化和本地化的混合。

标准化是指公司在不同市场上安排的营销行动都是一样，他们就不会考虑不同国家的文化区别。这种策略适合想在所有市场上保持自己品牌形象的公司，另外会让他们节省花费。

本地化的意思是按目标市场的特点和需求安排自己的计划，尝试适应消费者的喜好经营。公司使用这种策略以提高商品的吸引力，因为通过本地化，它们推出的广告可以包含目标市场的核心价值。

标准化和本地化的混合意味着公司按目标市场的特点修改自己的国际策略。

由于中国文化和西方国家文化之间的区别既充沛又宽广，所以对于外国公司而言，采用统一广告进入中国市场不是最好的办法，因为这样的广告无法让公司中国消费者满意。总的来说，标准化和本地化的混合可以一边让公司保持全球性的品牌形象而突出自己的原产国，一边可以拉紧公司和顾客之间的关系。

中国消费者非常欣赏西方品牌所具备的全球性的品牌形象，所以为了提高商品的吸引力，能够突出这些方面非常重要。

可是，营销策略不是可以让广告成功的唯一条件。确实存在许多因素影响中国人对营销行动和广告的评价。

该研究的目标为了解哪些因素在影响中国人对外国广告的看法，这具有重要意义。注意这些因素可以帮助外国公司了解在哪些方面集中努力与投入资金。如此，西方公司更

有机会避免让中国消费者懊恼、刺激吸引他们购买自己的商品，并且跟他们达成良好的长期关系、提高他们的保真度。

这篇文章主要分三个部分。

首先，第一章概括介绍中国广告业的历史和发展、特点、媒介与国家规则。该介绍能够提供让读者了解以下部分的背景。

然后，第二章分析影响中国人对西方营销行动与广告感觉的因素，尤其是不同的文化、社交媒体、西方观点和普遍定势、外国公司的品牌形象与广告的翻译。这些因素的具体分析可以有助于公司更深入地探索中国人的感觉与其原产国的感觉有何不同。

最后，为了具体了解外国公司在进入中国市场过程中会遇到的困难，第三章以五家外国公司作为个案研究。如此，该部分将把第二章的内容应用于实践。

这些公司都非常著名，分别是杜嘉班纳、耐克、巴宝莉、宝格丽和迪奥。它们都从事时尚产品生产与销售的业务，并且它们进入中国市场都已经很多年了。

它们对该研究具有重要意义，因为每家公司都在中国市场上至少犯了一个营销错误。但是，一些公司也取得了多次的成功。

杜嘉班纳是一家意大利奢侈品公司。因为多梅尼科·多爾切与史蒂法诺·加巴纳（杜嘉班纳的创始人）愿意以原产国作为营销行动的基点，该品牌主要采用标准化的策略。尽管如此，他们还推出了一些专门为中国观众制作的广告。尽管他们试着适应中国市场的需求，2017年和2018年推出的广告引起了中国消费者的强烈反弹。尤其是《起筷吃饭》广告，通过许多有关中国人的定势、性别歧视等错误导致中国消费者抵制该品牌，并且终止极多商业关系。该品牌的事物还可以让读者了解危机管理的重要性，因为创始人表现出无法解决问题并使情况变得更糟。

耐克是一家建立于1964年的美国公司。该品牌主要从事运动衣服的生产与销售。它作为一家非常成功的西方公司，并且特别注意其他国家的文化和习惯。其实他们在使用标准化的同时，也尽量将一些方面适应中国消费者的特点和需要。

虽然他们为满足各种各样的客户而努力，然而他们在中国市场上犯了一些错误。多数情况下，原因是耐克选择了不受欢迎的知名人士，或者广告中缺乏对中国文化的深入了解。

重要的是，该公司一般了解自己的错误，并且努力在以后的广告中改正。

为此，耐克是一个良好的例子，让我们了解一家外国公司是怎么进入中国市场的。

巴宝莉,还可以叫做 Burberry 集团公众有限公司、勃贝雷或者博柏利,是英国最著名的奢侈品公司之一。进入中国市场的时候,该公司选择了良好的策略,因为他们决定使用标准化和本地化的混合经营。

该公司的最大的问题就是有的时候,他们按西方背景创造自己的广告。如此,他们的一些广告并没有受到中国消费者的欢迎。

宝格丽也是一家非常著名的意大利奢侈品品牌。他们在中国市场上推出了不同开创性的广告。这对品牌而言是一个良好的优势,因为提高了广告商品的吸引力。他们最大的问题是在广告口号中不合适地使用双关语,并不预见双关语可能造成的后果。尤其是他们没有料想如此的广告能够在世界上引起那么广泛的反响。

最后的公司是迪奥。该品牌是克里斯汀·迪奥建立于 1946 年的公司。中国是迪奥广泛而重要市场之一。公司早期明白社交媒体的重要性,所以在微信上推出了许多互动广告与直播,吸引年轻消费者。因此,他们商品的吸引力提高了。

可是,他们也推出了造成负面影响的广告。比如,2021 年为促进在上海安排的山站台创作的广告战包括了“倾斜的眼睛”定势。正文你们稍后会读到,该定势其实把中国人给得罪了。

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to get acquainted with the Chinese advertising industry and discover how a Western brand can try to be successful and avoid making mistakes, causing communication crises while facing the Chinese market.

Entering the Chinese market for a Western brand is very challenging, since it is really easy for them to unconsciously commit errors that can provoke customers' criticism and worsening of the brand reputation. Indeed, there are several elements that can have an impact on the effectiveness of the marketing activities in this market.

In order to better comprehend and analyze the elements that can have repercussions on the favorable outcome of an advertising campaign, this thesis has been divided into 3 main parts.

First of all, there is a brief introduction of the Chinese advertising industry, with a focus on its evolution, the challenges it has to face through the decades and the current situation. This part also includes a description of the different channels used by brands, both in the past and in the present, the characteristics and the peculiarities of this industry and also an overview of Chinese advertising laws and regulations.

These explanations serve as instrument for Western brands to be up to date with the current background in order to follow the trends and satisfy the real needs of consumers, but it is also crucial to be well informed about its history, with the aim of understanding the causes of the present situation and prevent the employment of elements that are not coherent with its growth.

Secondly, there is an analysis of the aspects that can influence the Chinese audience's perception towards Western advertising campaigns. This is very useful in understanding what are the causes for which some advertisements that are supposed to be appreciated in Western countries are then rejected in the Chinese market.

There can be different reasons to justify this phenomenon. Culture represents one of the most important elements in this context. When entering a foreign market, each brand must figure out what are the characteristics of the target culture and find the differences between the local and the final culture.

Thus, this section is useful in examining what can be successful in China and what could be considered as offensive or counterproductive in contrast with the home country's situation. In addition, dissimilarities in advertising channels are very influential in the persuasiveness of the campaigns. In particular, Chinese social media are different from the Western ones and they are also subjected to institutional censorship. Thus, each brand that wants to operate in this market has to be prepared for a different environment.

'Orientalism' and 'Westernness' also play remarkable roles.

Orientalism is a Western representation of Asian people based on old convictions and stereotypes. Since it often doesn't reflect reality and can be very offensive, it really makes Chinese people upset and disappreciate the advertisement in which it is represented in a certain way.

On the other hand, Westernness is related to brand perception. Since Western products are often linked to positive features in Chinese perception, it is very important for Western brands to highlight their country of origin, because it can increase the attractiveness and the quality perceived of their products and capture Chinese consumers' attention.

Thus, these two elements can have a strong impact on the perception of the advertisement depending on how they are implied in the campaigns.

Another crucial aspect for the effectiveness of a foreign advertisement in China is advertising translation. Indeed, companies must master the Chinese language, idioms and its peculiarities, and they also have to analyze the different translation strategies and their effects and choose the best one for their product.

Furthermore, in this section there will be an investigation of different categories of offensive advertising with some concrete examples.

In the last chapter, the marketing activities of five different brands will be concretely analyzed as case studies in order to notice what can lead to success, what are the most common mistakes made by foreign brands in this market, and try to comprehend how to avoid them.

These brands are connected because they all operate in the fashion industry and they are very popular and successful around the world. In addition, they all entered the Chinese market several years ago, but made various mistakes in this country.

The first company analyzed is Dolce & Gabbana. This brand is a well-known Italian luxury brand acclaimed for its elegant and refined outfits, but also notable for its errors in communication and cultural inaccuracies. Indeed, it made several mistakes during the years in different countries. Also, in China it encountered harsh criticism more than once, but the 2018 campaign for "The Great Show" obtained the worst reaction, since it not only was denounced for stereotypes and offense, but it also led Chinese consumers to boycott the brand. Thus, it caused arduous consequences, such as worsening of the brand reputation in the country and on an international level and a notable decrease in sales. Moreover, this cultural accident demonstrates the importance of communication and crisis management after a serious backlash in order to limit the damages.

Nike, the second case study, is a sports fashion brand, notorious worldwide. It has been chosen in this research for both successful and failing marketing activities conducted in the Chinese market.

Its advertisements are famous all over the world for often being inspirational and emotional. The brand aims to encourage the audience to never give up and do their best to achieve success, in particular for what concerns sports. Also in the Chinese market the brand launched numerous heartening advertising campaigns. In some cases, it obtained great success through the selection of beloved Chinese athletes or references to Chinese traditional traits. However, not all of them received the expected results. Indeed, they committed some errors that raised Chinese consumers' criticism, in particular for what concerns celebrity endorsement or lack of attention towards details.

Another brand which had problems for being careless about some details in advertisements is Burberry. Burberry is a British luxury company globally well-known for its iconic tartan. This brand often tried to adapt its marketing activities and advertisements to Chinese characteristics, because they soon understood the importance of creating a strong link with the target consumers. Nevertheless, some advertising campaigns were not suitable for the Chinese market, because they demonstrated low effort or were not conformed to Chinese trends.

The fourth case study is Bulgari, which is a French luxury brand which since the beginning tried to find the perfect mix of standardization and adaptation in the Chinese market, in order to maintain its refined and elegant brand image, while also satisfying the target audience's tastes. It launched several innovative advertisements that were considered as very attractive by the Chinese audience. However, they also encountered some problems. One interesting example that will be commented in the last chapter is the New Year campaign launched for the year of the Pig in 2019, because it caused harsh criticism, especially from international customers.

Lastly, Dior is a very popular French brand. It has been chosen because through the analysis of its history in the Chinese market and its mistakes it can be noticed the importance of demonstrating effort and attention to details in this country. Indeed, accuracy and dedication in marketing activities are directly reflected toward the quality of the product. Moreover, through the study of the most recent example in the theses, it demonstrates how Orientalism and old stereotypes are still considered as serious problems in the Chinese advertising industry.

-

Chapter 1

Advertising in China

Advertising indicates all the ways and methods that can be used to let people know the characteristics of products or services through the messages best suited for the target market of the subject. The aim is to make consumers notice values that are inherent in the product or service, make them idealize the experience of its consumption and try to connect these values with the image of the brand. Through advertisements, the product may even lose any real connection with its characteristics and practical utility, and be reduced to abstract and changing qualities that can improve consumers' lives and make the product itself worth purchasing.

So, we can affirm that the primary purpose of advertising is to increase awareness and sales. For this reason, it can help in expanding both domestic and international trade, together with contributing to the economic and cultural development.

If done properly, advertising can be used as an efficient form of communication, which can bust the quality of life and link production with consumption.

Advertising can also be considered as a mirror of cultural values, traditions and symbols; it reflects the desires of the society in which it is created, but also helps in shaping new cultural values, consumers behaviors, attitudes and preferences. For these reasons there are so many differences between advertisements created by different countries' agencies. Even in the same country there could be some differences depending on the region, the dialect or influences of the zone of provenience.

Since advertising is shaped by China's cultural, economic, political and technological transformations, it is important to study the changes of social and cultural values and the different innovations in order to understand the effects they can have on advertising practices and trends.

In an analysis conducted in 1994, Junhao Hong identified five factors for the development of the Chinese advertising industry. The first was the prosperity of the population due to the rapid economic growth that led to the increase of the purchasing power. Secondly, the economic reforms in the late 20th century caused a decentralization of the economic structure and gave more importance to the Chinese market forces in the guide of the production. The third factor relies on the investments coming from outside the country, the spread of the joint-ventures and foreign companies. The following factor refers to the fact that Chinese consumers changed consumption habits and goals after the Cultural Revolution, because they entered in the third wave of consumerism. Finally, the commercialization of the Chinese media created great enthusiasm and interest for the advertising industry.

1.1 The Evolution of Chinese advertising

The history of advertising in China is very long, and has its roots in ancient China.

Advertisements developed and spread through the decades, until it transformed into modern advertising, what is strictly intended as the paid form of commercial promotion (in Chinese it is called 商业广告 *shāngyè guǎnggào*, or just 广告 *guǎnggào*). This change is due to the flow of goods and capital to the West following the Unequal Treaties in the middle of the 19th century, and it is also linked to the two Opium Wars (1839-1842 and 1856-1860).



Example of an advertisement of the golden age: The Rat Cigarettes (1938) (Source: Huckmag)

Slogan: 香味和醇濃淡適宜式樣玲瓏雅俗共賞 *Xiāngwèi hé chún nóngdàn shìyí shìyàng línglóng yǎsúgòngshǎng*

Translation: The fragrance and mellow shades are suitable for both elegant and popular styles.

In the 1920s and 1930s Chinese advertising was in its golden age, thanks to the first important wave of consumerism, and it spread through different types of media (Puppini, 2020). This time span is important because of China's serious engagement with modernity, flourished with the New Culture Movement (新文化运动 *Xīn wénhuà yùndòng*), which promoted a change in Chinese culture based on Western ideals like science and democracy, and it was symbolized by the May Fourth Movement (五四运动 *Wǔsì yùndòng*). In this period, advertisement saw its first boom and an incredible development, but this was interrupted by the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War in 1931 (that ended in 1945), and the Civil War between Communist and Nationalists for the governance of the country in 1945 (ended in 1949).

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China on 1st October 1949 by the Chinese Communist Party, there was

a huge decline of Chinese advertisement, because advertising was seen as a capitalist tool, so it was

not compatible with the CCP ideas and they believed it couldn't be useful in a state-controlled economy, and even counterproductive. The media were just representative of the Party, they could not promote other types of activities, like advertisements do nowadays. For example, in the streets there was no outdoor advertising, there were just political slogans or handwritten political announcements that were used for Party's propaganda. For this reason advertising agencies became state-owned and started to transmit only political messages. During the period of the Cultural Revolution, from 1966 to 1976, advertising was even considered as the 'Bible of Capitalism' (Puppini, 2020).

China had to wait till the late 1970s to see the return of advertisement, thanks to the market-oriented economic reforms, which introduced some capitalist aspects into the Chinese socialist economy. In fact, due to the Open Door Policy in 1978 and the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the CCP in 1979, Deng Xiaoping started a period of promotion of China's economic growth, that led to massive economic growth, the transformation of China in a global player on the world stage and the adoption of a globalized perspective. In this period, advertising had a strategic role in the opening of China and Chinese society to the external world (开放 *Kāifàng*), and it really contributed to economic development, because it was very useful in directing the growing middle class increased spending power. They understood that consumerism was fundamental for the country's economic development and that Chinese consumers had more money to spend and a desire for a wider choice of products and services, so they realized that people needed a tool to assist them in making purchase decisions, and this tool was found in advertising.

In the period that came from the reintroduction of advertisement in 1978 to the year 1991, advertising was seen as controversial and was contested because of the conflict it created between conservative and reformative forces. In fact, it embodied both a symbol of modernity and willingness to open up the country as well as values and principles of Western capitalism, but it was also the reflection of the challenge the Chinese government faced in changing consumers' perception of the economic growth and changes.

The government justified the diffusion of advertising and the revenues that were generated by this industry convincing people that advertisements would benefit and positively contribute to socialism, because it would connect consumers and producers through the economic information it can spread, expand their horizons and increase the exchanges with the West. Actually, advertising should not be considered as a tool for making profit, but it was sold as a public service to develop the economy, the connections with the foreign countries and the country.



A Coca Cola (可口可乐 *Kěkǒukělè*) advertisement in Hainan in late 1980s, with the slogan 请喝可口可乐 *Qǐng hē kěkǒukělè*, which translates the popular slogan "Please Enjoy Coca Cola" (Source: Fortune)

Although there were still some political movements that condemned advertising and consumerism as anti-socialist because it stimulated consumers' desire to consume, Chinese people normalized advertising since the 1980s.

In the past few decades, as a consequence of the reforms and China's continued economic growth, Commercial advertising has seen incredible and rapid development. There are some elements that allowed its spread and improvement, like the increased purchasing power of the new Chinese consumers, the creation of social media and online platforms, the liberalization of trade, the growing competition in the national and international marketplace and the government investments.

In the 1990s there was a rapide rise of media companies and the government also decided to readmit foreign advertising companies, even though at the beginning they encountered different restrictions, such as the limits on the quantity of advertising accepted in China. Conservative forces put political pressure in particular on ad professionals who were dealing with foreign brands and products.

Chinese advertising agencies and professionals wanted to learn from their Japanese and American counterparts, and they also established some exchange programs in order to study the newest advertising methods and practices. Foreign advertising had influenced Chinese advertising since the beginning.

As a consequence, starting from 1992 many private advertising firms were established. This was a clear sign not only of the development of advertising in the country, but also of the Chinese political liberalization, the cultural transformations and the economic globalization. But, because of the lack of experience of the local agencies, the competition for international clients was mainly among foreign advertising agencies.

Between 1990 and 1994 foreign investment agencies increased their investments, at the hand of the boom of promotion of foreign products and the success of the advertising agencies (both national and foreign).

With the entry into the WTO in 2001, China saw new changes in the advertising industry, such as the loosening of the restrictions to comply with WTO regulations, new trends and influences coming from the foreign companies and the new policies caused by the business and technological developments, which had a crucial role in shaping the structure and practices of the Chinese advertisements.

In 2008 and 2010 China hosted the Beijing Olympics and the Shanghai World Expo. These two important international events helped the Chinese advertising industry improve its creativity and artistic quality and attracted global attention and recognition.

Online and mobile technology dominated this period and this caused the decline of traditional channels, like television and radio.

In 2011 China even became the second biggest advertising market in the world, despite the fact that the government's ambivalent attitude toward advertising was still present. This was because on the one hand it could be seen as the symbol of the complex relation between capitalism and socialism, while on the other it often reflected wealth inequality of the country.

Recently, due to the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, which caused a fall of the market demand because of the restrictions, China saw a slower growth in the advertising industry, in particular for what concerns traditional advertising. However, as a consequence of the lockdowns, e-commerce platforms saw an increase in their popularity and this trend is expected to continue also after the end of the health emergency.

Now we can consider advertising as an indispensable tool for the development of China's economy because it helps the growth of domestic consumption and it is an important source of income for the Chinese media channels (including traditional channels, like television and radio; social-media platforms, like WeChat and Sina Weibo; and e-commerce giants, like JD and TMall). It also represents a source of knowledge and commercial promotion for exchange and business management.

1.2 Chinese advertising media



Advertisement of a tonic (in chinese: 补品 bǔpǐn) in a *yuefenpai* (Source: 每日头条 Meiri toutiao)

In China now there are several advertising media and channels. The variety of media started to grow in the aforementioned 'golden age', when the first wave of consumerism in the country helped the development of the different types of media, from radio to neon signs, from newspapers to billboards. At that time there was a very important form of advertising, that was the 月份牌 *yuèfènpái*, the so-called 'calendar posters' (Puppini, 2020), which represented Westernized Chinese women.

These channels can be useful both for propaganda and for creating profit, in order to satisfy both the political demand and the financial objective of the country. Actual forms of advertising include television, radio, printed advertising, outdoor, mobile and Internet.

Television is a valuable medium of communication because it can reach out

to a very large number of households in China, and it can communicate through "sight, sound, and motion" (Vescovi, 2019). It is very important if the company wants to reach elderly people and seniors, which represent the target market who is still not used to navigating the Internet and using social media. Since the 1990s, it obtained one third of the market share more or less, becoming a dominant medium of advertising in China. But, even though television has a longer history in Chinese advertising, now it is in second place in the popular Chinese media channel, because it has been surpassed by the Internet and its platforms. This can be due to the fact that the costs of television advertising are very high, and it is more difficult to target precisely, so it can lead to wasted coverage (consumers outside the product/service's target would see the advertisement).

In China, radio is still a popular form of advertising, because, thanks to the quantity of stations available, it represents a very segmented medium, helping brands to reach the desired target market. Its biggest disadvantages are that it's easy for consumers to switch stations avoiding the advertisement and that products cannot be seen.

Printed media includes magazines, newspapers and Yellow Pages. As said before, this category suffered a great impact because of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, but they are still present in the Chinese advertising industry. Magazines are the most specialized because they attract a unique segment depending on the topics they are focused on, but they are quite expensive and infrequent. Newspapers are more frequent, but generally they can be used just when brands desire an immediate response because of their 24-hours sale. Yellow Pages can overcome this problem, because they are available for a longer period of time, but they are updated just once a year.

Outdoor advertising experienced strong growth in Asia, because it can be really useful to reinforce famous and appreciated products.

Mobile advertisements may be very attractive in particular for young consumers, but if the messages are too frequent or unsolicited, they could have a negative impact on people's attitude toward the product and the brand. Moreover, in order to be effective, the messages should be memorable, relevant and interesting.

Nowadays, the most interesting form of advertising is surely represented by the Internet. This is because social media have already become important platforms for social interaction, political participation, e-commerce, online videogames and other activities and this makes them the only form of advertising that can be interactive. Moreover, Chinese media users spend a great quantity of time on mobile devices, a lot more compared to western countries (Geertz, 2017). Furthermore, since the Chinese online market is the biggest and has the fastest growth rate worldwide (Li, 2016), e-commerce and online platforms are effective media tools to reach out to a large number of Chinese consumers. As a result, they can be very useful in contributing to increase the exposure of the products and brand awareness. In addition, in China the majority of online platforms consist of both shopping and group buying applications where people can also share their personal opinion, be in touch with influencers and other consumers and see others' feedback, in a way that allows consumers to have a wider purchasing experience while feeling part of a community. Another advantage of e-commerce platforms is that they also offer customer data, so that they can offer companies important information about customers preferences and habits.

Advertisers must notice that the success of the advertising messages on this kind of channel often depends on the power of the word of mouth, consumers' sharing and viral communication.

