

“Marketing Across Different Cultures in Pakistan”

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ABSTRACT

Companies when decide to go in different markets keep in mind that the culture where they present their marketing campaigns should be according to their lifestyle, educational level, moral values and religious restrictions. In international setting the cultures vary too much so the standardization is not only option neither complete adaptation is the solution so there should be a balance between the two. Marketers come up with lots of research and knowledge about a particular region. If they do not consider the cultural needs in a particular market where the people are sensitive to the culture that ultimately will affect the profitability of the business, which is the core reason to run an industry. Standardization or adaptation has been a matter of debate from past few decades. When we standardize the product compromising on the cultural needs that is a phenomenon which saves the cost but ultimately the customer perception will change and they would not be able to relate to the product through the promotions. So save this relation between a customer and a brand it's equally important to adapt according to the culture of the people to whom we offer our product. In this way they can relate to the product and have feeling of owning the brand and as a result the profit of the company is boosted. Researchers and theories had established the fact that standardizations boost up the performance outcomes of the company but recently the adaptation strategy is no longer measured to be an unyielding choice. To that effect it would perhaps be superior to look outside the dichotomy of standardization or adaptation of promotional strategies, which actually do not associate that which one is better option to be taken.

KEYWORDS: Standardization, Adaptation, Brand, Lifestyle, Promotions

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1: Introduction

Here we will study the promotional activities and the cultural influences on those activities. Moreover, two oppositional schools of thoughts that are, standardization and adaptation will be discussed in detail. The aspect of standardization vs. adoption will be studied to have an idea that either marketers have benefit in going for standardized promotional activities or they prefer adapting the culture where they perform their promotional campaigns. Promotional mix has certain components according to Kotler they are advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing tools that are used by different companies in order to communicate to value and build trust among the customer (Kotler, 1996). Marketers are required to adopt one