In order to reach more consumers and catch more opportunities, advertising agencies advertise on different online platforms. Currently, the most popular applications are WeChat, Weibo, Xiaohongshu, Douyin (TikTok) and QQ.

WeChat (known as 微信 *Wēixìn* in China) was introduced by Tencent in 2011. It is the most popular messaging application in China and has several functions other than messages, like posting pictures and post through the function WeChat moments, gaming, video conferencing, booking a hotel room or even pay, through the system WeChat Pay. Since the app collects a lot of data about the users, it is a very important app for marketers, because it enables them to target very precisely, according to age, gender and region, with the aim of reaching potential consumers. In order to create consumer loyalty and improve the brand image, companies offer unique content and can allow users access to special offers.

Sina Weibo (新浪微博 *Xīnlàng Wēibó*) is a financial success. It is a microblogging website launched by Sina Corporation in August 2009, often compared to Twitter because of the limited text users can share, together with images, videos and live stream. It is famous for its effective e-commerce marketing options. Thanks to this platform, brands can engage in conversations with customers, promote products and services and obtain customers' feedback, building brand awareness and customer engagement.

Xiaohongshu (小红书 *Xiǎo hóng shū*), also known as Little Red Book, is one of the most popular social e-commerce shopping apps, launched in 2013. It mainly targets Chinese women between the ages of 18 and 35 and helps them be informed and updated about foreign luxury fashion and beauty products, shopping tips, fashion ideas and new trends. It also enables them to buy directly on the platform. Key opinion leaders and influencers are crucial in the success on this app, because through their fashion and beauty recommendations in their live streaming, video tutorials and other various content, they can attract users' attention and affection.

Douyin (抖音 *Dǒuyīn*) is very popular in China because it is based on user created short videos that are now one of the most popular to share content. It is the Chinese version of the app Tik Tok. The engagement rate is quite high, so it is a good platform for the brands to effectively reach consumers, and it also offers effective targeting features.

QQ, also known as Tencent QQ (腾讯 QQ *Téngxùn QQ*), is another instant messaging software service, released by Tencent in 1999. It also provides a lot of services like shopping, music, movies, microblogging and videogames.

Other important online platforms in China are Baidu (百度 *Bǎidù*, the most popular Chinese Search Engine) and Taobao (淘宝 *Táobao*, considered as Alibaba's Amazon and eBay, famous for consumer-to-consumer sales).

Differently from traditional advertising channels, the coronavirus pandemic had a positive impact on the development of social media and online marketing, following the investments and efforts that companies were already providing since 2018. In particular, due to the lockdown and the impossibility of going to the shops, a lot of online platforms tried to advertise their products through live streaming. Live streaming is very important for the brands because it can remove the barriers between the company and the consumers even if they are online. As a matter of fact, consumers can interact with the participants of the online show, who usually are popular influencers (Key Opinion Leaders or simply KOLs), and this enables brands to improve their marketing efficiency and sales.

Another very important form of advertising is what is called “brand entertainment”. This practice is often related to product placement, but it involves closer integration between the product and the content than the latter, because it requests a deeper collaboration between advertisers and producers. These forms of entertainment can be distributed in different ways, such as on popular video sites like Youku 优酷 *Yōukù* and Iqiyi 爱奇艺 *Ài qíyì*, advertisers’ websites, TV broadcasters and mobile apps. In this kind of videos it is important to use humor to engage users and share the products’ information through the main characters which are usually popular both in China and in the West in order to create globalized content and style and make the products worth buying. Advertisers and producers must be able to describe the values and advantages of the products through the storylines.

1.3 Characteristics of Chinese advertising

Thanks to its high development rate, the growth of Chinese purchasing power, and the strength of the Chinese social media, China is now a very important emerging market for foreign brands.

In order to build an effective brand image and effectively advertise products and services in the Chinese market, it is important for companies to implement an aggressive, creative and specific brand strategy that includes a reasonable mix of in-store support, Chinese social media and e-commerce to promote products and services, paying attention to the local consumption patterns and the characteristics of the market.

An important factor to consider is that Chinese consumers have trust in opinion leaders (which can be celebrities or experts in the industry) and word-of-mouth recommendations, that are informal communication between consumers about the brands, the products and the services. This is due to the fact that the Chinese do not really trust formal institutions (Geerts, 2017), so the majority of Chinese consumers prefer to rely on peer-to-peer recommendations to find sources of product information and make purchase decisions. Brands can use either physical or virtual word-of mouth in order to build its own reputation and image in China.

The selling of both nationalism and cosmopolitanism is a very important theme in Chinese advertisements. Nationalism and cosmopolitanism are two different responses that can be given to globalization, so integrating both in advertising can be useful in order to satisfy all the consumers. Nationalism in advertisements refers to the use of traditional symbols and cultural values in order to obtain attention, without contrasting globalization. It consists in the appropriation of the so-called 'Chinese elements'. Chinese elements (中国元素 *Zhōngguó yuánsù*) embody the values and the spirit of Chinese culture and tradition. They can be evoked through distinctive images, customs and habits that are easily recognizable and identifiable by Chinese people, like dragons, calligraphy, the Great Wall, jade, porcelain, ancient legends and heroes, which are often linked with loyalty to China. They are important because they can be understood and accepted by all the Chinese and can easily create a link between the products and vivid emotions, patriotism and familiarity. Sometimes, advertisers can also take advantage of the celebration of modern China's goals and accomplishments, like the entry into the WTO in 2001 and the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008.

It's important to notice that these elements have an effective value in advertising not due to their simple appearance in the messages, but thanks to their creative and dominant usage in the advertisements.

Cosmopolitanism is the result of the interactions between local and global forces and can help in giving a modern and new image to the products. It can celebrate a future Chinese integration with the West and the innovation the West reminds of.

In late 1990s in Chinese advertising industry emerged a new trend, called Chineseness (Li, 2016), in contrast to the emerging of the Western influence and the consequent loss of the discursive power (话语权 *huàyǔ quán*) of Chinese advertising agencies. Chineseness can be considered as a mix of different elements such as Western modernity, values, practices and elements coming from the Chinese tradition and from the relationship between Communism and Confucianism. This cultural strategy was useful for the Chinese advertising agencies to stress their Chinese identity and their local connections, in order to implement a competitive business technique that was consistent with Chinese ideals and values, to contrast the anxiety and the uncertainty caused by the Chinese entry in the WTO. This trend became an appealing marketing strategy that agencies could use with the aim of creating a link with consumers, but it could also have negative effects, because it may be associated with corruption, labor exploitation and patriarchy, that are elements for which China is often criticized for. Western foreign brands attract more Chinese consumers than Chinese products do, because Western brands and products are associated with better quality, safety, good service and luxury. Moreover, Chinese consumers pay a lot of attention to the country of origin and the values associated with it, and they often associate the brand and its products with its country of origin. So, some Chinese advertisers

often use Western symbols or images which remind Western values and modernity in their advertisement, in order to create global connections and show a globalized image. These cultural symbols can help in elevating the social status of the products and the brand image itself and increasing their prestige.

This influence creates a constant struggle for Chinese advertisers between the emulation of the West and the creation of an alternative and local model of advertising.

Since Chinese consumers are tired of seeing the same advertisements, they now search for authentic, special and new content. So, in order to efficiently transmit the message through a campaign, advertisers must pay attention to the content of the advertisement. Indeed, Chinese consumers today are aware of quality, referring to both product and marketing campaigns, so they prefer culturally conscious campaigns. This is a consequence of the development of the advertising industry, together with the increasing number of advertisements that have been created and also the maturity of the customers themselves. Sure enough, Chinese consumers are now more informed about the quality and characteristics of products and have a more refined taste.

Due to the linguistic peculiarities of the country and the level of globalization, advertising in China now represents a particular “site of linguistic creation and language contact” (Basciano, 2015, pp 147). This is because in the making of Chinese advertisements, agencies often use code-mixing, which is an interesting way of combining different languages in order to make the message more effective, cosmopolitan and creative.

Agencies use both Chinese dialects and English mixed with Mandarin with the aim of transmitting different values in their ads: dialects can help conveying familiarity, authenticity and an informal environment, because they are considered as a fundamental part of Chinese cultural heritage; while English is often associated with modernity and globalization, so it can give advertisements an international and advanced image. But English often is not used to give information about the product, it may be just used to persuade consumers to buy it, as a symbol of innovation and a guarantee of quality. Moreover, it is important to notice that the use of English and foreign characters allows advertisers to say or do things that are usually considered inappropriate if done by Chinese actors.

However, it is important to pay attention in using this technique, because in mandarin there are some words that can also have a negative connotation in a certain dialect, so they should not be inserted in the messages in order to avoid misunderstandings. There are also some words or expressions that have homophones in dialects that can be considered vulgar or insulting in some areas, so they should be avoided too. Moreover, sometimes written dialects are not so easy to read so they could make the message difficult to understand.

For what concerns the English language, advertisers can just put single words in the advertisement, or long phrases, depending on the target market, the scope of the advertisement and the popularity of the words themselves. Sometimes, English expressions inserted in the advertisement could make no sense, because the advertisers don't care about the message, but they just focus on the perception the customers can have of it.

1.4 Laws and regulations

China has strict regulations for the advertising industry. Those laws and regulations require that advertisements in China must be sincere, truthful and follow moral principles.

In the Chinese industry, advertisements must be based on scientific truth, cannot include images portraying national emblems or the Chinese flag, cannot contain the lyrics or the tune of the national anthem. They cannot nominate state organs, the military or government functionaries. They also cannot show pornographic or violent images or scene, superstitious or terroristic information, or include racist and sexist messages. Moreover, there are such words that cannot be said, like comparatives or superlatives (Li, 2016).

The country has two systems that serve to control the advertisements' content: the Party system and the State system. The Party system is represented by the Central Propaganda Department (often called CPD), which monitors advertising content and issues notices or directives in order to avoid offending advertisements or stop problematic ones.

But not all the advertisements have to be approved by the authorities before the publication. As a matter of fact, there are special categories whose advertisements need to be pre-approved, which are health products, medicine, food, cosmetics, agricultural chemicals, medical equipment/services and beauty services.

For the other categories, there are three steps to follow to implement a sort of self-regulation: self-censorship, a voluntary consultation with the China Advertising Association (CAA) and consulting an advertising censor.

Advertisers often follow these suggestions, because they give a lot of importance to advertising ethics, which defines what is acceptable, right and good in the creation of advertisements. It is not strictly related to law and regulations, but it is considered as fundamental for everyone who works in this sector. Moral codes are influenced by Confucianism and socialism and their goal is to preserve the country's interest, support the cultural and economic development and regulate the social interactions in the community. Moreover, even if an advertisement rigorously respects all the regulations and

directives, it could still encounter difficulties or problems, therefore it is important for the ad agencies to observe the codes in order to avoid as much as possible being banned.

The Chinese government justifies the presence of these kinds of regulations with the belief that they can be helpful in maintaining order, protecting the population by controlling sensitive subjects and information, and preventing fraudulent advertising.

As a matter of fact, in order to protect the interest, safety and security of Chinese consumers from fake and unrespectful promotional campaigns, in 2015 Chinese Government revised the national Advertising Law first launched in 1995. With the revision of this law, the government control over advertising became stricter and made the market environment less informative. Nowadays, it requires precise information about the company's sales and prohibits advertisements that denigrate other companies' products or services for promotional purposes.

Following the spread of online e-commerce activities and live-streaming on social platforms, laws, regulations and policies have also been published in order to regulate the industry and protect the consumers. The first one, released by the China Advertising Association (CAA) in June 2020, was the Code of Conduct for Online Live Marketing, and it took effect on 1st July 2020. It was followed by the Guidelines on Strengthening Supervision of Online Streaming Marketing Activities, published by the State Administration for Market Regulation of China (SAMR), which aim was to clarify the legal liability for merchants, livestreamers and live streaming platforms involved in the marketing industry. Brands that promote products through online streaming were already subject to different laws, such as the Anti-Unfair Competition Law, E-commerce Law, Law of the Protection of Consumer Rights Interests and Product Quality Law.

However, these are not the first regulations governing the Internet. Indeed, the beginning of the Chinese government control on the Internet began in 1997, with the first steps of the so-called Great Firewall (防火长城 *Fánghuǒ Chángchéng*), which can be considered as the combination of legislative actions and technologies implemented by China in order regulate the Internet domestically and to block access to selected foreign websites considered inappropriate, and to slow down cross-border internet traffic.

Chapter 2

Western Advertisement Campaigns in China

Nowadays, the Chinese market is massive in size and, thanks to the economic development and the increasing incomes of its consumers, this market is more and more attractive for Western companies, because it can offer them opportunities to position themselves and reach Chinese consumers. For this reason, in the last decades it has been one of the most popular destinations in which foreign brands directed their investments (Froese *et al.*, 2019).

Moreover, it is also important to note that due to the growing middle class and the increasing number of millionaires, China is now the third largest luxury market in the world and Chinese consumers are very attracted to foreign luxury products (Li, 2016). Thus, the Chinese luxury market also promotes the growth of the wealth of the global market (Martinez Lopez & Lopez Lopez, 2021).

However, foreign companies that want to enter this market must be aware of the fact that they will face different challenges, such as cultural differences, management styles, regulations, and so on.

From the point of view of the advertising industry, the biggest challenge foreign companies will face is the issue of communicating to an audience with a very different cultural background (Retnowati, 2015).



IKEA catalog designed for China in 2020 (Source: Ikea.com)

In order to overcome this obstacle, the choice between standardizing or adapting the advertising message has a key role in the effectiveness of the advertisement. These are two different strategies that foreign brands can adopt in the creation of advertising campaigns in a foreign market.

The first one opts for spreading the same message in all the different markets the brand faces without taking into account the cultural and behavioral differences of the countries, mostly because of the lower costs. For example, IKEA, the Swedish world's largest home furnishing retailer, is famous for the fact that it has a standardized brand image worldwide

and mainly opts for creating standardized advertising campaigns. Indeed, it seems that it has the same brand image and the same operative way in every market in which it operates, even if it needs to adapt for some management, pricing and product issues. This is because the company's mission is to offer good quality products to as many people as possible thanks to their low prices, trying to "work in the same way in every country within which it operates" (Johansson & Thelander, 2009, p. 201).

Their promotion is mainly implemented through their catalogs, which are the core of their marketing strategy. They are directly produced in the headquarters with the same products and layout, they just adjust some small details like the covers, the models represented in them and maybe some information to make new markets familiar with the brand's concept.

On the other hand, adaptation is more expensive and more difficult to achieve because of the deep research it needs, but it can ensure a higher rate of effectiveness (Lin, 2009). In fact, recent research demonstrates that adaptation strategy can represent a key element for the success in a foreign market (Johansson & Thelander, 2009).

A good example of an effective implementation of the adaptation strategy is Adidas' Chinese New Year advertising campaign in 2021. The brand achieved great success because it nailed the typical cultural tone of the Chinese New Year without misappropriation of it. It was inspired by China's traditional cultural customs symbols which are also displayed worldwide, such as the color red and the lion dance, while localizing the



Image taken from the Adidas' New Year commercial of 2021 (Source: Jing Daily)

mindset (Wu, 2021). They also opted for popular Chinese celebrities like Jackson Yee and Liu Yi Fei, for the television commercial.

The slogan in this advertisement is a way to wish Chinese people a happy new year. It is divided in two parts. The first one is in cursive: 笑口常开 *Xiàokǒuchángkāi*, which could be translated with "always smiling". In the second part there is a word play aimed to make a reference to the fact that the year 2021 was the year of the ox, which in Chinese is 牛 *niú*. The wordplay is based on the fact that this character also means "awesome" in slang and has the same pronunciation of the character 拗 *niù*,

which means “stubborn”. Thus, the sentence 新年新愿 不牛不成 *Xīnnián xīn yuàn bù niú bùchéng* literally means “New year, new desires. No ox, no success”, but it can also be translated as “New year, new desires. If you’re not stubborn/awesome, you won’t have success”.

This is another good point, because it represents the happiness and the spirit of the celebration of the Chinese New Year.

However, when considering China, probably the best way to effectively reach the consumer is to combine the best aspects of both standardization and adaptation (Retnowati, 2015), in order to create a connection with the target market, without losing the international and global image of the brand.



Litchi-flavored Oreos (in chinese: 奥利奥 Àoliào created for the Chinese market (Source: Wired)

The American brand Oreo, for example, understood this statement after years of research to comprehend the reasons for the stability of their sales. In fact, their main problem was that they were standardizing their strategy when entering a completely different market. Thus, with the aim of increasing the sales, on the one hand they broadened the range of products offered to the Chinese market and adapted their packaging in order to better encounter Chinese consumers’ taste and preferences. On the other hand, they also changed the way in which they were used to advertise in China, so they launched TV campaigns with

popular Chinese athletes, like Yao Ming, students and families eating Oreos all together that also illustrated the audience how to correctly eat their biscuits (Reddy, 2014). At the same time, they maintained the same slogans and atmosphere in the advertisements.

Furthermore, IKEA, entering the Chinese market, also had to change its usual strategy.

The brand has been present in China since 1998, also using a Chinese name, 宜家 *Yíjiā*, which has been chosen for the pronunciation (similar to the sound IKEA) and for the meaning, that is “suitable for home”. The name is not the only element IKEA decided to adopt. Indeed, the biggest change the company made in China was the catalog. In China, advertising has a bigger role in the promotion of the brand, while the catalog just represents a secondary element. Moreover, even if the Chinese catalog is printed in Sweden to have the same layout, they decided to change it and reduce its dimension till it becomes a brochure, in order to comply with local tastes and preferences.

Thus, in China IKEA maintains a standardized image while adapting some marketing activities to fit local conditions (Johansson & Thelander, 2009).

In any case, even if advertisements of foreign and Chinese brands could seem very similar (Li, 2016) and both of them try to stress affective connections with the target market in order to generate demand, companies that want to enter this market need to understand the subtle differences which exist between the brands' original markets and the Chinese one, the different consumer behaviors and the peculiarities of media usage, because these factors can influence the way customers perceive the advertisement content and respond to the advertisement.

There are several kinds of mistakes that foreign companies can make in the creation of an advertising campaign. For example, brands must pay attention not to misunderstand traditional Chinese culture and not to improperly use Chinese elements or stereotypical symbols. An improper translation is another factor that could ruin a message and for this reason it could be very useful to be in contact with a translator or a native speaker that understands the target audience's language and habits.

Since China is a vast country and has very different regions, foreign companies should also consider the differences between the different submarkets that are present in the country and implement different strategies to take advantage of these differences.

In this chapter, we are going to analyze some elements that are useful in understanding the difficulties that foreign brands can face in entering the Chinese market.

2.1 The Role of Culture

First of all, advertising agencies have to understand that culture has a great impact on how customers can perceive advertisements and the messages they contain. Thus, a good starting point to create an effective and non-offensive advertisement is studying the differences between cultures and get acquainted with the local habits and the cultural expressions, in order to notice what are the characteristics in common and which are the differences, what are the values to emphasize, and what aspects the companies must pay attention to.

There are several studies regarding the differences between cultures and how culture affects aspects of everyday life that agencies could examine at the beginning. Among them there are two popular methods used to analyze cultures that can be very useful in this field of research: Hall's Model and the Six Dimensions of Hofstede.

In the book *The Silent Language*, published in 1959, Edward T. Hall divided societies into two groups: Low-context societies and High-context societies, depending on the importance given to the communication elements in the messages that provide meanings. The difference between these two

groups is that in low-context societies, messages are explicitly communicated and information is clearly given, while in high-context cultures, information is shared between the members of the society, but not explicitly mentioned in the messages. China is classified as a high-context society, and this explains why Chinese often rely on nonverbal and implicit symbols for communication. Since this is also reflected in advertising, foreign brands must pay attention to this trait, because advertisers have to avoid direct confrontation in order to maintain harmony in the communication and also keep away from mentioning explicit or unacceptable information, like sexually-oriented appeals and intimate matters which could cause embarrassment or indignation.

Based on the results of his own survey on IBM workers, in the late 1970s Hofstede published a framework with four dimensions in which cultures can be divided into and that can help in distinguishing the differences and the similarities between one culture and another. A few years later, he added the fifth and the sixth dimensions. These cultural dimensions are applicable all over the world, and are reflected in every aspect of life.

For this reason, his work is very useful also to understand some characteristics of Chinese consumers that are useful for foreign advertisers to better comprehend the advertising attractiveness and also some differences that are present between Chinese and Western cultures, which are reflected in the advertisements.

The first dimension is Power Distance, which is the dimension that expresses people's attitude towards the inequalities amongst individuals in a society. It can be high when people in a country find inequalities amongst people acceptable, or low when in a country an equal distribution of power is expected. China can be considered as strongly hierarchical where people in high positions have power over their subordinates and where decisions are made at the highest levels, so this index is high (Martinez-Lopez & Lopez Lopez, 2021). This causes advertisements to focus on the products' ability to provide consumers with prestige and prominence.

The second one is Individualism, opposed to Collectivism. This dimension expresses the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members. In individualistic societies, people are more focused on themselves, while in collectivistic societies people care about the group they are part of and work for the community. China is a collectivist culture in which individuals trust the people in their community (Martinez-Lopez & Lopez Lopez, 2021) and show their personal value in the group. This is related to the use of the terms "I" or "We" in the advertising messages and the values that can be shown. To have success in China, advertising agencies should prefer to use the term "We", in order to create a sense of belonging to a group and show big families, people helping each other, young people showing respect to elderly people. This is in contrast with Western advertisements, where advertisers

are used to advocate individualism and the importance of individual value, in Chinese advertisements the product often is linked to a community (Xiong, 2021).

Thirdly, there is Masculinity, in contrast to Femininity. The score of this index depends on the values that drive the society. In Masculine countries, people will be driven by achievement, competition and success, while in Feminine societies, the dominant values will be the quality of life and the care for the other people. Since China is a masculine country (Zha *et al.*, 2020), advertisement messages should focus more on masculine values, like hard-work, success and goals. Also the majority of Western countries belong to this group, so this aspect generally is not something that creates misunderstandings or dissatisfaction.

The fourth dimension is Uncertainty Avoidance. It expresses the way in which a society deals with the uncertainty of the future. In societies in which this index is high, people show higher stress and anxiety levels and need rigid rules and regulations. In countries with low uncertainty avoidance index, individuals don't need to control or plan the future and rely on informal regulations. China scores high (Zha *et al.*, 2020) and the consequence is that in advertisements, agencies should avoid creating ambiguous situations and strictly follow the rules. Moreover, even if Chinese consumers are attracted to innovation and modernization in advertising, advertisers should introduce innovative elements in their advertisements, but always respecting tradition.

Long-Term Orientation, opposed to Short-Term Orientation, is the fifth dimension. This indicates how the country maintains its links with the past, while dealing with the challenges of the present and the future. China is a long-term oriented country (Martinez-Lopez & Lopez Lopez, 2021). This means that advertising agencies should emphasize the products' long-term benefits through the message they are promoting. Chinese culture is also past-oriented, and this attitude can help in increasing brand loyalty, but it is still fundamental for brands to push consumers to repeat a purchase of the same brand if they were satisfied by the first one.

The last dimension refers to the degree to which people try to control desires and impulses, depending on the way they were raised and it's called Indulgence versus Restraint. China is classified as a Restrained society (Zha *et al.*, 2020), because it is considered as a country that does not give a lot of importance to leisure time and gratification. This impacts advertising because desires and impulses can be shown and can be the fulcrum of the message, but they cannot be the only element of the marketing message to persuade consumers.

2.2 Social Media

As stated in the first chapter, the Chinese Internet landscape is quite different from the Western one. Western brands, in particular international luxury brands, have already understood the importance of social platforms for expanding their businesses in China.

But, since different foreign marketers are not very familiar with Chinese online platforms and characteristics, Western companies have to understand that social media network sites in China are different and bigger than the ones they are used to. Thus, companies must analyze the Chinese Internet landscape and the different types of social media users in order to obtain benefits from these online platforms. In fact, the Chinese Internet landscape is dominated by local Chinese media, which are specifically developed for the Chinese market in order to substitute the Western platforms that are blocked by the Great Wall, like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Moreover, foreign brands must comprehend the importance of celebrity endorsement in China. Celebrity endorsement is a popular strategy in social media marketing used to promote the brand's product. Therefore, as said before, Chinese consumers are very confident in what Key Opinion Leaders say, and hence it is vital for advertisers to engage with celebrities in their social media advertising campaigns. In this situation, the problem which arises is whether to choose a Chinese celebrity or an international one (Yu & Hu, 2019). In order to decide, it is necessary for the company to have a deep understanding of the target market. In fact, if the consumers they are facing are people with high patriotism, the best way to reach them and lead to more interactions is to localize celebrity endorsement (Yu & Hu, 2019). In this case, using Chinese celebrities is the optimal choice to increase brand awareness on social media and build a closer relationship with the users, because it can help in the identification of the customer with the advertisement, so it can lead to self-reference (Yu & Hu, 2019).

Foreign brands that decide to opt for a Western celebrity usually want to highlight the country of origin of the products and try to keep a certain distance from the consumers. As we will discuss later, the country of origin is very important for certain kinds of products, so it has to be highlighted in advertisements. This is particularly true when talking about luxury brands who prefer to maintain their status quo and their leading role (Yu & Hu, 2019). For luxury products it is fundamental to maintain a global image and the prestige that make customers willing to pay for them.

The problem with choosing international celebrities could be that Chinese users don't feel a connection with them, so the impact would not be the same compared to the effect of a well known Chinese celebrity.

Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Armani, Prada, Hermes and Hugo Boss are a few of the most beloved luxury brands in China and all of them have to struggle in making their marketing strategic decisions in order to preserve a brand name and image that is able to convey social status and symbolic meaning for Chinese consumers, and at the same time including Chinese elements into their advertising and design (Cui *et al.*, 2015).

2.3 'Orientalism'

The term 'Orientalism', coined by Edward Said in 1978, refers to the Western and Eurocentric representation of the Orient diffused in the 19th century among European and American intellectuals, who wanted to express their adoration and delight of Asian cultures. It is a product of Culturalism and Eurocentrism. Culturalism can be defined as a distorted and dehistoricized conception of another culture (Dirlik, 1996). Thus, in this conceptualization, the society is described as an object of admiration, but it has no real contemporaneity or historicity, because it is fossilized in a representation of its past. In fact, it is mostly based on stereotypes.

In fact, in Orientalism, the Orient and its people are othered as people that can be dominated by the Western. In this discussion, the West is used as a standard, it represents innovation, civilization and modernity itself, it is considered as the center around which the word orbits; while the so-called 'Orient' is defined as the Other, the exotic, as what is different from the Western norm (Piou, 2014). So the Orient is unconsciously altered to the extent of reflecting ignorance, closed-mindedness and poverty.

Nowadays, Orientalism is not as widespread as it used to be in the last century, but it still persists, explicitly or implicitly, in a lot of activities of our everyday lives which are connected to Chinese culture (Martinez-Roblez, 2008). It is also still present in the advertising industry through the stereotypes inserted in advertisements.

Advertisers should be very careful in using stereotypes in every culture, because they may lead to misunderstanding and offense, even if they are expressed through humor.

In China, as we will see in the case studies, people are strongly attached to their characteristics and they don't appreciate humor very much in advertisements (Forster & Brantner, 2016) if it is directed towards their tradition or cultural values or if it makes their symbol funny or ridiculous, because it is judged as disrespectful and outrageous. So, it is better to avoid employing an Orientalist approach if the brand doesn't want to hurt and annoy the audience.

2.4 'Westernness' and brand perception

As stated before, Chinese consumers are often more attracted to Western brands and their products than to Chinese products. Indeed, they associate 'Westernness' with innovation, modernity, richness, quality, fashion and prestige. For this reason, Chinese consumers who are materialistic and status-focused prefer to buy foreign products, with the aim of showing off and looking up to Western people (Li, 2016).

So, under this perspective, Western brands are already at an advantage compared to Chinese companies. It's important for them to highlight the global image of the product and the brand itself in their advertisement, in order to gain this advantage.

As a matter of fact, since Chinese consumers often have a favorable attitude towards the country of origin of popular foreign brands, it could be helpful to adopt a standardized strategy to promote the product, in favor of the creation of a strong global brand identity and the increase of the perception of prestige and purchase intention (Yu & Hu, 2019). However, companies should also combine Chinese consumer values with the Western identity, in order to shape the message according to the audience's needs and tastes and try establishing an international and global image with content and words that are applicable in the Chinese market.

So, as already discussed before, the best strategy that a foreign company can apply in the Chinese market is a mix of standardization and adaptation, making the product and the brand itself maintain a global image while highlighting values important for the local culture.

However, if companies want to insert in an advertisement both Chinese and Western images and symbols, they have to be careful not to elevate Western elements in a superior position in relation to Chinese elements, in order to avoid misunderstanding or offense in the audience. In the following chapter we will analyze an example of this kind of error (see section 3.2).

Moreover, Western advertisers must be cautious in the appropriation of the Chinese symbols, because an inappropriate use of them could cause a negative reaction of consumers, and consequently a bad perception of the products and even of the brand image itself.

2.5 The Role of translation

Language is considered as a reflection and expression of culture. It can represent a way to transfer the values and the characteristics of a culture, and it is also a vehicle for the development of culture.

As a consequence, translation is a sort of exchange between the cultures involved, it is a cross-cultural communicative activity.

As stated before, there are several cultural differences between China and Western countries, and these differences are reflected in the languages of each country and have a strong influence on translation.

Advertising language is a particular form of language, and has a key role for the persuasiveness of a cross-cultural advertising message. It is not merely formed by words, but it also includes pictures and symbols. It has to be immediate, clear, attractive enough to raise the interest of the receiver, vivid and memorable and has to persuade consumers as quickly as possible.

So, since it involves more than just language, before starting to translate advertising, it is fundamental to master the two cultures and their differences, the characteristics of the target audience and the way in which they are used to communicate. In fact, it is also very important to understand the consumers' values and psychology, the cultural specifics and, of course, master the target language usages and slangs, because the advertisement must be perceived not only at the linguistic level but also at the moral, symbolic and rhetoric levels (Zheng, 2018). Aspects in people's daily life in each country shaped peculiar customs and traditions, and they have to be respected and reflected in the final message.

Thus, in advertising translation, clients have an active and significant role, since their nature and attributes influence the final decisions about the advertising plan and they attach particular meanings to the different component of the advertisement by interpreting and associating them with other aspects that are internalized in their culture, so they indirectly control the method, the function and the content of the translation (Valdés, 2019). The essence of the advertisement can be regarded as the result of the interaction between words and consumers.

However, these decisions are still part of the authority of the translator, who not only has to make language and textual choices, but also to catch the audience's essence mentioned before.

As a matter of fact, a good advertisement, both original or translated, has to bring high commercial value, not only communicate information and persuade consumers to buy the product and increase sales. Moreover, together with the increase of the sales and economic allure of the product and the brand, a good translation of advertising can also boost the understanding and exchange between the different cultures (Wang *et al.*, 2019).

Advertising translation could also be influenced by the aesthetic value of differences between the two languages. Western companies in the Chinese market must pay attention to unusual aspects, like diction and ornaments, which are very important for Chinese consumers (Zheng, 2018).

There are several translation strategies that can be adopted to achieve the desired effect.

For instance, the translation of the message can be standardized or adapted (Cruz-Garcia, 2018). The standardization strategy advocate that the advertisement is transposed into the corresponding target

language, assuming that it will equally work in different markets, while the adaptation approach pay attention to the peculiarities of culture and the needs of the consumers and include them into the advertisement to make it more comprehensible and pleasing for the audience.

As for the advertisement itself, the best strategy to implement is to mix both the standardization and the adaptation approaches with the aim of conveying the message with the highest potential (Cruz-Garcia, 2018).

Standardization and adaptation strategies are comparable to the two translation types identified by Nord in 1997, which are called “documentary translation” and “instrumental translation” (Valdés, 2019, p. 173). The first one is associated with standardization, because it is focused on the source context, it doesn’t really concern the environment in which it is inserted. The second one is based on the creation of new content in the target language, establishing a communication between the brand and the target market. The translated message will be perceived as an original advertisement shaped directly for the target consumers, because it will envision their values and culture.

There are also two other commonly used strategies that advertisers can use in advertising translation which are called Eleganzation and Popularization (Wang *et al.*, 2019). Eleganzation is implemented when advertisers want to make the language of the message more beautiful, using complex sentences, poetic forms or expressions, while the aim of Popularization is to make the advertisement easy to understand, hence sentences are simplified and streamlined. It is concerned with the massification of the message, so employing this strategy often makes the advertisement more colloquial and accessible.

Sometimes, eleganzation and popularization can also complement each other, in order to better conform to the needs of the audience.

To conclude, when foreign companies have to decide the strategy to adopt in advertising translation, before they need to be clear on the communicative purpose they have to achieve and what are the characteristics and the needs of the Chinese audience and of the specific target market of the product. So, the translator has two very important functions to accomplish; the first one is to choose the right words and sentences in order to transmit the persuading message. Second, she/he also has to perform her/his own cross-cultural competences with the aim of showing and highlighting the elements which are relevant for the target audience.

2.6 Offensive advertising

When foreign companies enter the Chinese market through an advertising campaign, there is always the risk of publishing offensive or outrageous advertisements. These advertising messages often show the necessity for brands to obtain a deeper knowledge of the culture and habits of their target.

It is clear that if an advertisement is considered offensive, manipulative or annoying, it has less power of persuasion in the target audience (Haidia & Rahim, 2015), or it may even damage brand identity. Thus, it is crucial for foreign brands to understand what is perceived in this way and try their best to avoid these kinds of mistakes.

An advertisement can be perceived as offensive by viewers for several reasons.

Consumers can consider a message offensive because of the product it promotes. In China, for example, advertisements of cigarettes, tobacco or objects connected to sexuality are often not welcomed because of how the products are perceived, not of the messages themselves. Indeed, advertising some of these products is not even allowed in China, such as tobacco. At the same time, in the view of the fact that China is a Party of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control since 2009, tobacco advertising is forbidden in media channels and public places, but it is still permitted in some occasions: for instance, tobacco companies can be sponsors in events and organizations or can distribute promotional discounts.

Secondly, the advertisement could not be appropriately executed. In fact, vulgar, obscene or irritating images and information are not appropriate in the Chinese market, because Chinese consumers are particularly sensitive to advertisements related to sex, birth control techniques or other taboo which can still nowadays cause unease and embarrassment (Waller *et al.*, 2008).

For example, for the company Durex, well-known worldwide for the production of condoms and its frank and explicit advertising, releasing an advertisement which is considered appropriate for Chinese people it's a tough challenge. However, in the last few years, Durex's marketers are having success in this market, attracting the audience thanks to the use of implicit language and normal conversations, which make consumers essentially understand the discrete taglines, while preserving a positive brand image (Jung, 2019). Nonetheless, there are still some occasions in which its advertisements were not welcomed by Chinese consumers. For instance, the advertisement released in 2019 in collaboration with HeyTea (a famous Chinese milk tea brand) received a negative response and made the two brands apologize to the customers. The message contained in this message is 一滴都不许剩 *Yīdī dōu bùxǔ shèng*, and means "Must not leave a single drop", making a comparison between milk tea and certain bodily fluids. This advertisement was considered as too explicit and containing inappropriate language because it openly made a reference to sex, so caused embarrassment in the audience.

Another factor could be cultural insensitivity, which indicates that the advertisement was created without a proper knowledge of the target audience's culture, language, the differences and the similarities with the native country. For example, a foreign company could improperly use symbols or images which are considered as disrespectful or insulting by the target market, or the brand could decide to standardize a message, without considering the differences between the different countries it faces, or maybe the strategy of adaptation is not properly created.

A representative case of this lack of analysis could be KFC's slogan when the company entered the Chinese market. Actually, in the 1980s the American fast-food company Kentucky Fried chicken, when translating the popular slogan "Finger-lickin' good", wrote in its advertisements "Eat your fingers off". This mistake in the translation of the slogan caused an important loss in the sales of KFC.

Moreover, discriminations like sexism and racism can raise a lot of criticism if shown in advertisements. Sexism can be transmitted through female stereotypes or portraits of women as victims of violence or sexual objects and this is harshly judged because it reinforces conservative values such as "subservience, domination and inequality between sexes" (Chan *et al.*, 2007, p. 9). Racism can be present in advertising because of the stereotypes about a culture, or jokes and humor about religions or minorities. Nowadays in China, these themes are the most commonly mentioned causes of offensive advertising (Chan *et al.*, 2007).

Unfortunately for the Swedish brand, Ikea was accused for the launch of a sexist commercial in 2017. In the advertisement, during a family dinner, a mother reproaches her daughter for not having a boyfriend to present to her parents and, soon after that, a good-looking boy appears at the door with a bouquet and the parents instantly make Ikea furniture appear in the house. The reprimands made women, which are the main target of Ikea in China (Johansson & Thelander, 2009), feel very



Co-promotion advertisement of Durex and HeyTea (Source: Pandaily)

uncomfortable, especially because of the reputation that women have if they become “leftover women” (in Chinese 剩女 *Shèngnǚ*, which indicates successful women that are still not married) makes women feel great pressure in China, where marriage is still considered a requirement for women (Maveal, 2017).

Ikea had to publish an official apology following this accident.

The fifth category of examples of offensive advertising includes advertisements that violate the country’s laws and regulations. This includes the transgression of laws, but also customs, ethics and social code. This fact reinforces the need for foreign companies to be informed and updated with all the Chinese advertising laws and regulations.

Lastly, consumers can also change their tastes due to current trends, environmental changes and external influences. If the foreign company is not up to date with all the changes and the trends, it can make an advertisement become controversial because it cannot suit consumers’ tastes anymore.



Pictures of the 七夕节 Qixi Festival campaign (Source: Marketing Interactive)

An example of this can be seen in the advertisement of Balenciaga launched in 2020 in the occasion of the Qixi Festival (七夕节 *qīxījiē*), the Chinese Valentine’s day, for the new collection of bags with romantic sentences, such as “I love you”, “You love me” and “He loves me”. In this campaign, a Chinese woman and a man take different poses in front of several old-fashioned posters inspired by the 1990s aesthetics. Chinese people felt insulted by these tasteless and unfashionable images and they believe that the brand tried to make fun of them and insult their tastes in fashion, because of the backwardness of the style and the slovenliness of the execution (James, 2020). Chinese people had such a negative reaction that the hashtags #巴黎世家七夕广告土 *Bālishìjiā qīxī guǎnggào tǔ*, which states that the campaign of Balenciaga for Chinese Valentine Day is unsophisticated, and #巴黎世家辱华 *Bālishìjiā rǔ Huá*, which means that Balenciaga dishonoured China, spread all over Weibo (Tan, 2020).

Offensive advertising can cause consumers' reactions, such as boycotting the product and the brand itself in the worst cases. Boycotts are customers' instruments to control the market and promote cultural sensibility and social responsibility. They aim to denounce firms that are unable or unwilling to espouse a commitment to moral values or that are considered disrespectful, through the call for a reduction of the sales of the boycotted product.

It is important to notice that the reactions to an advertising campaign may not be homogeneous (Valdés, 2019), so there can be differences in perception between different countries, but also in the same culture, especially in a country like China, which is characterized by regional sub-cultures and differences between different zones.

2.7 Conclusions

To sum up, we can affirm that even if nowadays the Chinese market is really attractive for Western brands because of its increasing prosperity and knowledgeable consumers, there are several challenges for foreign brands that want to enter this market.

When entering this market, advertising can represent one of the biggest threats for foreign companies. Indeed, there are many factors that can affect Chinese consumers' perception of Western brands' advertising campaigns.

Culture and the differences between cultures influence the level of appreciation of an advertisement the most. Without a proper understanding of Chinese culture and its peculiarities, companies may face rejection by the target market.

However, as we discussed in this chapter, for what concerns both the creation and the translation of the advertisement, also the strategies adopted, such as standardization and adaptation, and the advertising media chosen are crucial in determining the effectiveness and the perception of the message in the target market.

Thus, foreign brands must understand and intensely analyze all these factors in order to be successful in the Chinese market and elude the risks of negative reactions, and even boycotts.

Chapter 3

Case Studies

As emerges from the previous Chapters, there are several elements that can influence the perception and the effectiveness of an advertising campaign in a country. These elements are also the different basic elements which constitute communication and they are the source (who or what transmits the message), the message (the content, what is transmitted), the channel (what is the instrument used for the transmission) and the code (how the message is constructed and interpreted).

There are two main problems that can lead to inefficiency during the exchange.

The first one is that the source is not sufficiently competent or credible to effectively and successfully transmit the message. In the advertising industry, this can happen when the brand which launches the advertisement, or the advertising agency that creates it, is not sufficiently prepared for the target audience to which the message is referred.

The other is that the code is not shared by both the parts involved in the exchange, so the message will not be properly interpreted by the audience.

Moreover, in an advertising exchange, the audience is not passive, and can react heterogeneously to stimuli and all the external factors that interfere with the communication. Indeed, as previously analyzed, there are numerous aspects that can interfere with the transmission of the message and the context and that can influence the effectiveness of the advertisement.

Thus, besides the basic elements of communication, there are also these aspects which can cause interference in the transmission and have a concrete role in provoking the advertisements effect to be positive (desired effect), negative (opposite effect) or void (no effect at all).

In order to understand more precisely the problems that can arise when foreign companies launch advertisements in the Chinese market, in this chapter five different brands will be analyzed as case studies to recognize the challenges that Western companies have to deal with and the mistakes that they could make facing this market, the different reactions that Chinese consumers can have and the possible consequences.

These five Western companies are all involved in the fashion industry. Four of them are luxury brands that are famous worldwide (Dolce & Gabbana, Burberry, Bulgari and Dior), while the fifth brand is Nike, a global leader company in the sport fashion industry.

These case studies are useful in this research because, even if they are all part of the same sector, they opted for different marketing strategies when entering the Chinese market and the campaigns that will be studied are all different from each other, because of the advertising channels used, the target

market they were interested in, the form of advertising chosen and the causes of their success or unsuccess. Moreover, the mistakes the different brands made in their path are quite heterogeneous. Not all the campaigns that will be analyzed encountered a bad response, because some successful campaigns will also be commented, in contrast with the unsuccessful ones in order to notice what are the differences between a campaign which received a positive feedback and a campaign that faced a backlash, the different reasons, the aspects that influence the final effect and also if the brands understood and corrected the errors made in the past, in an attempt to improve their image.

3.1 Dolce & Gabbana

Dolce & Gabbana was founded in 1985 in Milan by Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana, two Italian designers. Following constant growth, it is now an Italian-based luxury fashion brand globally well known.

The brand is committed to the design of luxury goods made in Italy, that includes women's wear, menswear and children's wear produced with top quality materials. It is famous for the bold prints and brightly colored designs inspired by Sicily and Italian culture. Thus, its style is considered to be Mediterranean and vintage, something that reminds of an old Italy.

For this brand it is always very important to highlight their country of origin and the so-called "Italianness" of the brand in its marketing activities and operations, especially for what concerns countries like China, in which the country of origin has a high value in the creation of attractiveness of luxury products for consumers. Since the growing relevance of the Chinese luxury market in the world, this country is also more and more crucial for D&G's global sales.

It is important to note that the brand decided not to use an advertising company, because they prefer to opt for 'in-house' advertising, in order to have more control over the ideas and intentions which drive their campaigns. Indeed, it is a brand who is not afraid of breaking the rules and innovating. It is creative and has an elegant but unconventional identity.

Recently, this brand has often been involved in cultural or moral controversies for their advertisements or their behavior on social media or in public events. Indeed, the brand is no stranger to creating communication crises because of lack of cultural sensitivity and abuse of honesty. Their unfiltered and uninhibited communication on several occasions resulted in a damaged brand image.

One of the most outrageous scandals in which Dolce & Gabbana was involved is related to the advertising campaign of the brand's "The Great Show". This event was conceptualized as a tribute runway show with more than three hundred outfits and was organized on 21 November 2018 in Shanghai with the aim of celebrating China and its culture.

The campaign, called in Chinese 起筷吃饭 *qǐ kuài chīfàn* (which means “Eating with chopsticks”), was launched on the 18th November 2018 on D&G social media channels (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Sina Weibo) and it was composed by three different videos of a beautiful Chinese woman, performed by the model Zuo Ye, struggling to eat exaggeratedly large Italian food (pizza, cannoli and spaghetti with tomato sauce) with chopsticks. This young woman in the spots is wearing D&G garments and accessories to promote the new collection while clumsily attempting to eat in an ‘orientalized’ atmosphere. In the meantime, a male voiceover reports and comments on what the woman does and remarks the inefficiency of chopsticks for eating “our great, traditional pizza Margarita” (Zhou & Lovari, 2021, p. 7) and the other dishes.

Before each spot begins, the screen displays the name of the dish that will be eaten in the spot in Chinese while the man announces it and then welcomes the audience to the viewing of the advertisement. Respectively the Chinese names of the Italian dishes are: 玛格丽特披萨饼 *mǎgélìtè pīsàbǐng* (Pizza Margherita), 意式香炸甜卷 *yìshì xiāngzhà tiánjuǎn* (Italian fried sweet roll, or cannoli) and 番茄酱意面 *fānqié jiàng yìmiàn* (tomato sauce pasta).

After all the videos, a black screen shows, in sequence and each in yellow, the name 上海 Shanghai, which is the city in which the event was organized; the countdown indicating how many days left till the published event (4 天倒计时 *sì tiān dàojìshí*, which means “4 days left”); “The Great Show”, its name; and the name of the brand.



Screenshot of the first chapter of the advertising campaign: “Eating Pizza Margherita with chopsticks” (Source: YouTube)

In episode number one (第 1 集 *dì yī jí*) the model has to eat a big pizza Margherita, which is called “Margarita” by the man voiceover. At the beginning, the model seems very confused about how to eat pizza and tries to pierce it using the two chopsticks.

As it can be seen in the picture, while she tries to figure out how to eat it, the man tells her if she’s doing it the proper way or not. In the image there’s the frame in which the voiceover congratulates her for having found an appropriate manner in which to eat pizza. In fact, he says 嗯对, 这样就对了 *én duì, zhèyàng jiù duì le*, which means “Right, in this way is correct”.

Thus, following the instructions of the man, she rips a piece of pizza and lifts it up with chopsticks.

At the end of the episode she is satisfied with herself for having accomplished this and claps her hands while the man tells her “Bravissimo” with an Asian accent, just as he will say it at the end of every episode.

In the second episode (第 2 集 *dì èr jí*), the woman has to eat an enormous cannoli, a typical sweet dish coming from Sicily.

While the model is embarrassed and tries to evaluate how to



Screenshot of the second chapter of the advertising campaign “Eating Cannoli with chopsticks” (Source: YouTube)



Screenshot of the third chapter of the advertising campaign “Eating spaghetti with meatballs with chopsticks” (Source: YouTube)

approach to this particular, and probably unknown, dessert, the man makes some jokes about the dimension and appearance of it, like 还是不是这太夸张了? *hái shì bùshì zhè tài kuāzhāng le?*, which means “Isn’t it too big?”, as it is shown by the screenshot.

She chuckles for all the duration of the video.

At the end, she cannot eat the cannoli, but uses chopsticks to eat the cream inside of it.

The voiceover affirms that after tasting this food, people feel just like they are in Italy, even if in reality they are still in China.

In the last episode (第3集 *dì sān jí*), the dish that has to be eaten is an incredibly abundant portion of spaghetti with tomato sauce. Also in this spot, the model seems very perplexed and clumsy at the beginning.

The suggestion of the man in this case is to roll the spaghetti up using chopsticks, as it is shown in the scene of the screenshot, where he says 对, 夹起它 *duì, jiā qǐ tā*, which means “Right, roll it”.

In this spot, the man also makes the audience notice the luxurious bracelet the model is wearing, saying it is really beautiful while she is rotating chopsticks.

Unfortunately for the brand, as soon as the videos were published online, Chinese consumers started criticizing them and accusing the two founders of stereotyping and discriminating Chinese people. There are several reasons for Chinese people’s criticism. First of all, they found the spot as a sort of “racist caricature of Chinese culture” (Ban & Lovari, 2021, p. 1). The videos can be considered as a good representation of the essence of ‘Orientalism’ (see section 2.3), since they are full of explicitly expressed stereotypes.

Even if they were created for a Chinese audience, the videos have been designed just from an Eurocentric perspective. The first stereotypes that are easy to catch are the narrowed eyes and the long black straight hair of the model, which are emblems of racial stereotypes of Chinese people (Ban & Lovari, 2021), since they serve as the typical characteristic elements in the classical representation of Chinese people in Western media. Then, the atmosphere in which the scenes are inserted is outdated and reflect the Western imaginary of how China is, as it is evident from the colors, the adornments, the red lanterns and the Chinese folk music in the background, but it is not a real representation of what China actually is. On the contrary, in China now there is not just antiquity and historical places, but there are a lot of modern spots, trendy spaces and innovative scenery.

Moreover, from these videos, people could believe that Chinese people are not up to date with other cultures, are not informed about the trends in the external world and are a closed country. On the contrary, even if Chinese people grew up using chopsticks to eat everyday because it is their tradition, they are aware of and even appreciate other countries’ dishes and are conscious about how to eat them. In particular, they know what pizza is and how it should be eaten, since it is a very popular dish in China nowadays.

Also, spaghetti is not unknown to Chinese people. Indeed, in the Chinese culinary tradition there are many dishes which are made of spaghetti, noodles or other kinds of long pasta. Thus, they are familiar with how to properly eat them with or without using chopsticks. Making jokes on their incapacity to eat spaghetti with chopsticks not only is not funny, but it is also nonsensical.

Furthermore, many Chinese users stated online that it is ridiculous and unreasonable that Italians wanted to teach Chinese people how to eat whichever dish with chopsticks (James, 2018), considering the fact that this kind of cutlery is part of Chinese tradition, not of the Italian one.

Another point that was criticized for racism was connected to the mandarin-speaking male voice over. The reason is that he arrogantly jokes on Chinese people's incapacity to pronounce foreign words like "Bravissimo" or even "Dolce & Gabbana", the name of the brand itself. This was not accepted by Chinese customers because it offered a bad image of China and its people inasmuch it reflects ignorance and whimsy.

Thus, this campaign rather than turning out to be funny and hilarious, it ended up representing the country as an ancient China that is unable to adapt to the Western world. Although it is known that China is now an advanced and innovative country, and that Chinese customers are demanding, want luxury and elegant products that communicate exclusivity and wealth.

Other elements that made many Chinese people upset are the clumsiness and pretentiousness in the behavior of the model and the way in which the male voiceover commented on what she performs.

Regarding the first point, the Chinese audience found the videos sexist (Ban & Lovari, 2021) and offensive for all the Chinese women. Indeed, it represented the antiquated stereotypes of the woman that is silly and confused, who is not capable of doing things and expressing herself. The model in the videos doesn't speak, she just expresses through her gaze and gestures. Moreover, she often laughs and giggles because of the comments and the references of the voiceover, displaying innocence that can also be considered guilelessness.

For what concerns the speaker, he explained with irony and humor the fact that the model was using chopsticks in an incorrect way in the video, and joked about how she should eat the dishes in a proper manner. He gave the impression that chopsticks are not the right instrument to eat Italian dishes. In fact, he uses the words 小棍子形状的餐具 *xiǎo gùnzi xíngzhuàng de cānjù*, which can be translated in "stick-shaped cutlery" (Huang & Janssens, 2019, p. 124) in order to describe chopsticks, that was perceived as a disparaging comment.

However, the lessening of chopsticks is not the only problem with the voiceover.

Indeed, the irony he used as a means of communication generated criticism. Even if generally speaking, humor is a popular communication strategy in the advertising industry and usually has a positive impact on the audience, captivating consumers' attention, increasing the attractiveness of the products and the image of the brand (Forster & Brantner, 2016), nonetheless, in China the number of brands which opt to use humor in their advertisements is very small, and there are several reasons for this fact.

First of all, the success of humor in advertising depends on the product's characteristics and audience's peculiarities. Thus, since Chinese consumers don't really appreciate humoristic comments, especially about sensitive topics (see section 2.3), it is advisable to avoid using them and prefer other types of communicative style. Secondly, there's the risk of diverting the attention away from the content of the advertising message, making the advertisement less attractive. But most importantly, in China humor may increase the likelihood of a potentially offensive ad's being perceived to be a violation of ethical standards.

It is also important to notice that in China humor and mischievous spirit are still not enough to justify and permit the use of sexual references in advertising messages, such as questioning if cannoli are "too big" for the model, linking the size of the traditional dish with a phallic figure. These remarks are perceived as provocative, humiliating and aggressive remarks by the Chinese audience.

D&G usually targets young aged people (between 20 and 25 years), innovators, trendsetters and people who enjoy freedom and irony in fashion. Thus, they are used to utilize sex and aesthetic sensation to catch their attention in their advertising campaigns. Their communication is often aimed at surprising the audience.

However, this is not enough to justify these outrageous acts. When entering a different market, they need to understand the target market and its peculiarities, especially when facing different customers like those in the Chinese market. Indeed, Chinese customers cannot accept that a foreign brand tries to dictate Western superiority over Chinese and Asian culture.

The backlash was so strong that the brand was forced to take all the videos down from all the social media within 24 hours.

Then, Chinese people's criticism grew stronger after the appearance on social media of some screenshot displaying a conversation including many offensive comments and judgment by Stefano Gabbana about China and Chinese culture.

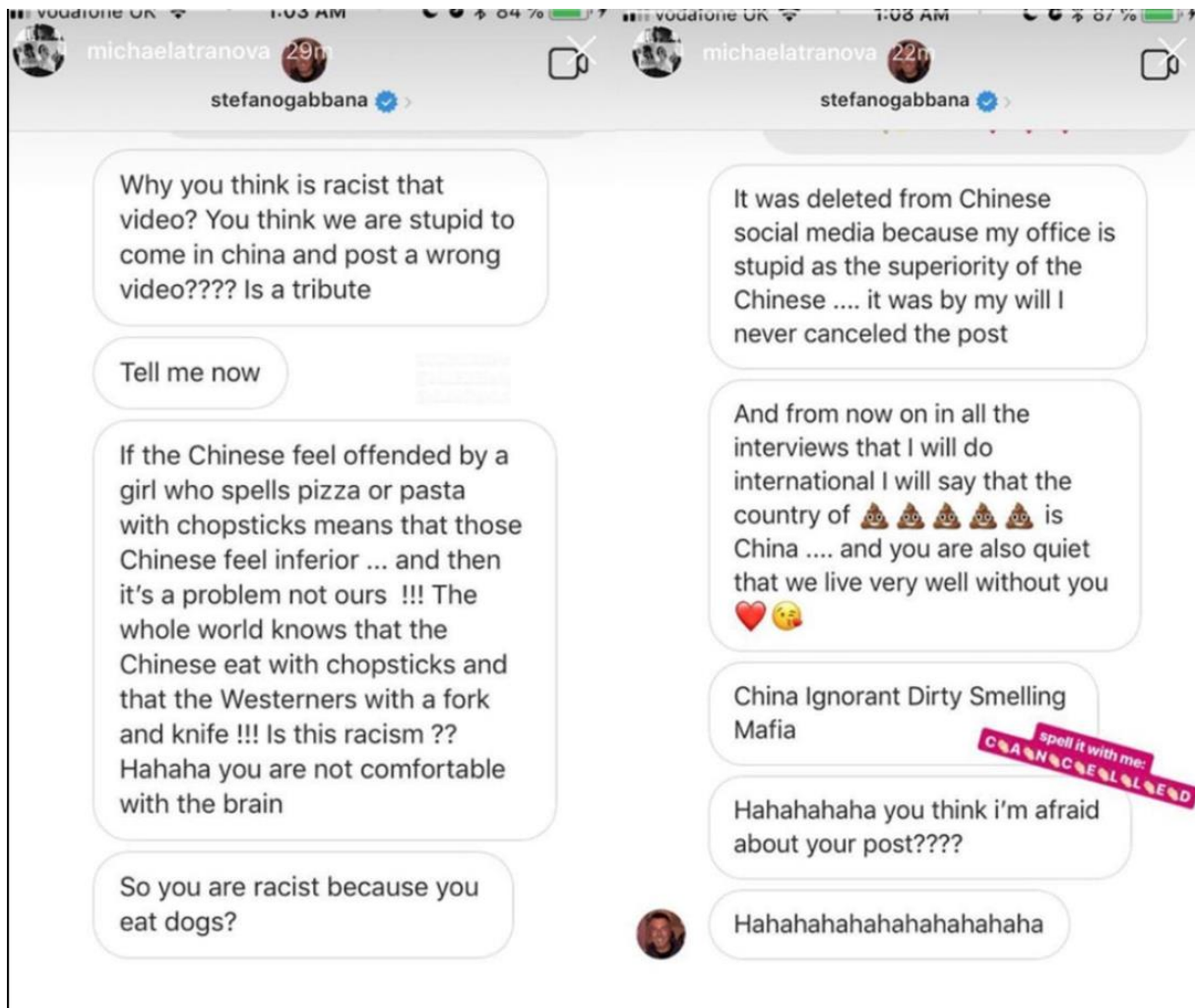
This conversation was held on Instagram by direct messages between a user, Michaela Tranova, and Stefano Gabbana.

In this conversation apparently emerged Stefano Gabbana's point of view on the situation and the accident, which consists in the conviction that the decision of the forced removal was unreasonable, since the videos were a tribute to China and Chinese people. The problem is that he exposed his opinion without mincing words, and added several insults to Chinese culture and people.

As it can be seen from the screenshots, he affirmed that China is "[a] country of [five 'poop' emojis]" and "[an] ignorant dirty smelling mafia", and confirmed that the videos were posted "by [his] will" and that he never intended to remove them.

These offensive messages couldn't go unnoticed and made Chinese customers perceive the brand as racist and disrespectful of China as a whole.

In an attempt to save himself and mitigate the crisis, Stefano Gabbana announced on social media that the brand's and his Instagram account had been hacked and he hadn't control of them (Ban & Lovari, 2021), through posting a photo in which he wrote "NOT ME" with the screenshots of the chat in the background and a tweet containing the letters "GI", revealing that every action was made with "good intention" and that the reactions were not expected.



Screenshots of the incriminated conversation between an online user and Stefano Gabbana on Instagram (Source: SupChina)

Thus, he was assuming that he was not the author of the insulting messages included in the screenshot posted online trying to make people believe this was just fake news.

The denial and victimage strategies (Ban & Lovari, 2021) of attributing the insulting conversation to cybercrime adopted by the co-founder not only wasn't helpful in the limitation of the losses and the worsening of the brand image, but they even aggravated the crisis and the cynicism of Chinese

customers. Indeed, Chinese people felt insulted and mocked by the words of Gabbana, as the co-founder was just making fun of them.

As a consequence a group of Chinese people protested in front of the new shop Dolce & Gabbana opened in Milan, holding papers with the incriminated writing “NOT ME”, with the aim of denigrating and denouncing the denial strategy adopted by Stefano Gabbana and, at the same time, dissociating themselves from the brand’s actions.

The picture of the people protesting rapidly spread all over social media, and other groups of people followed their example sharing similar photos on their profiles, showing empathy and a sense of community.



Screenshot of the apology video of D&G with subtitles (Source: La Repubblica)

After this episode, on November 23rd Dolce and Gabbana published a video in which they promulgated their official apology in Italian with Chinese subtitles. They asked Chinese people for forgiveness trying to demonstrate they understood the mistake and saying that they had never intended to hurt anyone's feelings with their videos, because they love and respect Chinese culture and people. At the end of the video they pronounced the word

“sorry” in Chinese, which is 对不起 *duìbuqǐ*. They emphasized their positive attitude towards cultural diversity in an attempt to respond to Chinese criticism of stereotypes and racial discrimination.

In this video, which lasts only one minute and a half, the two co-founders were sitting behind a long table with their hands folded, and this, together with the fact that they seemed expressionless and halfhearted (Ban & Lovari, 2021), constituted a problem for Chinese people, because usually apologies should be conducted standing, in order to demonstrate genuine remorse, and people should also show their feeling and emotions to appear contrite.

It is important to notice that an efficient management of communication crises is fundamental for a successful management of the brand image.

However, even if the two designers promised to do their best to improve their knowledge of Chinese culture and avoid making similar mistakes again (Puppin, 2018), their apology was considered as an inadequate and dishonest response to the enormous crisis they were facing. Symbolic expressions of repentance cannot repair such damage to Chinese victims. Moreover, Chinese consumers felt that in

the video the two co-founders were insincere, coward and venal and that their efforts were unsatisfactorily pulled together. They thought that the apology was made just to avoid losing other money and that was just a desperate move of their image repair strategies to respond to the crisis (Ban & Lovari, 2021), together with the hacker justification and the removal of the spots.

Additionally, it was already too late to retract. Brands that want to be successful in the Chinese market cannot conduct racist and bigot acts and then expect that apologies can easily solve a morally questionable conduct.

Also the model in the video decided to apologize for her appearance in the videos on Weibo. The reason for her acceptance was that, when the brand asked her to be the main character of this campaign, she didn't reflect on how the advertising campaign could have been perceived by her compatriots and the effects it could have in the country. She felt so embittered, guilty and ashamed. Not only did the advertisement almost ruin her career, but she also received many attacks and even threats on social media (Hills, 2021).

Thus, the consequences of these three advertising videos were enormous in China, but even in foreign countries.

Some important Chinese celebrities, such as Zhang Ziyi, Chen Kun and Li Bingbing, who planned to participate in "The Great Show" organized in Shanghai withdrew from the event. Moreover, the Chinese Culture and Tourism Department requested the cancellation of the fashion show because the campaign was not acceptable, so it had to be canceled.

Furthermore, Wang Junkai, Dilraba Dilmurat and other brand's celebrity ambassadors and models declared that they wanted to distance themselves from D&G and put an end to their contracts with the brand.

As if all of this were not enough, on Weibo and other social media started to spread the hashtag "BoycottDolce" to denounce the accident and convince people not to buy Dolce & Gabbana's products anymore. Also foreign people supported Chinese customers in their criticism and showed their sympathy with them and their disappointment with the brand.

Following this movement, a few days after the accident, several social media accounts published a video called "Chopsticks" on different social media platforms, such as WeChat, Tencent Video (腾讯视频 *Téngxùn shìpín*), Weibo and Bilibili (哔哩哔哩 *Bìlǐ bìlǐ*). This video was firstly released in 2014 by CCTV to highlight the importance of this instrument in China to share the same culture and history. Chopsticks here are represented as a medium of cultural bond and inheritance. It lasts 5 minutes and it is composed of 8 different stories all connected to the use of chopsticks sited in different parts of China and in different stages of people's life, which are important to create emotion and touch the

audience. It reminds Chinese people of important values, such as “Inspiration” (启迪 *qǐdī*), “Courtesy” (明礼 *mínglǐ*), and “Caring” (关爱 *guān'ài*), which are also used as titles of the different stories.



Frame of the video “Chopsticks” with the title of the scene *Inheritance*, in Chinese 传承 *Chuánchéng* (Source: YouTube)

It was used in this situation in order to reply to the offense made by Dolce & Gabbana and show to the world the Chinese pride of their culture and habits.

Likewise, the popular Instagram account Diet Prada harshly criticized the campaign, and was also responsible for the diffusion of the incriminating screenshots mentioned before.

Diet Prada is an Instagram account founded by Tony Liu and Lindsey Schuyler. The Journal *Business of Fashion* defined Diet Prada as the most scaring Instagram account in the fashion industry (Suen & Mondalek, 2021) because of their irreverent and mocking posts on fashion goods’ copies or about the most eccentric outfits worn by the celebrities. This account in the last years often had troubles and conflicts with the brand, for the two co-founders’ arrogance and aloofness, especially for Stefano Gabbana. Their critics emphasized even more the unsuitability of the campaign and the response of the brand, conveying the bad temper of the co-founder and the ignorance presented.

Thus, as a consequence of the event and all the repercussions it caused, Dolce & Gabbana almost lost the Chinese market.

Not only was Dolce & Gabbana not welcomed in China anymore, but major Chinese e-commerce sites such as Alibaba, JD.com, and Tmall decided not to sell D&G’s products and removed the brand from their online shelves.

This fact caused an important decrease in sales which amounted to hundreds of millions dollars.

Four years after the accident, the brand is still unappreciated on Chinese social media and often still receives negative comments and messages against the brand, sales are very much lower than before the offensive advertising and some e-commerce platforms haven't stocked their products yet.

Also the few Chinese celebrities who still wear the brand's products are insulted by Chinese users.

However, the 2019 campaign was not the first time Dolce & Gabbana was involved in controversies because of stereotyped advertisements both inside or outside China.

In fact, the campaign launched in april 2017 in China already faced some problems.

This campaign was called #DGLovesChina, and was an online



Picture of #DGLovesChina campaign (Source: Business of Fashion)

marketing campaign on Weibo and WeChat, released on occasion of the "Alta Moda and Alta Sartoria Fashion Show", programmed on 21st April at the Peninsula Hotel in Beijing. The aim of the campaign was to create a positive buzz and cater to rich Chinese clients through a series of photographs shot in Beijing, which were taken by the Morelli Brothers. In these colorful and joyous images, models wearing the new D&G collection's clothes are interacting and posing with locals like tourists and taxi drivers.



Picture of #DGLovesChina campaign (Source: Per quel che ne so)

The release of these pictures provoked the rise of a public relations crisis, because Chinese customers highlighted the fact that Dolce & Gabbana opted to focus only on underdeveloped parts of Beijing and impoverished residents, while ignoring the fact that in China now people can admire more modern sceneries of skyscrapers and more stylish citizens.

To such a degree, discrimination, racism and stereotypes are again the

main problems of the brand's advertising campaign.

Moreover, in their review online, Chinese audiences also draw attention to the photographer's lack of shooting skills. Indeed, locals were in the foreground of the pictures, while the models were often relegated to the backgrounds. Plus, editing was overdone, because coloring was too dirty and unnatural. In their opinion this shows an insincere and awkward attempt to show Dolce & Gabbana's love and appreciation for Chinese culture and people.

Thus, the negative reaction obtained by the campaign from Chinese consumers had already caused a decrease in the brand's sales in China and a loss of Chinese clients, and this forced the brand to delete these photos both from Weibo and WeChat.

Further, the company came out to be culturally unprepared also in Italy, which is the co-founders' native country, and this demonstrates a serious need for the brand to improve their communication skills and their cultural sensibility.

In fact, the #DGLovesNaples campaign launched in 2017 for the promotion of their new men and women fragrances "The One" received a backlash from Italians, and Neapolitans in particular.

The campaign, directed by Matteo Garrone, was mainly composed of two video clips lasting one minute each. In these videos, the main characters, which in the first one is Kit Harington and in the second one Emilia Clarke, two famous actors from the Game of Thrones, go into a crowded square and are welcomed by a joyful and festive atmosphere.



Screenshot of #DGLovesNaples campaign, starring Emilia Clarke (Source: YouTube)

In the background there's the popular song "Tu vuò fà l'americano" of Renato Carosone, sang by Franco Ricciardi.

The way in which Naples was represented in the campaign was not appreciated by Italians. This is because they believe that it was full of stereotypes about Naples and the country itself and, thus, was considered as embarrassing and close-minded in Italians perception.

Indeed, it just represents an old Italy, and displays the same stereotypical characteristics of Italian people, as if Neapolitan culture of the 1950s was the only culture in Italy.

Nevertheless, there were also people that actually liked the videos, because they felt that there was nothing really outrageous about Italian culture.

In this case the brand decided not to apologize, but, on the contrary, it insulted and assaulted critics online saying that they would never come to Naples again.

From these errors, the brand should have learned that an efficient communication, especially in intercultural exchanges, requires comprehension and respect for the interlocutor, its culture and values.

Furthermore, it is fundamental for brands to master how to face communication and reputational crises, because crisis management has a crucial role in brand image and in solving these kinds of events.

3.2 Nike

Nike is an American multinational corporation located in Oregon, which was founded in 1964 with the name of Blue Ribbon Sports. In 1971 it changed its name to Nike, in honor of the mythical Greek goddess of victory.

The company is engaged in the design, development, manufacturing, marketing and sales of footwear, apparel, equipment, accessories and services. Nowadays it is the world's leading designer and supplier of athletic shoes and apparel in the world.

The brand's logo, called Swoosh, was invented in 1972 in order to easily differentiate its shoes from the others and now it is considered as a symbol of victory and supremacy (Barroso *et al.*, 2018) that transcends language. It is very easy to recognize and the typical color black helps it to be remembered, even if there are also several variants that are colorful or decorated.

Another essential element in their advertising strategy is the iconic slogan "Just Do It", which emerged in 1988 during an advertising campaign in order to transmit to the audience a sense of internal drive to achievement that is common in the elite athletes. It has never been translated in other languages with the aim of being universal and always recognizable.

Nike targets customers who cherish their genuineness and embody the conception of transcendence through sports, and following this principle designs its products, advertisements and chooses celebrities and athletes endorsements and sponsorships (Marshall & Morreale, 2018). Sponsors and brand ambassadors have been key elements in Nike advertising strategy since the beginning, and this helped the brand in establishing a strong and close relationship with athletes and customers, conveying authenticity and carefulness.

It is a very dedicated brand that desires to instill a positive change across countries and around the world. Thus, it is very conscious about the differences between cultures and the transcended values that sports embody in the different countries.

For the purpose of increasing customers' brand loyalty, Nike put great efforts in reinforcing brand trust through social responsibility. Indeed, it is interested in political and cultural issues, and tries to give support and help through sporting events and initiatives. These efforts are very important because,

when consumers are aware of social responsibility in a brand's actions, it improves their attitude toward that company and has a strong impact on their purchase decisions. However, it also accomplished in maintaining its affirmation of individuality and individualism and highlighting the importance of the achievement of success.

Nike is committed to expanding its awareness internationally and advertising campaigns represent essential instruments to achieve this goal.

The brand soon understood the importance of social media advertising in the new era of digital media, so it produced many inspiring commercials which were published on different social media accounts. For what concerns China, the brand's first approach in the advertising industry of this market was quite cautious.

Since the beginning, Nike released several advertisements which were praised, welcomed and also reproduced. Many of them were starring Chinese celebrity athletes to promote the brand's products. Indeed, the selection of star athletes in China was very attentive in order to create links with local customers and continue to improve the brand image. For example, in the early 2000s, the brand chose Yao Ming, the first Chinese basketball player to be recruited to play in the NBA, as one of the first brand ambassadors in China and this powerfully helped Nike in their growth in the Asian market. After the end of the contract with Yao Ming in 2003, they repeatedly opted for a famous Chinese athlete, Yi Jianlian, who was the second player to enter the NBA.

Moreover, with the aim of being the most inclusive possible and inspiring a new generation of Chinese athletes, the brand also established a long-term relationship with Li Na starting from 1997, probably the most outstanding female Chinese tennis player in Chinese sport's record, as well as the world number 4 tennis player in that period.



"Dare to aim higher than the sky" campaign starring Li Na
(Source: Nike)

Nike launched different campaigns to celebrate her achievements and

victories. For instance, to commemorate the winning the Grand Slam in 2014, they distributed the new campaign "Dare to aim higher than the sky", in Chinese 心敢比天高 *xīn gǎn bǐ tiān gāo*. The message contained in this advertisement wanted to inspire athletes to be determined and set higher expectations for themselves to achieve success.

Nonetheless, Nike also decided to maintain some international brand ambassadors in Chinese advertising campaigns, trying to implement a mixed strategy. For instance, a few advertisements launched in China were featured by LeBron James or Kobe Bryant, two immensely famous American basketball players.

The attention and thoughtfulness shown in the selection of the brand ambassadors and celebrity endorsers reflect the importance they have in the Chinese market as mediators between the brand and its customers.

Moreover, following the intent of demonstrating concern and appreciation to Chinese people, in 2012 Nike launched its first advertisement on WeChat. This innovative kind of promotion was useful for the brand in order to strengthen the connections with consumers and also try to customize the conversation with them.

However, even though Nike is very sensitive and attentive in advertising and the influence that different cultures can have on its perception and effectiveness, not all the campaigns succeeded in approaching the target market in a proper way.

One of the biggest mistakes made by the brand in China was committed in November 2004, when CCTV, or China Central Television Station of Beijing, and other provincial stations in China transmitted Nike's advertising campaign called "Chamber of Fear" (in Chinese 恐惧斗室 *kǒngjù dòushi*) to promote their new Zoom LeBron II, a pair of basketball shoes specifically designed for the Chinese market. It was released simultaneously in China, Singapore, Hong Kong and the United States.

The spot was produced by Wieden & Kenney, Nike's US advertising agency, in the US and it lasts 90 seconds.

Since the target market of this advertisement was composed of young Chinese consumers, this advertisement was designed to look like a video game with elements inspired by Japanese manga and Chinese martial arts, featuring the famous American NBA's star LeBron James.

The basketball star LeBron James has to overcome various metaphorical obstacles in the advertisement. In fact, it has to face in a long basketball match different Asian-style allegorical figures, which included a white haired kung fu master, two cartoon women dressed in traditional Chinese 旗袍 *qípáo* (a kind of Chinese traditional female clothing) and a pair of dragons. These are all Chinese cultural elements, considered sacred in Chinese culture. The brand decided to employ these symbols in this advertisement with the aim of attracting Chinese people's attention and creating a strong emotional connection with them.

Notwithstanding, in the advertisement these cultural emblems are misused and transposed in an inappropriate and insulting way because in the basketball star's point of view they all represent

impediments for the achievement of his goals, thus he has to defeat all of them during the basketball game, which is divided in five different scenes.

Each scene begins with a black screen which displays its title in Traditional Chinese. Additionally, there are subtitles in English and a man voiceover who reads the name in Chinese, to make the advertisement understandable for the most people possible.

At the beginning of the first scene, which is titled *LeBron James in Chamber of Fear* (恐惧斗室 *kǒngjù dǒushi*) LeBron James walks into a bright room. He is dressed in white with Nike's basketball shorts, tank top, headband and the new Zoom LeBron II black shoes. Then, he has to face a white-bearded old man which reminds of a kung Fu master, who wears purple robes and a topknot.

The master serves as an obstacle for LeBron to reach the basket, which represents his goal. Thus, before reaching his objective, he has to face him, and consequently, his fears.

The second scene, called *Hype* (夸张失实 *kuāzhāng shīshí*), is focused on the game between these two characters. The master tries his best to block James who's in the attempt to make a basket, but at the end James manages to win the battle. Indeed, he succeeds in knocking him to the ground, passes the master and scores the basket.



Screenshot of the advertisement "Chamber of Fear" showing the shoes launched (Source: YouTube)

At the end of the scene the camera focuses on Nike's new pair of shoes while James runs the stairs to enter the following room.

In this room the scenery changes; everything is anime-styled, including James itself. It is the beginning of the third scene, named *Temptation* (诱惑 *yòuhuò*). In this new environment, there are the four beautiful women in pink traditional dresses, the aforementioned 旗袍 *qípáo*, which

try to seduce the basketball star and represent temptation. From this element derives the name of the scene, because LeBron has to resist them in order to achieve his goal, together with all the money spread all over the room. Indeed, the basket is placed behind them.

In spite of everything, James dribbles past the flying women and scores the basket, breaking the support.

It is already obvious that the advertisement is full of symbolism. The fact that he can overcome all these obstacles, portrayed by the different characters, demonstrates to the audience that he can

succeed in everything he performs and he doesn't need to rely on anything, no matter what kind of problematic situation he has to face.

After James hits the basket, there is another change in the atmosphere. The animation turns again into reality, it is no longer an anime anymore.

The fourth scene is called *Haters* (仇敌 *chóudǐ*), because now LeBron has to face five kung fu warriors, who are portrayed as African-Americans, with sunglasses and afro hair and stand between James and the basket. While they try to scare him with threats and their 双截棍 *shuāng jié gùn* (what in Western countries is usually called *nunchaku*), he scores a three point shot over all of their heads. Again the camera focuses on the promoted shoes while he runs up the stairs.

The following scene, called *Complacency* (自鸣得意 *zì míng dé yì*), happens again in an anime-style room, where there are two green dragons with their eyes glowing red. The title of the scene refers to the frame of mind of the player, who's satisfied with himself because of the success he has already achieved. On the screen appears the sentence "The Chosen One grew in wisdom with each challenge", which wants to highlight the fact that LeBron, the Chosen One, is improving himself while facing the obstacles in the basketball battle. The dragons exhale spirits that the basketball player has to overcome to reach the basket. When LeBron hits the basket, the trajectory of the ball creates a Swoosh in the air.

The last scene displays the "greatest test" and is called *Self-Doubt* (自我怀疑 *zì wǒ huái yí*). James finally arrives at the end of the stairs, and he discovers that he reached the roof of the building.

In the background there are several buildings with traditional Chinese architecture of swoop peaked roofs. At the far end of the roof there is the final basket.

James is again the real James, but now he has to challenge a cartoon James, wearing all black. This scene represents the ultimate game, a one to one between the basketball player and a contrasting himself. It symbolizes the inner battle that everyone has to fight when in trouble. During the confrontation, the cartoon James becomes bigger and bigger, but the real one shoots the ball and pierces him in the middle of his chest to make the basket. And soon after that, he kicks him in the face and wins the last battle.

The real James stands up triumphant on the rooftop, after overcoming all the different obstacles.

At the end of the advertisement, the Nike Swoosh and their website to buy the shoes appear on the screen.

From a Western point of view, it can be perceived as an inspirational and encouraging video, which motivates people not to quit and always do their best when facing every type of difficulty.

However, since at the end all the Chinese cultural symbols are defeated by LeBron James, the advertisement was severely criticized by Chinese people and the State Administration for Radio, Film

and Television (SARFT) ordered the ban from all the different Chinese channels in order to protect “national honor and traditional Chinese culture” (Chan *et al.*, 2007, p. 6), because the advertisement was perceived as “hurting the dignity of China and Chinese people” and their feelings (Li, 2016, p. 193) and it offends national customs and norms. Moreover, this advertisement was accused of violating Chinese advertising regulations which state that each advertisement in the Chinese market has to defend Chinese national dignity and interest and honor the country’s culture and people. It was the first time Nike's advertising was banned in China (Liu, 2004), and it was also the first advertisement banned by the Chinese government after the entry into the WTO (together with Toyota’s print advertisements launched in the same year).

Thus, even if the advertisement is easy to remember, attractive and has a high stopping power (the capability to grab the audience's consideration and curiosity) thanks to the music, the set and the interesting plot, it ended in a complete disaster for Nike’s image in China. In addition, it didn’t possess a great persuasion power, since it focused too much on LeBron James, the endorsing celebrity, and his phenomenal accomplishments, while it didn't display and describe enough the product’s features and worth.

Nike tried to convince the audience that using this new pair of shoes can allow people to overcome every challenge and at the same time be comfortable and fashionable, but they didn’t enhance in an effective way the product’s benefit to convey these concepts.

In this case, it is notable the importance given to the opinion of Chinese Internet users (in particular coming from Weibo and WeChat) in the discussion about the perception of the advertisement in its cancellation. Indeed, public opinion had a fundamental role in the expression of disappointment, in the denunciation of the superiority of the Western culture shown in this advertisement and in the promotion of nationalism to counteract.

Nike in this campaign made several mistakes which have already been analyzed in the previous chapter (see section 2.6).

First of all, it is an involuntary expression of cultural insensitivity of the brand. Indeed, Nike didn’t display enough respect toward icons that are regarded as sacred in Chinese culture. Insulting a dragon or a mystified symbol in China is a serious matter, thus foreign brands should be very careful in how they want to include such respectful figures in advertisements.

An appreciated professor of sociology in Beijing University, Xia Xuelan, even considered this advertisement as a sort of cultural aggression, because advertisers exploited very important Chinese images at their will, without considering the consequences it could have on the audience (Li, 2004).

Secondly, not only did they disrespect sacred emblems of Chinese culture, but they also represented the three sacred women in a sexist and chauvinist way. Indeed, the three women in the advertisement are particular and very important symbols in China, and are called 飞天 *fēitiān*.



Mural-themed digital artwork inspired by the Dunhuang caves *Feitian* (Source: China Daily)

The *feitian* are known as the *Apsara*, which are Buddhist sacred and holy women who fly through the sky. They represent traditional characters and are very famous in China, in particular because of the Dunhuang Caves' frescos. However, in this advertisement they personify the temptation, since they try to seduce LeBron James to create a diversion. Thus, they are displayed as vicious women (Li, 2004). It is shown no respect in the treatment both because it is a sacred figure and a woman.

Moreover, the advertisement violated the country's rules and regulations. Indeed, the brand didn't respect the Chinese national dignity and, as already highlighted before, went against the rule that requires advertisements not to contain insults and dishonorable affirmations about national practices and cultures.

Furthermore, Chinese people didn't appreciate the juxtaposition of Chinese symbols with an American star. Actually, some people in the target market perceived that the fact that LeBron James didn't encounter difficulties in defeating all the symbols was an expression of the superiority of American culture in comparison to Chinese culture (Li, 2004). This matter would not be accepted in the majority of countries, especially in a patriotic country like China.

Lastly, some customers while watching the Chinese traditional symbols being beaten down in the advertisement, felt that they were defeated too (Li, 2004). In Chinese people's point of view, the American brand insulted Chinese people directly while showing Western culture superiority over Chinese culture, because they identified with their traditional cultural symbols.

Thus, just like in the Dolce & Gabbana case analyzed in the previous paragraph, Nike created an advertisement for the Chinese market, but from an American perspective.

Even if at the beginning the brand refused to withdraw the advertisement, finally Nike was forced to retire it and, together with LeBron James himself, apologized for this advertisement, explaining that the aim of the campaign was just to emulate the martial art movies and Bruce Lee that were popular in the 1970s and that the star loved so much. In addition, through the mix of elements coming from different traditions, they wanted to demonstrate that Culture should not have limits across countries (Liu, 2004). They never intended to offend Chinese tradition and culture. Quite the opposite, as a spokesman for Nike in Shanghai, Maurice Zhou, explained, the brand's advertisement aimed to encourage young people not to fear anything, be brave and accept all the challenges in life (Ang, 2004) even when they seem insurmountable.

If we analyze all these errors, except for the sexist caricature of the *feitian*, the others could easily be avoided by just opting for a Chinese star and illustrating product features in order to allow customers to see the benefits of the product and make it more attractive.

Certainly, in this case opting for a Western celebrity in the Chinese market had been perceived as inappropriate and ineffective, because he had to face characters which impersonified important Chinese cultural values. But, if the same actions were conducted by a Chinese athlete, probably the encouraging message that Nike wanted to transmit would be correctly interpreted by the Chinese audience.

First of all, a Chinese athlete facing Chinese symbols would not create the juxtaposition between American culture and Chinese culture. Thus, it would not demonstrate any kind of superiority of the brand country of origin, and it would not be considered as annoying and insulting.

As a consequence, it would also solve the problem with cultural insensitivity, because the challenges with the sacred characters would be perceived in a completely different way, and probably it would have transmitted the desired message of courage and tenacity.

Thirdly, it would not contain outrageous and shameful acts countering Chinese symbols which are against Chinese law, so it would not be illegal and against Chinese rules and regulations.

Lastly, a Chinese athlete would have been helpful in increasing the ease in consumer's identification with the main character, since it is easier for Chinese people when there is a Chinese celebrity

endorser. Thus, it would really be an inspirational advertisement, which tries to stimulate people to never give up, no matter what difficulties they have to encounter.

This last element has not to be disregarded, because consumers' identification with the athlete chosen for the campaign and the sport in which they participate constitute a fundamental element in strengthening brand loyalty.

As stated before, since the beginning of its marketing strategy, Nike's advertising strategy was directed on building strong emotional links with the customers through various famous athletes. Especially when entering the Chinese market, they were focused on the consolidation of brand image and reputation through every form of promotion, and for this purpose sponsorships and Word of Mouth (WOM) were, and are still nowadays, crucial. Indeed, they represent significant intermediaries who can negotiate the relationship between the brand and its products, and the consumers.

An important aspect, that can be easily demonstrated through the campaign previously analyzed, is that the same message with different representatives could be interpreted in different ways.

Thus, not only Nike should have paid more attention to Chinese cultural symbols and traditions to avoid offense and resentment, but it also should have paid more attention in the selection of the celebrity endorser, trying to generate a sense of patriotism and convince people to purchase the product.

Actually, Nike already understood this important lesson. In fact, they also launched different advertisements starring popular Chinese athletes which gained great success.

An example of an extremely appreciated campaign, is the advertisement published in 2004, containing a television spot featuring China's Olympic gold medalist Liu Xiang. He is one of the greatest Chinese athletes and precisely in that year he established a new record in the 110m hurdles, so he was deeply admired by Chinese people.

The advertisement was called "Stereotypes are made to be broken", which in Chinese was translated into 定律是用来被打破的 *dìnglǜ shì yòng lái bèi dǎpò dì*, that literally means "Rules are made to be broken". In the spot the athlete destroyed the field and rhetorically asked a series of questions about Chinese people in order to discredit some Western stereotypes, like the fact that Asians people aren't strong and lack muscles or that they are not motivated to win, showing the audience his abilities and his strong determination.

The name of the advertisement was inspired by a rousing sentence Liu Xiang often repeated himself to motivate, which is 打破定律，你能比你快 *Dǎpò dìnglǜ, nǐ néng bǐ nǐ kuài* and means "Break the rules, you can run faster than you do".

This campaign had instant success, and this is because the advertisement made Chinese people feel very honored and determined. Nike succeeded in understanding why Chinese are proud of their

country and their people, and this helped the brand boost an improvement of the brand image. In fact, Nike Air Jordan became a symbol of success in the Chinese new middle class.

Also the advertisement launched in 2018 called “Dare to Become” demonstrates how Nike understood the mistakes made in the past in order to generate an appropriate and favorable campaign.

This video clip represents an alternative future taking place in 2033 in which the world’s greatest football players are Chinese and where all the football teams of the world are afraid of facing the Chinese team in a match because of its strength. It starred real teenage Chinese football players from the Nike Football League in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

The aim of this spot is to stimulate young Chinese athletes and football fans by providing a vision of what Chinese football could become in the future.

The idea came from the 2018 football frenzy and was then realized by Wieden & Kennedy and directed by Matt Skibiak.



Screenshot of the campaign “Dare to become” (Source: The Drum)

At the beginning of the spot, it displays an idealized future. Chinese football players are outstanding and very popular all over the world. They are part of the global football star elite and every team would like to hire them. When the Chinese team participates in the World Cup, the other countries are all scared, to the point that British people, discovering they will have to face China in an important match, start crying. This also causes an increase of sales in the Chinese tissue industry.

In the second part of the advertisement, it goes back to 2018, and the audience can admire the same football player seen before in real life, while training or participating in matches.

At the end of the advertisement the screen displays in white 全凭我敢 *quán píng wǒ gǎn*, which means “Dare to become”.

Even if it started a debate on the real possibility of this future, many Chinese people were inspired and encouraged by this vision and praised the boldness of the advertisement’s prediction.

It was a great success for several reasons. Firstly, since they chose young Chinese athletes, so it was easy for Chinese consumers to relate to them, and this aspect was very helpful in inspiring them.

Moreover, the advertisement conveys core values for the target market, such as the importance of hard work to achieve success, courage, the necessity of being committed to passions and never giving up. The final message is that everything is possible.

A third reason is that Nike idealized a rosy future, in which China is strong and successful, and this pleased the nationalist audience.

Lastly, opposed to the advertisement “Chamber of Fear”, in this advertisement there is no negative juxtaposition and no orientalist view. On the contrary, it displays a sort of superiority of Chinese efforts in achieving their goals. It is interesting to notice that in this case, it is not regarding a confrontation between two different cultures, but it just wants to elevate Chinese people in a certain way for their hard-working and perseverance.

Besides celebrity endorsers, it is also crucial for brands to understand and master the target market’s culture, habits and customs.

For example, in China, the celebration of the Lunar New Year is very meaningful and honored, like Christmas and New Year Eve are in Western countries. Thus, brands should take advantage of this event in order to improve brand awareness and attract new consumers, but also respect it and treat it in a proper and accurate way, just because it is very cherished by Chinese people.

Nike, like many other foreign brands (as it will be analyzed in the following sections), tried to exploit the benefits offered by this interesting opportunity through dedicated advertising campaigns or inspired products.

For instance, in 2016 the brand launched a new pair of shoes inspired by the Chinese New Year. This peculiar pair of Air Force 1 Mid was white and embroidered with the red Chinese characters ‘發’ *fā* (in simplified Chinese: 发) on the back of the left shoe and ‘福’ *fú* on the right one, which respectively means “to get rich”



Picture of the Lunar New Year inspired Air Force 1 Mid (Source: Laohu Shequ)

and “luck”. The aim of this promotional launch was to wish Chinese people wealth, prosperity and good luck. With the same purpose, the character 福 was inverted as a traditional way to wish luck (it will be explained later, in section 3.3).

Unfortunately for the brand, it was not a success, because, even if the two different characters singularly have positive and cherishable meaning, together they mean “to put on weight”. Thus, it is clear that people usually don’t want to wear something regarding gaining weight.

However, the brand also managed to design successful advertising campaigns dedicated to this heart felt event.

For example, the advertisement called “The Great Chase” published on the occasion of the 2020 Chinese New Year, which was the year of the rat, received much appreciation from the Chinese audience. The campaign promoted a special Chinese New Year collection, which took inspiration from traditional Chinese activities, such as paper-cutting.

This advertisement displays a story of a sort of “battle” between a polite and respectful niece and her resolute auntie which concerns giving and refusing the red envelope on the occasion of the celebration of the Lunar New Year through the decades.

This battle starts when the niece is just a child, and even if she always politely refuses the red envelope that the auntie insists to give her, at the end the aunt always wins and gets to donate the gift. During the years this battle between the two determined characters becomes a giving-and-refusing competitive sport. At the moment of the exchange, the two are prepared with Nike branded running shoes and outfits to run away and after everywhere in order to respect this tradition.

Then, with the arrival of the new technologies, the competition develops into a virtual challenge in which the auntie can send the red envelopes through her smartphone.

At the end of the spot, the niece is already a grown woman with her children and guests at home for the celebration of the new year. When the aunt appears at the door, as a sort of revenge of the niece,



Screenshot of the 2020 campaign (Source: YouTube)

she gives back a red envelope to the aunt, but the auntie is already prepared for the chase with a new pair of Nike shoes on. Thus, a new inverted competition begins.

At the end the message “新年不承让” (*xīnnián bù chéngràng*) and its translation “*Hold Nothing Back This New Year*” appear on the screen, in order to wish people a brave and exciting new year.

This message captured the Chinese audience's attention, because it is very creative and accomplished in adapting Nike's memorable and famous slogan, “Hold Nothing back”, with a popular Chinese athletic expression. Indeed, 承让 *chéngràng* is sentence which is often said to the winner after a match to demonstrate politeness and modesty, and it means “*you let me win*”, “*you have shown generosity*”. Thus, this original slogan achieved to mix in a visionary way sport, competition, Chinese tradition, politeness and encouragement.

The object of this loving fight, the red envelope, which in Chinese is called 红包 *hóngbāo*, is a important tradition in China. It is used as a gift in different occasions, in particular on the celebration of Chinese New Year and it is stuffed with money. Refusing the red envelope, contrary to Western habits, is considered good manners in China, as it demonstrates respect towards the person who's giving it and the gift itself.

Thus, the video showed creativity and esteem in honoring Chinese traditional elements, such as the tradition of the *hongbao* and the deference for the old people and the familiar.

Moreover, it highlights intelligence and astuteness through the different stratagems the two women use in order to win the battle, which are characteristics of the rat, the first of the 12-animal-cycle of the Lunar Calendar. This detail displays a deep understanding of Chinese culture and its peculiarities. Chinese people perceived this advertisement as humorously and playfully, but very respectful, because it never makes fun of Chinese tradition. Thus, it obtained positive reactions and pleasing feedback.

3.3 Burberry

Burberry Group Plc is a British luxury fashion brand established in 1856. It is now present all over the world, and tries everyday to expand, open and renovate its stores.

The company is present in mainland China and Hong Kong, and it continues to experience growth in its retail and wholesale channels, particularly due to the demand from mainland consumers.

Its wide-range of products comprehends men's and women's clothing, accessories and licensing fragrances. The brand is well known especially for the iconic trench coat, invented by the founder itself, Thomas Burberry. Its unique tartan pattern is easily distinguishable all over the world, and is now one of the most emulated trademarks in China (Zheng, 2020).

Its strategy is to mainly standardize products and marketing mix and try to avoid the adaptation of the promotion, also in very different countries such as China. This is because they want to maintain the same brand image in every country, and try to attract the Chinese middle class with the values reflected by the country of origin and the Westernness of the brand. However, Burberry successfully opted to be represented by Chinese popular spokespersons, because they understood that in China celebrity endorsement is crucial in order to achieve success (Zheng, 2020).

In fact, the brand, in order to attract the young Chinese generation, opted for Kris Wu, a popular Chinese actor and singer and Dongyu Zhou, a Chinese actress for being its brand ambassador. This caused an important increase in sales in China for the company (Zheng, 2020). Again, with the aim of gaining the attention of generation X and millennials, Burberry also introduced the actress, director and pop singer, Wei Zhao, who is very popular and cherished in China.

Another point in which Burberry decided to adapt its advertising strategy is concerning some events or traditions. An example of this can be seen in the period of the celebration of the Chinese New Year.



Picture of the Chinese New Year 2020 campaign (Source: Burberry)

Indeed, in China, as already said before, the celebration of the Lunar New Year is very important and it is still one of the most celebrated and long-standing traditions. For this reason, many foreign brands consider this celebration as a great opportunity to promote their products and spread their brands' image, in order to increase their brand awareness.

Also Burberry tried to seize this opportunity several times. On some occasions it received appraisal from Chinese people, but it also made some big mistakes which caused harsh criticism and negative comments on social media.

In 2020, for the celebration of the Chinese Year of the rat, the brand launched a dedicated promotional online game called

Ratberry, together with the Chinese New Year campaign. This campaign, starring the actress Zhou Dongyu, a brand ambassador, and the models Liang Jiyuan and He Cong, was promoting a collection characterized by a strong use of red and a tailoring and sportive style. It also includes a limited-edition

Thomas Burberry monogram motif, which is inspired by the Chinese zodiac with an animation referring to the Year of the Rat.

Ratberry is a cartoon-style character who lives in a fantastic world completely inspired by the new Burberry Monogram motif. This new game took inspiration from B Bounce, another videogame published in October 2019 by the same brand on its online store. Both these two games focus on the fact that the main character has to bounce (this is the reason for the name of the first game launched) on different platforms in order to achieve an objective. During the path the player should also catch Burberry monograms, coins or other objects (which in the second game are represented by Chinese lanterns) in order to obtain more points and gain a better ranking position.



Ratberry portrait (Source: Burberry)



Screenshot of the game Ratberry (Source: Burberry)

Since it was an easy and intuitive game, it attracted many young Chinese consumers while showing the new capsule collection that the brand was launching.

The main character Ratberry was also the subject of many New Year stickers released on WeChat by the brand, then sent by Chinese users to wish luck and happiness to other people. Moreover, some famous Chinese celebrities published hashtags, posts or images regarding this character, and this helped in the diffusion of this interactive advertising.

Through this interactive kind of promotion, the brand succeeded in strengthening the relationship with the Burberry community online.

On the other hand, in 2015, Burberry unsuccessfully launched a scarf dedicated to this festive period. Indeed, this dedicated product was not well received by the Chinese market and its customers and resulted in a big failure for the brand.

The aim of the product was to honor Chinese tradition and culture through the red embroidery of the character 福 *fu*, which means “luck” or “fortune”, on a scarf with the classical and famous Burberry motif. The starting idea was reasonable and fitting the target market, because this character is a typical Chinese symbol used in the celebration of the Lunar New Year and also the color chosen was exactly right. People are used to hanging this character on the doors of their houses and the walls in order to wish luck to other people and to their families.

However, its execution encountered harsh criticism from Chinese customers. First of all, Chinese custom and tradition usually dictate that the character 福 *fu* should be displayed upside down when it is shown to wish luck. This is because in China there’s a wordplay between two words which have the same pronunciation, but two different meanings, that are 到 *dào* and 倒 *dào*, which respectively means

“arrive” and “turn over”, “inverted”. Thus, the sentence pronounced as *fúdào* could be interpreted both with 福到了, which means “the fortune arrived” or “incoming fortune”, and 福倒了, which means “(the character) *fu* has been inverted”. Thus, in this period Chinese people reverse this character while exposing it all around as a way of saying that fortune will arrive soon.

Therefore, Burberry in designing this scarf didn't respect this old custom and demonstrated a lack of care and consideration of small gestures and symbols that could make the difference in a marketing strategy.

Secondly, Burberry was also criticized because in consumers’ perception, designing this scarf needed low-effort from the brand, since they just decided to embroider a Chinese character on a simple scarf with the typical Burberry motif. Thus, they did nothing special and memorable, it was not worth buying. Especially considering the fact that this product belongs to the luxury category, hence customers usually expect something that reminds them of preciousness and ambition, not a common good.

Another relevant mistake made by Burberry on the occasion of the Chinese New Year was the campaign released in January 2019.



2015 Chinese New Year launched scarf (Source: Radian China)

The advertisement, shot by Ethan James Green, was ahead of time posted online with the hashtag “BurberryChineseNewYear” to introduce the brand’s new collection.

The preconditions for a successful advertisement were constructed. In fact, Burberry decided to opt for Chinese celebrities for the cast of the pictures, and choose Vicky Zhao and Zhou Dongyu, who are very popular and beloved actresses in China and ambassadors of the brand. This element, as stated before, stressed the importance of coming closer to Chinese consumers, letting them identify with the advertisement’s characters, and attract them through loved stars.

Another positive aspect of the campaign was the focus on family, communion and togetherness, which is a very important characteristic for a campaign launched during the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Thus, this highlights the fact that Burberry tried to embrace an essential Chinese traditional mark which is crucial in this period, making the brand also receive online users’ praise and appreciation posts.



2019 Chinese New Year campaign’s family portrait (Source: Luxury Society)

Moreover, the reference to the products promoted is clear, since all the models are wearing the new collection launched.

The main problem with this advertisement is its questionable realization (Yap, 2019). Indeed, even if from the Western perspective it could be considered chic and stylish for the poses and the environment in which it is set, some Chinese consumers didn’t appreciate it very much. Some even stated that it reminded them of a promotional campaign for a horror movie (Adams, 2019).

The reasons for this perception are multiple. First of all, the picture is an unsmiling family portrait, and this gives a somber mood to the campaign in its complex. This fact contrasts the happiness and the joy which are typical of this festive period in China. Thus, this lack of festive cheer made Chinese customers upset and unsatisfied. Some online users even commented that the atmosphere is so gloomy, that it seems that the family is feuding over the grandmother's fortune (Yap, 2019).

Secondly, the scarce use of bright colors, such as red and gold, which are also traditional colors of Lunar New Year, constructed a dull scenery which didn't symbolize the typical cheerful atmosphere of the period. Moreover, it is important to underline that symbolism is a fundamental element in efficiently transmitting an advertising message, especially in the Chinese market. Even if symbols can often be seen as innocuous or secondary for Western audiences, they have a crucial role in the perception of Chinese people and are potentially offensive for some of them. Thus, international brands should be extremely cautious in understanding the cultural background that all elements of an advertisement could imply.

For instance, black outfits were not considered adequate in this New Year campaign, because they could not embody the typical characteristics of the celebration.

Probably, the aim of the brand was to give a chic and luxury refresh to the traditional family portrait. However, it ended in a display of lack of cultural sensitivity of the advertisers. Indeed, it seems that Burberry did not do enough research in order to foresee how the Chinese audience could perceive and interpret the message of the advertisement (Yap, 2019).

Probably Burberry wanted to emphasize the country of origin and the 'Westernness' of the brand and its products, because, as described in section 2.4, it is very useful to attract Chinese consumers. The problem is that in highlighting these characteristics, it disregarded Chinese consumers' customs and traditions, thus it was not appreciated by the Chinese audience.

If the brand had portrayed all the characters in a different way, displaying happiness and love, colors and dynamism, the campaign would probably receive positive results and would have been welcomed in China, since it would have shown interest in the celebration and understanding of Chinese customs.

3.4 Bulgari

Bulgari (or better Bvlgari) is an Italian luxury fashion society founded in 1884 and it is now a member of LVMG Group. It is well known for its leather goods, accessories, fine jewelry, watches and fragrances.

Bulgari's CEO Jean-Christophe Babin soon understood the possibilities which China could offer to luxury brands inasmuch it is the fastest growing luxury market in the world.

The biggest challenge that a brand has to face while entering this market is finding the perfect mix of product and target marketing that can be attractive for young and wealthy customers.

To solve this problem, Bulgari decided not to implement a global strategy on a local level, but opted in creating, through the research and satisfaction of the individual tastes of the local market, an adaptation strategy which takes into account Chinese culture and values, its traditions, its customers' behaviors and expectations (Fischer, 2019).

For instance, the brand launches in China products with specificities or materials which are different and maybe cannot be found in the rest of the world. Thus, the assortment is similar to the other markets, but it has a major focus on gold or special stones, like jade, the primary milestone of traditional Chinese sculpture (Zhou, 2020). Through expedients like this, the brand achieved a balance between creativity and localization in its product and marketing strategy.

Nowadays, thanks to its high quality marketing initiatives, not only the brand has a very strong presence in mainland China, but it has also become one of the most popular luxury brands in China and its products are the most demanded luxury gift choice (Pan, 2019).

Also this brand soon understood the opportunities that social media could offer, especially in an innovative country such as China, and started to launch campaigns on different online platforms. Today it is one of the top-ranked luxury brands that have great success on WeChat. Moreover, with the aim of promoting their products on this platform, Bulgari recruited popular Chinese celebrities like Kris Wu, Hu Ge and Yang Yang as brand ambassadors to follow Gen Z trends and preferences, and this had a great impact on the attractiveness of their promotional campaigns.

An example of this phenomenon can be seen in the first 'See now, Buy now' campaign, launched in March 2017 on WeChat to promote a new watch. Indeed, on the 24th Bulgari on its official WeChat account published a post documenting the attendance of Kris Wu, the selected Chinese Key Opinion Leader, with Bulgari's global CEO Jean-Christophe Babin at the Baselworld Show. Thus, they posted online several pictures with Kris Wu, wearing the latest Octo Finissimo Automatic watch and announcing the upcoming event. For this purpose, the tagline of the principal image was “包塞尔钟

表展 BVLGARI 全球首发” *Bāo sài ěr zhōngbiǎo zhǎn BVLGARI quánqiú shǒufā*, which means *Basel clock Fair, Bvlgari’s first global launch*.



“See Now, Buy Now” campaign on WeChat (Source: Luxury Society)

This campaign was really appreciated by Chinese consumers, not only because it starred a beloved Chinese celebrity, was trendy and fashionable, but it was also interactive. Indeed, at the end of the campaign, customers could directly visit the WeChat store in order to understand the quality and the prestige of the product and pre-order the watch, through the functions “了解详情” *liǎojiě xiángqing*, *Know more details*, and “限量预购” *xiànlìàng yùgòu*, *Limited preorder*.

Bulgari was one of the first brands giving this opportunity to customers.

This helped the brand construct a strong social media presence on the Chinese platform, while not weakening the brand image and the importance of its country of origin.

With the aim of increasing brand awareness in China and establishing a close relationship with Chinese consumers, Bulgari was also attracted by the commercial opportunities of the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Thus, on January 4th in 2019, the Italian brand launched a New Year Campaign to promote its jewelry on WeChat and Sina Weibo.

Since 2019 in Chinese horoscope was the Year of the Pig, the brand published some posters which show small and cute pigs interacting with their new products to demonstrate their respect toward Chinese traditions.

The peculiarity of this campaign is that all the different slogans contained in the posters contain a wordplay that included the word “Jew”, an abbreviation that stands for the word “jewelry”, in replacement for Chinese words with a similar pronunciation (珠 *zhū*, 竹 *zhú*, 局 *jú*, 诸 *zhū*). The brand on purpose tried to use many words pronouncing *zhu* (or *ju*) because they are homophones of the Chinese word 猪 *zhū*, which means “pig” in honor of the Year of the Pig.

A post online anticipated the campaign to introduce the promotion and wish Chinese people a happy new year. In Chinese was “新年伊始，你的魅力已展露锋芒。宝格丽农历新年特别款作品全新上市。新的一年，要你做掌上明 JEW。” *Xīnnián yīshǐ, nǐ de mèilì yǐ zhǎnlù fēngmáng. Bǎo gé lì nónglì*

xīnnián tèbié kuǎn zuòpǐn quánxīn shàngshì. Xīn de yī nián, yào nǐ zuò zhǎngshàng míng JEW, and it can be translated as “At the beginning of the new year, stress your charm. Bulgari launches a dedicated collection for the Lunar New Year. Wish you that in the New Year you’ll be the JEW in the palm of your hand”. In this case, the word JEW replaces the word 珠 zhū, which means *pearl*.

It is inserted in the phrase 掌上明 JEW, which substitute the popular Chinese idiom 掌上明珠 zhǎngshàng míngzhū that means *pearl in the palm*, but it also indicated a beloved person, in particular the daughter. In this slogan, both the two versions of the idiom serve to wish people to become the important thing in their own lives, or a beloved person.



2019 Bulgari’s Chinese New Year campaign (Source: Jing Daily)

The first poster promoted a new necklace, which was inserted in the advertisement placed on a small pig made of pottery, another peculiar trait of the campaign that was inspired by Chinese culture and arts.

It is interesting to notice that the necklace promoted is bedecked in rubies, instead of diamonds like the classical one, because of the emotional appeal the rich, red stone holds for Chinese clientele.

The slogan was: “新年风格 #1 胸有成 JEW 是你的奇特魔力 在你手中 意外也能变成惊喜 宝格丽 Fiorever 咏绽系列项链 农历新年特别款（中国限量 405 件）咏绽八瓣花 为你开启新年好运”
Xīnnián fēnggé #1 Xiōng yǒu chéng JEW shì nǐ de qítè móli zài nǐ shǒu zhòng yìwài yě néng biàncéng jīngxǐ Bǎogéli Fiorever yǒng zhàn xiliè xiàngliàn nónglì xīnnián tèbié kuǎn (zhōngguó xiànlìàng 405 jiàn) yǒng zhàn bā bàn huā wèi nǐ kāiqǐ xīnnián hǎo yùn, and it means “New Year Style #1 In your chest there is a JEW, it’s your singular magical power. In your hands, also the unexpected can become a pleasant surprise. Bulgari’s necklace Fiorever it’s a special edition for the Lunar New Year (limited quantity of

405 pieces in China) the charm of a flower with eight petals, helps you starting the New Year with good luck”.

The abbreviation JEW, here, is inserted in a Chinese idiom, 胸有成竹 *xiōngyǒuchéngzhú*, which means “to plan in advance” or “have a well thought out plan”. This can give the slogan different meanings. The first one is the literal one offered in the previous translation and is *in your chest there is a JEW*, and it is also displayed in the picture with the pig, because it actually has a necklace in its chest, and this can be perceived as a superpower. The second meaning is implied with the wordplay, and indicates that being able to plan in advance can be considered as a great capability.

In the second poster, the slogan was: “新年风格 #2 掌控全 JEW 是你的果敢魄力 随时随地气场全开 宝格丽 LVCEA Tubogas 光环腕表农历新年特别款 明亮钻石时标配以热烈中国红表盘 令新年的你 24 小时闪耀不间断” *Xīnnián fēnggé #2 Zhǎngkòng quán JEW shì nǐ de guǒgǎn pòlì suíshí suí dì qì chǎng quán kāi Bǎogéli LVCEA Tubogas guānghuán wàn biǎo nónglì xīnnián tèbié kuǎn míngliàng zuànshí shí biāo pèi yǐ rèliè zhōngguó hóng biǎopán lìng xīnnián de nǐ 24 xiǎoshí shǎnyào bù jiànduàn* and can be translated in “New Year Style #2 control the entire JEW is your bravery, your aura is always and everywhere complete. Bvlgari LVCEA Tubogas Halo Watch New Year Special Collection with its Brilliant diamond quadrant with warm Chinese red dial lets you shine 24 hours a day in the New Year”.

In this case, the abbreviation JEW substitutes the word 局 *jú*, which means *situation* in the idiom 掌控全局 *zhǎngkòng quánjú*, *control the situation as a whole*.

The third slogan was: “新年风格 #3 JEW 事顺利 是神奇的万有引力 你总是带来无止境的好运气 宝格丽 Serpenti Forever Diamond Blast 红色包袋 装满新年好运递送给你 点击下方小程序 做自己的掌上明珠 JEW” *Xīnnián fēnggé #3 JEW shì shùnlì shì shénqí de wànyǒuyǐnlì nǐ zǒng shì dài lái wúzhǐjìn de hǎo yùnqì Bǎogéli Serpenti Forever Diamond Blast hóngsè bāodài zhuāng mǎn xīnnián hǎo yùn dìsòng gěi nǐ diǎnjī xiàfāng xiǎo chéngxù zuò zìjǐ de zhǎngshàng míng JEW*, and its translation is “New Year Style #3 the JEW matter goes well, is a magical attractive force. You always bring endless good luck. The Bulgari Serpenti Forever Diamond Blast Red Purse is full of good luck for you. Click below, be your own pearl (JEW) in the palm”. In this slogan there are two word plays with the word JEW. The first one is a pleasant way to reassure people that everything will be fine, because the idiom implied by the play is 诸事顺利 *zhū shì shùnlì*, which literally means *everything goes well*. The second one is again implying the idiom 掌上明珠 *zhǎngshàng míngzhū* as in the preceding post online.

Many Chinese consumers appreciated this advertising campaign, because they believed that the combination between Chinese characters, idioms and English words is very creative and matches the Chinese people's demand for innovation mixed with tradition, so they felt that the advertisements showed a respect for Chinese culture and an updated understanding of modern Chinese audience's tastes. They found the wordplay funny and creative, so they responded positively to the campaign.

However, some customers, especially outside China, pointed out that, even if Bulgari employed the word JEW as an abbreviation for *jewelry*, it could also stand for the Jewish faith. Thus, the advertisement was perceived as a demonstration of cultural insensitivity by many people. Moreover, online users made notice that because of the Jewish kosher dietetic rules, they cannot eat pork. Thus, the juxtaposition between the Jewish faith and pigs is in bad taste. Finally, generally speaking, comparing people with pigs, even if through a wordplay, is not perceived as an appropriate matter. Since the harsh criticism was spreading online, in particular on international platforms, Bulgari was forced to remove the advertisement from WeChat and Weibo in order to avoid a racial crisis and problems with its brand image in China and all over the world.

To conclude, it can be stated that foreign brands have to pay attention to the Chinese market's peculiarities and needs, but they have also to consider the resonance the advertisement can obtain on an international level.

3.5 Dior

Christian Dior SE, usually just called Dior, is a French luxury brand founded in 1946 by the French fashion designer Christian Dior himself in Paris. It became a leading fashion icon thanks to Christian Dior's first collection "La Ligne Corolie", known as the "New Look" because of its innovative designs and shapes. Nowadays, the brand is globally well-known for the magnificence and elegance of its clothes, fragrances and cosmetics. Its products are often golden, architectural and precious, and this is an outcome of the origin of the word *Dior*, *D'Or*, which in French means "golden", "gold". However, the brand, although it maintains a strong link with the original New Look style, tries to make certain changes to its style every year, in order to avoid being copied and always offer something original, sophisticated and unique.

The brand is still based in France, even if today its two largest markets are the US and China.

Dior had been admired for years for its advertising campaigns in China. It was the first luxury brand to understand the importance of social networks for marketing activities and advertising. Indeed, it was the first luxury company to debut on WeChat in 2015, through the function WeChat Moments, and in 2018 on Duoyin and Bilibili creating the first luxury official account (Jensen, 2020), with the aim of easily reaching Gen Z consumers in China, who can represent a very proficuous target market for luxury products.

In the same year it also started the first luxury livestream on WeChat. Furthermore, it was the first luxury brand to open an online WeChat store.

In addition, Dior understood the importance of the Key Opinion Leaders and celebrities on social media and the impact they can have on customers, especially for what concerns young generations. It always opted for Chinese celebrities on Weibo, and this, as already analyzed before, represents a very important aspect for the success of the brand in the Chinese market (Yu & Hu, 2019).

For example, the advertisement starring celebrities like Liu Yuxin, winner of the Chinese TV show 'Youth with you II' and the live broadcast with Jing Tian, a famous actress, on the website JuHuasuan (聚划算) were very successful in China and stimulated Dior's sales in the Chinese market.

However, simply opting for a Chinese celebrity as a brand ambassador is not always enough in order to obtain success and attract Chinese consumers. The celebrities chosen also have to be coherent with the brand image, the product they are promoting and they have to be up to date with the latest trend and habits of

the target market. Thus, the brand must also possess a certain control on the stars selected and teach them how to properly reach the consumers.

Dior learnt this lesson in 2018, when the influencer Elle Lee from Hong Kong, an official brand ambassador, posted a video on Weibo, on Dior China's official account.

The spot at issue was an advertisement created to promote a new variation of Dior's iconic Saddle bag. This popular and notorious bag was first created in 1999, but in that year the brand decided to launch a renewed and innovative model for the Fall-Winter season 2018/2019, which was more solid, had more availability of colors and had been embellished with new details.

Elle Lee in the design of this video took inspiration from typical advertisements present on popular Chinese e-commerce sites which are very successful, such as some promotional campaigns present on Taobao, hoping the video would gain the same favorable outcome.

Nevertheless, considering the fact that a luxury brand and the products it launches is expected to be prestigious and expensive and Chinese customers are very exigent, the quality of the advertisement needs to satisfy the standards too. Thus, this economical advertising campaign, which reminds of fast



Jing Tian live broadcast on Ju Huasuan announcement (Source: Daxue Consulting)

fashion companies' advertisements, obtained a negative reaction from Chinese consumers, because the bag promoted, as a consequence, appears cheap, it has no charm. The advertisement seemed not up to date with the current trends of the Chinese luxury market and it didn't encounter the target market's tastes. Thus, users and fashion haters posted several negative comments on social media.

Dior had to distance itself from the marketing operation in order to limit the losses and the worsening of the brand image. It officially stated that it was not an official advertising campaign, but just a post created by an influencer.

However, unfortunately for the brand, this was not the last time Dior demonstrated a lack of cultural in-depth analysis. Indeed, during a presentation to students of the Zhejiang Gongshang University in Hangzhou about its boutique network, the company excluded Taiwan in a map of China. Since Taiwan is still nowadays a very sensitive issue for China, this caused great anger and criticism in Chinese consumers. Thus, it caused an important backlash, and the brand was again forced to apologize, affirming that the brand "always respects and upholds the one China principle" (Samson, 2021) and doesn't aim to undermine China's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

For what concerns the advertising field, the brand also encountered problems of cultural insensitivity in China. An example of this can be seen in the campaign launched in 2021.

On the occasion of the "Lady Dior" exhibition in Shanghai, planned on 12th November 2021, the brand launched an advertising campaign to promote the event and a new purse.

It was composed of a single image shot by the famous Chinese photographer Chen Man.

In the Chinese fashion world, Chen Man is a very well-known photographer in the industry, who had already shot numerous magazine's covers portraying several Chinese and



2021 "Lady Dior" picture (Source: Shine)

international celebrities such as Fan Bingbing and David Beckham.

The advertisement picture portrays a Chinese woman holding a Lady Dior bag, which is the object of the advertisement and also one of Dior's most popular handbags. The young lady is wearing a traditional Chinese costume and long fingernail protectors, which were worn by nobles in the Qing period (1644 - 1911) (Wang, 2021). Also her hairstyle, close to the scalp, is inspired by the same period of time.

Even if the preconditions for a favorable advertisement were settled, like the choice of a Chinese model, the popularity and talent of the photographer, the emphasis given to Chinese historical elements and the focus on the product promoted, it encountered a severe backlash. The brand and the photographer were accused of deliberately humiliating and vilifying Chinese people.

In this case, the criticized issue of the advertisement is the way in which the young Chinese woman had been represented. Essentially, Chinese people condemned the fact that the model in the picture has the so-called 'slanted eyes', the narrow-shaped eyes with epicanthic folds.

This aspect is considered humiliating for Asia and Chinese people. Actually, during the 19th century in the West there was a new stereotype about Asian people, that is that all Asians have what they started to call 'slanted eyes'. Asians consider this kind of representation derogatory and denigrating, because it is irritating and debasing, but it is still deeply ingrained in the fashion industry.

In fact, a lot of brands used in the past and still use in the present Asian models for their advertisements or their shows. Moreover, they also projected models' make up and poses in order to best fit this imagery.

This behavior is typical of Orientalistic people, like it has been discussed in section 2.2.

Since in this advertisement Chinese people are represented with this characteristic, as something exotic, a fiction of everything Western people is not, they perceived they were 'Otherized' by the brand and thus they felt discriminated against and insulted.

Accordingly, in this case the brand committed the same mistake made by D&G, even if it was perceived by the audience as less serious, because it was just an element of the advertisement and it didn't find itself under the same circumstances.

The model again resembles just a small part of the Chinese people, like it has been done for decades in the movies selecting actors to comply with this stereotype.

Thus, Chinese people perceived that this advertisement was designed in order to satisfy and accommodate Western ideas and imagery, but not to comply with Chinese tastes and beliefs, because this image fit the Orientalists Western perception of Chinese women.

For this reason, the brand and the photographer had been criticized for intentionally insulting Chinese culture and people.



“Whatever the Weather” series (Source: Next Shark)

When this advertisement had been released, many people advocated that it reminded of “Whatever the Weather”, a series of images shot by Chen in 2012. This collection is composed of 12 covers and was created for the British fashion magazine i-D. The pictures share different elements with the Dior campaign. Indeed, they display different Chinese ethnic groups wearing modern spins on traditional clothing and almost all of them have a narrow eye shape. The difference here was the target market. In fact, it was a campaign pledged to the English audience, thus under a Western point of view it was appreciated and acclaimed for its ethnicity and

creativity.

In order to escape the risks of boycott and conspicuous decreases in sales, Dior soon removed the advertisement both from the exhibition and the Weibo account.

The campaign’s failure clearly demonstrated the necessity for foreign brands to better analyze and understand Chinese culture and values in order to be successful in this market.

In order to be culturally sensitive, foreign brands should embrace the modern ideal beauty features in China in their advertisements, thus they should prefer models with fair skin and large eyes (Lotti, 2018) to suit their tastes.

Conclusions

As a consequence of the numerous differences that can be found between the different cultures, entering a foreign market always represents an arduous challenge for a company. This is because it requires a proper and deep understanding of the target market's culture, tastes, habits and customs. In particular, for a Western brand trying to adequately penetrate the Chinese market is even more complicated, because of the peculiarities of this country, the demands of its consumers, its cultural traits and the numerous differences in cultural and national characteristics.

Thus, not only at the beginning, but even after several years of presence, it is very easy to make mistakes without an appropriate knowledge of Chinese culture and of the Chinese advertising industry. As already illustrated before, there are mainly three different strategies that companies can implement in their marketing activities in a different country, and they are standardization, adaptation or a mix of the two.

Through the analysis of the case studies fulfilled in the last chapter, it can be concluded that mixing adaptation and standardization is the best option for a foreign brand in the Chinese market, in particular for what concerns luxury products, because it allows brands to maintain their brand image and highlight the country of origin (which constitutes an important element in the attractiveness of the brand in China), while at the same time creating a stronger link with the target market, emphasizing some values important to Chinese people or inserting some Chinese elements into their marketing activities to personalize their campaigns.

Thanks to the case studies previously commented, we can also understand what are the most common mistakes made by Western brands in facing this market and interpret how brands could avoid them to limit the possibilities of backlash and boycotts.

The worst problem a foreign brand has the risk to fall into, and probably the most frequent, is represented by racism. Indeed, discrimination and stereotypes in advertising campaigns constitute serious humiliation for Chinese people and make them feel deeply offended, as it can be seen through the reaction caused by the advertisement launched in 2018 by Dolce & Gabbana (section 3.1).

Also the topic of 'Orientalism' (paragraph 2.3) is connected to this discourse, since it is mostly based on stereotypes and old false beliefs which can cause harsh backlash. These elements are a direct consequence of the fact that Western brands often are not used to foresee how their message could be perceived in another country, taking for granted that the target market's approach will be the same as their local markets. Thus, they often take a standardized approach with a globalized viewpoint, instead of trying to partially adapt their marketing strategies.

Also, the demonstration of the superiority of Western cultures through unequal comparisons or juxtapositions of images and symbols is connected to this matter, and it makes Chinese consumers very upset, because they are proud, nationalistic and respectful of their customs and traditions.

Another mistake that can lead to the emergence of negative reactions from Chinese consumers, which is again linked with cultural insensitivity and ignorance, is treating Chinese people as if they were outside the modern world and not up to date with international trends. This can be noticed in the case of Dolce & Gabbana, in which the brand implicitly made consumers conclude that Chinese people are not kept up to date with Western culture and modern customs.

The third category of errors contains advertisements characterized by sexism and chauvinism. Indeed, sexist comments can cause serious irritation and offense in the Chinese audience, as in many markets all over the world, because they display no respect towards women.

Moreover, disputes and harsh criticism can arise when brands do not strictly follow national rules and regulations. Like it can be observed in the Nike example (paragraph 3.2), this not only causes authorities to order a ban and make brands withdraw the advertisement, but it also generates the consumers' disappointment and disdain, increasing the risk of boycotts and the likelihood of worsening the brand reputation.

A further obstacle in the achievement of success can be represented by the improper use of irony and humor. As already stated, Chinese people don't appreciate very much humor in advertisements when it refers to a sensitive subject, like China's traits or traditions, political affairs and sex. Dolce & Gabbana's advertisement is again a clear example of this phenomenon, since the male voiceover often uses humor to comment the actions of the model and makes many sexual references that made Chinese people very embarrassed and dissatisfied.

In addition, an involuntary demonstration of low effort in the execution of both the product and the advertisement, constitutes a disappointing element for the Chinese audience. This is because Chinese consumers have high expectations and standards about quality that need to be satisfied by the companies in the goods and in their promotional marketing strategies, specifically for what concerns Western luxury brands, which are considered prestigious and esteemed. A poor quality advertisement would also have an impact on the perception of the quality of the product it is presenting.

Lastly, a minor, however not negligible, problem concerns the absence of a description of the features of the product and benefits in an advertising campaign. This doesn't represent an offense for the Chinese audience, but causes the advertisement to fail in achieving the desired effect, since it lacks persuasion power.

Furthermore, it is very crucial for Western brands to master the management of communication crises that can happen after an offense or a backlash. Thus, brands should be prepared on what they should

do and how to do it if they have to face a crisis and solve the situation that emerges after a bad reaction like those mentioned above. Crisis management should be productive in resolving the problem, thus it should not increase the gravity of the circumstances, just as Dolce & Gabbana did after the boycott with the posts on social media and the apology video.

However, brands can try to avoid making these common mistakes following simple recommendations. First of all, each brand has to profoundly research with the aim of obtaining a deep knowledge of Chinese culture and characteristics. This could be very proficuous in demonstrating respect toward Chinese characteristics and traditions, mastering how to use Chinese symbols and emblems in an advertisement in an appropriate manner. It could also be very helpful to use creativity to increase the attractiveness and make the Chinese audience focus on the right details.

It should be assumed that foreign brands should also avoid using stereotypes and designing the campaigns under an Orientalistic point of view, trying to create the advertisements in a Chinese perception, to satisfy their needs and encounter their tastes.

Moreover, it could be favorable to opt for Chinese celebrity endorsers, because it is easier for a Chinese audience to relate. This also can help in avoiding comparisons and juxtapositions between cultures, like it happened in the criticized Nike advertisement starring LeBron James. In addition, this can also be convenient in trying to create an efficient mix between the 'Westernness' of the brand and Chinese elements, with the aim of satisfying Chinese tastes, while always maintaining the original brand image. Anyway, it is also important to always take into account Western ideas and perceptions in order to avoid international problems and criticism, such as what happened to Bulgari with the JEW advertisement (paragraph 3.4).

It is also crucial for the Chinese audience to perceive that foreign brands are inclined towards highlighting elements that make them proud. Indeed, this can influence the attractiveness of the advertisement and improve the relationship with the customers, establishing a strong emotional bond which can lead to purchases and brand loyalty. Thus, foreign brands should focus on values that are essential for Chinese people both in the message and the content of the campaign.

Furthermore, showing both modernity and tradition is very effective to be successful, because it demonstrates brands' concrete appreciation for the country and understanding of the current market. For this reason, it is crucial for brands to master present trends and customs of the Chinese market and customers. Thus, inserting innovative elements and creating interactive advertisements can be very helpful in attracting consumers, especially when brands want to intrigue young people. Further, this can benefit brand image, since 'Westernness' is typically associated with innovation, modernity, quality and richness in Chinese perception.

Also, as it should be done in every country of the world, each brand should show respect towards women and avoid inserting chauvinistic stereotypes, with the aim of demonstrating equality, consideration and cleverness.

It is fundamental for foreign brands to strictly follow the rules. First of all, this is crucial in order to avoid Chinese national authorities bans and, thus, guarantee the spread of the advertisement. In addition, it is indispensable also to limit the possibilities of backlashes and boycotts from Chinese users. Indeed, since Chinese people need rigid rules and are required to rigorously follow them (as described in paragraph 2.1 in the Uncertainty Avoidance passage), Chinese consumers don't appreciate brands who don't follow the rules.

Brands should not avoid using humor in their advertisements, because it can have positive effects on the attractiveness of their campaign, but in the Chinese market they should pay attention to the context in which it is used and its themes. Thus, foreign brands should avoid being ironic about delicate questions such as sexuality and nudity, which can make the audience embarrassed because they still represent taboos, and national symbols and emblems to demonstrate honor and regard toward their culture.

Foreign brands, in particular for luxury products, always have to consider the fact that care and dedication in the execution demonstrate the quality of the product. Thus, excellence in advertising campaigns and marketing activities also has a great impact in the accomplishment of Chinese consumers' high expectations.

To increase the likeability of an advertisement in the Chinese market, it is also advantageous to make the audience clearly understand what are the characteristics and benefits of the products, inserting transparent details and descriptions and precise references to the properties. This, as already analyzed in paragraph 2.1, is due to the influence that culture has on the perception of the advertisements in a certain market. Indeed, the necessity of explicit positive features is linked to the degree of power distance in the country and the fact that the country is long term oriented. Thus, in the Chinese market, advertising campaigns in order to be effective and convince the audience, should demonstrate that products can provide prestige to the users, and that they have long term benefits.

Acknowledgments

*Ringrazio i miei genitori,
i quali mi hanno fortemente sostenuto in tutto il mio percorso di studi,
non negando mai una singola opportunità e credendo sempre in me.*

*Ringrazio Antonio,
che con infinita pazienza, mi è stato accanto fin dal principio
anche nei momenti più stressanti
e mi ha dato tutto l'aiuto e supporto che poteva.
Si è sorbita tutte le sessioni della magistrale (anche con il covid),
e per questo direi che si merita una statua.*

*Ringrazio mio fratello, la mia famiglia e i miei amici
per essere sempre stati al mio fianco.
In particolare mia nonna, che sta lottando con tutte le sue forze.*

*Ringrazio il mio relatore,
che è stato di grande aiuto durante tutta la stesura,
anche come supporto psicologico.*

*Ringrazio Giulia,
la mia roccia e la mia cheerleader,
senza la quale questa magistrale non sarebbe stata la stessa.*

*E come ultima, ringrazio me stessa,
per averci creduto fino alla fine, nonostante tutti i dubbi e le difficoltà.*

References

ADAMS, Shalena (2019). *3 Huge Chinese New Year Advertising Fails from International Brands*. Raddi China. 31/01/19. <https://radiichina.com/3-huge-chinese-new-year-advertising-fails-from-international-brands/>

ANG, Audra (2004). *Just don't do it: China bans Nike's basketball advert*. Independent. 07/12/04. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/just-don-t-do-it-china-bans-nike-s-basketball-advert-678907.html>

BAN, Zhuo & LOVARI, Alessandro (2021). *Rethinking crisis dynamics from the perspective of online publics: A case study of Dolce & Gabbana's China crisis*. Public Relations Inquiry. pp 1-21. DOI: 10.1177/204614X211026854

BARROSO, Carmel Llorente, GARCIA GARCIA, Francisco & JIMENEZ, Virginia Soria (2018). *Análisis comparativo de la simbología cromática en publicidad. NIKE en China y España [Comparative analysis of chromatic symbolism in advertising. Nike in China and Spain]* Vivat Academia. Revista de Comunicación. 142. pp 51-78. DOI: 10.15178/va.2018.142.51-78

BASCIANO, Bianca (2015). *Creatività bilingue e contatto linguistico nella pubblicità cinese*. Lingua cinese: variazioni sul tema (a cura di Magda Abbiati, Federico Greselin). Sinica venetiana 2. pp 147- 171. DOI: 10.14277/6969-040-2/SV-2-7

BIRD, Richard & WHITE, Victoria (2014). *False and Misleading? Advertising on Social Media in China and Hong Kong*. Cover Story. Asia Ip. February 2014. pp 29-32

BRIZZO, Lorenzo (2022). *5 Most Popular Platforms for Social Media Marketing in China*. WeChat & China Social Media. Neal Schaffer. 04/02/22. <https://nealschaffer.com/social-media-marketing-china-platforms/>

BU, Lambert, DURAND-SERVOINGT, Benjamin, KIM, Aimee & YAMAKAWA, Naomi (2017). *Chinese luxury consumers: More global, more demanding, still spending*. McKinsey & Company. 16/08/17. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/chinese-luxury-consumers-more-global-more-demanding-still-spending>

BURBERRY plc (2019). *Burberry reveals Chinese New Year 2020 campaign* Burberry. 30/12/19. <https://www.burberryplc.com/en/news/corporate/2019/burberry-reveals-chinese-new-year-2020-campaign.html>

BURBERRY plc (2020). *Burberry launches online game Ratberry to celebrate Lunar New Year*. Burberry. 14/01/20. <https://www.burberryplc.com/en/news/corporate/2020/burberry-launches-online-game-ratberry-to-celebrate-lunar-new-ye.html>

CASSIDY, George (2020). *A visual history of Chinese propaganda - From the 1920s to today*. Huckmag. 02/04/20. <https://www.huckmag.com/art-and-culture/art-2/coronavirus-communism-posters-history-chinese-propaganda/>

CENDROWSKI, Scott (2014). *Opening happiness: An oral history of Coca-Cola in China*. Fortune. 12/09/14. <https://fortune.com/2014/09/11/opening-happiness-an-oral-history-of-coca-cola-in-china/>

CHAN, Kara & CHAN, Fanny (2005). *Information content of television advertising in China: an update*. Asian Journal of Communication. 15(1). pp 1-15. DOI: 10.1080/0129298042000329766

CHAN, Kara, LI, Lyann, DIEHL, Sandra & TERLUTTER, Ralf (2007). *Consumers' response to offensive advertising: A cross cultural study*. International Marketing Review. 24(5). pp 606-628. DOI: 10.1108/02651330710828013

CHAN, Sally & PHILLIPS, Rachel (2020). *Editorial: Advertising China*. JOMEC Journal. Advertising China. 15. pp 1-3. DOI: 10.18573/jomec.204

CHEANG, Sarah (2007). *Selling China: Class, Gender and Orientalism at the Department Store*. Journal of Design History. 20(1). pp 1-16. DOI: 10.1093/jdh/ep1038

CHEN, Qian (2014). *The Influence of Cultural Differences between English and Chinese in Advertisement Translation and the Application of Domestication Principle*. Theory and Practice in Language Studies. 4(1). pp 206-211. DOI:10.4304/tpls.4.1.206-211

CHEONG, Yunjae, KIM, Kihan & ZHENG, Lu (2010). *Advertising appeals as a reflection of culture: a cross-cultural analysis of food advertising appeals in China and the US*. Asian Journal of Communication. 20(1). pp 1-16. DOI: 10.1080/01292980903440848

CRUZ-GARCIA, Laura (2018). *Advertising across cultures, where translation is nothing...or everything*. Journal of Specialised Translation. 30. pp 66-83

CUI, Annie Peng, WAJDA, Theresa A., WALSH, Michael F. (2015). *Luxury brands in emerging markets: A case study on China*. Advances in International Marketing. 25. pp 287-305. DOI: 10.1108/S1474-79792014000025013

DIRLIK, Arif (1996). *Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism*. History and Theory. 35(4). pp. 96-118. DOI: 10.2307/2505446

EYADA, Bassant (2020). *Brand Activism, the Relation and Impact on Consumer Perception: A case study on Nike Advertising*. International Journal of Marketing Studies. 12(4). pp 30-42. DOI: 10.5539/ijms.v12n4p30

FATTICIONI, Camilla (2021). *Branding Epic Fails in Cina*. Per quel che ne so io. 14/01/21.
<https://perquelchenesoio.com/2021/01/14/branding-epic-fails-in-cina/>

FISCHER, Cécile (2019). *Bulgari, a leading brand in digital*. Watches and Culture. 13/03/19.
<https://www.watchesandculture.org/forum/en/bulgari-a-leading-brand-in-digital/>

FORNEY, Matthew, FONDA, Daren & GOUGH, Neil (2004). *Marketing: How Nike Figured Out China*. Time. 24/10/04. <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,995462,00.html>

FORSTER, Kati & BRANTNER, Cornelia (2015). *Masking the Offense? An Ethical View on Humor Advertising*. Journal of Media Ethics. 31(2). pp 146-161. DOI: 10.1080/23736992.2016.1188013

FRITH, Katherine T. & TSAO, James (1998). *Advertising and cultural china: Challenges and opportunities in Asia*. Asian Journal of Communication. 8(2). pp 1-17. DOI: 10.1080/01292989809364761

FROESE, Fabian Jintae, SUTHERLAND, Dylan, LEE, Jeoung Yul, LIU, Yipeng & PAN, Yuan (2019). *Challenges for foreign companies in China: Implications for research and practice*. Asian Business & Management. 18(1). pp 249-262. DOI: 10.1057/S41291-019-00084-0

GAO, Zhihong, ZHANG, Hongxia & LI, Sherry F. (2014). *Consumer Attitudes Toward Advertising in the Digital Age: A China-United States Comparative Study*. Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising. 35(1). pp 12-28. DOI: 10.1080/10641734.2014.866844

GEERTS, Steef (2017). *Positioning and advertising in the Chinese online consumer landscape, For Western Brands*. Lap Lambert Academic Publishing. OmniScriptum GmbH & Co. KG

HALLIDAY, Sandra (2019). *Burberry ad criticised in China for lack of festive cheer*. Fashion Network. 07/01/19.
https://uk.fashionnetwork.com/news/Burberry-ad-criticised-in-china-for-lack-of-festive-cheer_1053497.html

HAIIDIA, Amilia & RAHIM, Hardy Loh (2015). *Social Media Advertising Value: A Study on Consumer's Perception*. International Academic Research Journal of Business and Technology. 1(1). pp 1-8

HILLS, Megan C. (2021). *Three years after ad controversy, D&G is still struggling to win back China*. CNN Style. 17/06/21. <https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/dolce-gabbana-karen-mok-china/index.html>

HONG, Junhao (1994). *The Resurrection of Advertising in China: Developments, Problems, and Trends*. Asian Survey. April 1994. 34(4). pp 326-342. DOI: 10.2307/2645141

HUANG, Qian & JANSSENS Alice (2019). *Come mangiare un cannolo con le bacchette: The Contested Field of Luxury Fashion in China, a Case Study of the 2018 Dolce & Gabbana Advertising Incident*. ZoneModa Journal. 9(2). pp 123-138. DOI: 10.6092/ISSN.2611-0563/9970

HUW, Hughes (2019). *Burberry lancia il suo primo gioco online: 'B Bounce'*. Fashion United. 01/11/19. <https://fashionunited.it/news/moda/burberry-lancia-il-suo-primo-gioco-online-b-bounce/2019110120409>

JAMES, Greg (2020). *Balenciaga accused of insulting Chinese people's taste with 'tacky' and 'offensive' ads*. SupChina. 11/08/20. <https://supchina.com/2020/08/11/balenciaga-accused-of-insulting-chinese-peoples-taste-with-tacky-and-offensive-ads/>

JAMES, Greg (2018). *Dolce & Gabbana cancels Shanghai show after chopstick video controversy*. SupChina. 21/11/18. <https://supchina.com/2018/11/21/dolce-gabbana-cancels-shanghai-show-after-chopstick-video-controversy/>

JENSEN, Emily (2020). *Breaking Down WeChat Advertising for Luxury Brands*. Jing Daily. 10/04/20. <https://jingdaily.com/breaking-down-wechat-advertising-for-luxury-brands/>

JENSEN, Emily (2020). *Dior Learned To Localize In China - And Was Rewarded For It*. Jing Daily. 02/12/20. <https://jingdaily.com/dior-localization-in-china-luxury-market-marketing/>

JIANI, Jiang, HUHMAN, Bruce & HYMAN, Michael R. (2019). *Emerging Masculinities in Chinese Luxury Social Media Marketing*. Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics. DOI: 10.1108/APJML-07-2018-0256

JOHANSSON, Ulf, THELANDER, Asa (2009). *A standardised approach to the world? IKEA in China*. International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences. 1(2). pp 199-219. DOI: 10.1108/17566690971454

JUNG, Chauncey (2019). *How did Durex Fail its Cooperative Promotional Campaign with HeyTea the Tea Brand?*. Pandaily. 23/04/19. <https://pandaily.com/how-did-durex-fail-its-cooperative-promotional-campaign-with-heytea-the-tea-brand/>

- JUNG, Jaehee (2018). *Young Women's Perceptions of Traditional and Contemporary Female Beauty Ideals in China*. Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal. 47(1). pp 56-72. DOI: 10.1111/fcsr.12273
- KLEIN, Jill Gabrielle, SMITH, N. Craig & JOHN, Andrew (2002). *Exploring Motivations for Participation in a Consumer Boycott*. Advances in Consumer Research. 29. pp 363-369
- KOETSE, Manya (2019). *Bulgari's Noteworthy New China Marketing Campaign on a Happy 'Jew' Year of the Pig (Zhu)*. What's on Weibo. 04/01/19. <https://www.whatsonweibo.com/bulgaris-noteworthy-new-marketing-campaign-on-a-happy-jew-year/>
- LI, Hongmei (2016). *Advertising and Consumer Culture in China*. China Today. Polity Press
- LI, Hongmei (2016). *Advertising in China*. All China Review. August - September 2016
- LI, Jian (2004). *Nike's dragon-insulting as sparks controversy*. China daily. 22/12/04. https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-12/22/content_402383.htm
- LI, Jie 李, 婕 & LÜ, Qian 吕, 倩 (2018). *Na xie waiqi yu zhongguoren de meimiao xiangyu hai jide diyi ci chi kuaican ma? 那些外企与中国人的美妙相遇 还记得第一次吃快餐吗? . Renmin ribao haiwai ban 人民日报海外版*. 28/08/18. <https://www.chinanews.com.cn/m/cj/2018/08-28/8611970.shtml>
- LI, Lifeng 李, 立锋 (2004). *Dapo dinglv - Ping Naike yadian Aoyun guanggao zhi Liu Xiang pian 打破定律 - 评耐克雅典奥运广告之刘翔篇*. Chenggong yingxiao 成功营销. 28/11/04. <http://www.mie168.com/manage/2004-11/268337.htm>
- LI, Xiaoyue 李, 潇月 (2019). *Lunkua wenhua guanggao chuanbo zhong de lunli wenti - yi Du Jiabanna "Qi kuai chi fan" guanggao shijian wei li 论跨文化广告传播中的伦理问题 - 以杜嘉班纳“起筷吃饭”广告事件为例*. Study on Intercultural Advertisements Communication Ethical Issues: Taking "Eating with Chopsticks" Dolce & Gabbana Advertisement as Example. Guanggao daguan 广告大观. Lilun ban 理论版. 4.
- LI, Xuefeng 李雪枫, YAO, Jie 姚洁 (2021). *Guanggao xue yanjiu de wenti yishi yu fangfa xuanze 广告学研究的问题意识与方法选择*. Xinwen yu chuanbo pinglun 新闻与传播评论 Journalism & Communication Review. 74(5). pp 56-70. DOI: 10.14086/j.cnki.xwycbpl.2021.05.005
- LIN, Qi (2021). *Dunhuang murals inspire digital art*. China Daily. 24/11/21. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202111/24/WS619d9928a310cdd39bc77321_6.html

LIN, Yi (2009). *Comparative Analysis of Advertising Value Appeals Reflected in U.S. and Chinese Women's Fashion Print Advertisements*. Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 1809. Maggio 2009.

<https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/1809>

LIU, Haihai 刘, 海海 (2004). *Naike wei wenti guanggao shumian zhiqian 耐克为问题广告书面致歉*. Jinghua Shibao 京华时报. 09/12/04. 第 A09 版

LIU, Jianming 刘, 建明 & BAN, Zhibin 班, 志斌 (2020). *Xifang yishi chuanbo yanjiu: dongxiang yu qishi 西方仪式传播研究: 动向与启示*. Xinwen yu chuanbo pinglun 新闻与传播评论. 第 73 卷. 第 5 期. pp 89-101. DOI: 10.14086/j.cnki.xwycbpl.2020.05.008

LIU, Sindy, PERRY, Patsy, MOORE, Christopher & WARNABY, Gary (2015). *The standardization-localization dilemma of brand communications for luxury fashion retailers' internationalization into China*. Journal of Business Research. 69. pp 357-364. DOI: 10.106/j.jbusres.2015.08.008

LONG, Danielle (2018). *Ads We Like: Nike dares China to become a football superpower*. The Drum. 19/07/18.

<https://www.thedrum.com/news/2018/07/19/ads-we-nike-dares-china-become-football-superpower>

LOTTI, Valeria (2018). *The Image of the Beautiful Woman: Beauty Ideals in Modern Urban China*. Asien 147. April 2018. pp 92-104

LOU, Rachel (2019). *Top 5 Big Mistakes Foreigners Make when Marketing in China*. Dragon Social. 19/03/19.

<https://www.dragonsocial.net/blog/mistakes-marketing-to-chinese-consumers/>

MACCOTTA, Federica (2021). *Arrivano gli Oreo al litchi per il capodanno lunare cinese*. Wired. 13/01/21.

<https://gls-group.com/IT/it/servizi-online/ricerca-spedizioni.html?match=LT620346057&type=NAT>

MAGNI, Max & ATSMON, Yuval (2010). *The Power of Word-of-Mouth in China*. Customer Experience. Harvard Business Review. 30/04/10.

<https://hbr.org/2010/04/the-power-of-word-of-mouth-in#:~:text=Physical%20or%20virtual%2C%20word%20of,which%20they%20make%20purchase%20decisions>

MARCHETTI, Simone (2018). *Dolce & Gabbana chiedono scusa alla Cina*. La Repubblica. 23/11/18.

https://www.repubblica.it/moda-e-beauty/2018/11/23/news/dolce_gabbana_chiedono_scusa_video_weibo_cina-291591696/

MARSHALL, Philip David & MORREALE, Joanne (2018). *Advertising and Promotional Culture, Case Histories*.

Palgrave. Macmillan Publishers Limited. pp 129-148

MARTINEZ-ROBLES, David (2008). *The Western Representation of Modern China: Orientalism, Culturalism and Historiographical Criticism*. Digithum. 10. pp 7-15. DOI: 10.7238/D.V0I10.511

MARTINEZ-LOPEZ, Fancisco & LOPEZ LOPEZ, David (2021). *Advances in Digital Marketing and eCommerce*. Second International Conference. Springer. pp 255-262. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-47595-6

MAVEAL, Alexander (2017). *IKEA pulls 'sexist' commercial in China after backlash online*. Global News. 25/10/17. <https://globalnews.ca/news/3823895/ikea-pulls-sexist-commercial-in-china-after-backlash-online/>

NAAS, Roberta (2020). *Bvulhari CEO Jean-Cristophe Babin on their unique Chinese clientele and Battling the Coronavirus*. Jing Daily. 21/02/20. <https://jingdaily.com/bvlgari-ceo-jean-christophe-babin-on-their-unique-chinese-clientele-and-battling-the-coronavirus/>

NIKE (2014). *Nike Celebrates Li Na's Victory with "DARE TO AIM HIGHER THAN THE SKY" Campaign*. Nike News. 25/01/14. <https://news.nike.com/news/nike-celebrates-li-na-s-victory-with-dare-to-aim-higher-than-the-sky-campaign>

PAN, Yiling (2017). *6 Ways Luxury Brands Use WeChat for Marketing Campaigns in China*. Luxury Society. <https://www.luxurysociety.com/en/articles/2017/03/6-ways-luxury-brands-use-wechat-marketing-campaigns-china>

PAN, Yiling (2019). *Bvlgari's Chinese New Year Campaign Isn't Kosher*. Jing Daily. 07/01/19. <https://jingdaily.com/bvlgari-china-jew/>

PAN, Yiling (2017). *Dolce and Gabbana Campaign Sparks Controversy on China's Social Media*. Jing Daily. 25/04/17. <https://jingdaily.com/dolce-gabbana-campaign-controversy/>

PIETERS, Rik, WEDEL, Michel & BATRA, Rajeev (2010). *The Stopping Power of Advertising: Measures and Effects of Visual Complexity*. Journal of Marketing. 74(5). pp 48-60. DOI: 10.1509/jmk.74.5.48

PIOU, Sara (2014). *What is Orientalism, and how is it also racism?*. Reappropriate. 17/04/14. <http://reappropriate.co/2014/04/what-is-orientalism-and-how-is-it-also-racism/>

PRENDERGAST, Gerard & SHI, Yi-Zheng (2001) *Client perceptions of advertising and advertising agencies: a China study*. Journal of Marketing Communications. 7(2). pp 47-63. DOI:10.1080/13527260122863

PUPPIN, Giovanna (2020). *Environmental Public Service Advertising (PSA) "with Chinese Elements": A Visual Semiotic Analysis of Localized WWF Print Campaigns in Mainland China*. China Media Research. April 2020. 16(3). pp 26-48

PUPPIN, Giovanna (2020). *Forty Years of the Return of Advertising in China (1979-2019): A Critical Overview*. JOMEC Journal. July 2020. 15. pp 1-19. DOI: 10.18573/jomec.201

PUPPIN, Giovanna (2020). *Playing with Chopsticks in China is not Funny: A Critical Reading of the Controversy over D&G's 'Eating with Chopsticks' Ad*. Asia Dialogue. December 2018.

<https://theasiadialogue.com/2018/12/17/playing-with-chopsticks-in-china-is-not-funny-a-critical-reading-of-the-controversy-over-dgs-eating-with-chopsticks-ad/>

REDDY, Srinivas K. (2014). *An Oreo with Chinese Characteristics*. Asian Management Insights. 1(1). pp 44-48.

RETNOWATI, Yuni (2015). *Challenges in cross cultural advertising*. Humaniora. 27(3). pp 340-349. DOI: 10.22146/jh.v27i3.10594

SAMSON, Carl (2021). *Dior sparks local controversy over photo of Asian woman at Shanghai exhibition*. Next Shark. 19/11/21. <https://nextshark.com/dior-sparks-controversy-in-china-over-portrayal-of-asian-women/>

SCHOOLEY, Skye (2022). *Lost in Translation: 13 International Marketing Fails*. Business News Daily. 18/03/22. <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/5241-international-marketing-fails.html>

STROSS, Rendall (1990). *The Return of Advertising in China: A Survey of the Ideological Reversal*. The China Quarterly. 123. pp 485-502. DOI: 10.1017/S0305741000018889

SUEN, Zoe & MONDALEK, Alexandra (2021). *Dolce & Gabbana Has Sued Diet Prada for Defamation*. Business of Fashion. 05/03/21. <https://www.businessoffashion.com/news/luxury/dolce-gabbana-sues-diet-prada-for-defamation/>

TAI, Susan & PAE, Jae (2001). *Localize Or Standardize in Advertising? Chinese Consumers' Point of View*. AP - Asia Pacific Advances in Consumer Research. 4. pp 210-216

TAN, Janice (2020). *Balenciaga cops flak for 'tasteless' and 'insulting' Chinese Valentine's Day ad*. Marketing-Interactive. 12/08/20. <https://www.marketing-interactive.com/balenciaga-cops-flak-for-tasteless-and-insulting-chinese-valentines-day-ad>

TIE, Nie, QIAO, Fei & BILLINGS, Andrew (2016). *Power of the "Swoosh": Nike Advertisements, Sports Fan Engagement, and Social Media in the United States and China*. Modern Sport Communication, Xiandai Tiyu Chuanbo 现代体育传播. 2. pp 109-129. Emperical Research, Shizheng Yanjiu 实证研究

VALDES, Cristina (2019). *Advertising translation and pragmatics*. The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Pragmatics (a cura di Rebecca Tipton, Louisa Desilla). Routledge. pp 171-190. DOI: 10.4324/9781315205564

VESCOVI, Tiziano (2019). *International marketing to China*. McGraw-Hill Education. pp 421-455

WALLER, David. CHRISTY, Timothy P. & FAM, Kim-Shyan (2008). *Perceptions of offensive advertising elements: a China - US comparison*. Journal of East-West Business. 14(3-4). pp 325-343. DOI: 10.1080/10669860802608719

WANG, Feng, ZHU, Yunahui & MA, Yan (2019). *On the English Translation of Chinese Advertisements from the Perspective of Elegatization and Popularization*. London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences. 19(2).

WANG, Qingchu (2021). *Dior runs afoul with controversial poster*. Shine. 17/11/21.

<https://www.shine.cn/news/nation/2111178311/>

WANG, Xuedong 王雪冬, CHEN, Xiaozhi 陈晓宇, MENG, Jiajia 孟佳佳 (2020). *Shuzihua shidai de pinpai yiyi: neihan, yanjiu yiti yu weilai zhanwang 数字化时代的品牌意义: 内涵、研究议题与未来展望*. Waiguo jingji yu guanli 外国经济与管理 Foreign Economics & Management. 42(9). pp 47-62. DOI: 10.16538/j.cnki.fem.20200610.301

WILLIAMS, Robert (2019). *Louis Vuitton, Bulgari lead luxury push on China's WeChat*. Marketing Dive. 25/06/19.

<https://www.marketingdive.com/news/louis-vuitton-bulgari-lead-luxury-push-on-chinas-wechat/557529/>

WU, Dongying 吴东英 (2014). *Quanqiuhua yu pingpai chuanbo de duoyuan wenhua zhenghe 全球化与品牌传播的多元文化整合*. Xi'an jiaotong daxue xuebao (shehui kexueban) 西安交通大学学报 (社会科学版) Journal of Xi'an Jiaotong University (Social Sciences). 34(125). pp 57-62. DOI: 1008-245X(2014)03-0057-06

WU, Wenzhuo (2021). *How adidas' 2021 Campaign Won Chinese New Year*. Jing Daily. 27/01/21.

<https://jingdaily.com/adidas-2021-chinese-new-year-campaign-jackson-ye/>

XIONG, Lena (2021). *The four main differences between Chinese & Western advertisements*. China & Western Culture. 19/03/21. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/four-main-difference-between-chinese-western-lena-xiong/>

XIONG, Shasha 熊莎莎, WANG, Tao 汪, 涛 & ZHAO, Peng 赵, 鹏 (2018). *Kuaguo pinpai bentuhua shiying zhong de wenhua hunda xianxiang: yanjiu huigu yu zhanwang 跨国品牌本土化适应中的文化混搭现象：研究回顾与展望*. *Waiguo jingji yu guanli 外国经济与管理*. 40(7). DOI: 10.16538/j.cnki.fem2018.07.009

YANG, Hongwei, LIU, Hui & ZHOU, Liuning (2010). *Predicting Chinese young consumers' acceptance of mobile advertising: a structural equation modeling approach*. *Chinese Journal of Communication*. 3(4). pp 435-452. DOI: 10.1080/17544750.2010.516577

YAP, Lydianne (2019). *Cultural Messaging in China: A Chinese New Year Case Study*. *Luxury Society*. 20/02/19. <https://www.luxurysociety.com/en/articles/2019/02/cultural-messaging-china-chinese-new-year-case-study>

YU, Shubin & HU, Yangjuan (2019). *When luxury brands meet China: The effect of localized celebrity endorsements in social media marketing*. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. 54. pp 1-12. DOI: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.102010

ZHA, Yiru 查, 奕如, ZOU, Qingxu 邹, 青栩 & LIN, Wan 林, 腕 (2020). *Wenhua boyi shijiao xia qiche yingxiao celüe fenxi 文化博弈视角下汽车营销策略分析*. *Shichang yingxiao 市场营销*. DOI: 10.13939/j.cnki.zgsc.2020.29.127

ZHANG, Jian 张, 剑 (2009). *Jin 30 nian lai Zhongguo gudai guanggao shi yanjiu gaishu 近30年来中国古代广告史研究概述*. *Dongnan Xueshu 东南学术*. 4. pp 153-158. DOI: 1008-1569(2009)04-0153-06

ZHANG, Justina (2020). *China Strengthens Supervision of Online Live Streaming Marketing Activities Through New Guidelines*. *Global Advertising Lawyers Alliance*. 06/08/20. <http://blog.galalaw.com/post/102gcxu/china-strengthens-supervision-of-online-live-streaming-marketing-activities-throu>

ZHANG, Xiaofan 张, 小凡 (2016). *Naikede "Fafu" zhide rushou yishuang? 耐克的“发福”值得入手一双?*. *Laohu Shequ 老虎社区*. 13/01/16. <https://www.laohu8.com/post/7989>

ZHENG, Qing (2020). *Burberry in China: Sales increasing faster than any other region*. *Daxue Consulting*. 04/07/20. <https://daxueconsulting.com/china-market-research-on-burberry/>

ZHENG, Qing (2020). *Dior in China: A prima case of luxury fitting into a Digital China*. *Daxue Consulting*. 30/07/20. <https://daxueconsulting.com/dior-in-china/>

ZHENG, Xin (2018). *The Influence of the Difference between Chinese and Western Culture on Advertising Translation and Strategy*. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*. 8(3). pp 331-339. DOI: 10.17507/tpls.0803.09

ZHENG, Yuan 郑, 媛 (2017). *Huo zai yuefenpai shang de minguo nvshen 活在月份牌上的民国女神*. *Meiri toutiao 每日头条*. 18/08/17. <https://kknews.cc/zh-cn/culture/pxa3py8.html>

ZHOU, Cunyu 周, 存玉 (2020). *Lun diaosu yishu zhong de zhongguo hua yijing 论雕塑艺术中的中国画意境*. *Discussion on the Artistic Conception of Chinese Painting in Sculpture Art*. *Wenhua yishu chuangxin 文化艺术创新*. 3(6). pp 102-104. DOI: 10.26549/whyscx.v3i6.6057

ZHU, Chencen (2018). *D&G issue in China: Why the video about chopsticks suddenly went viral on Chinese social media*. *Daxue consulting*. 11/12/18. <https://daxueconsulting.com/chopsticks-video-china-social-media/>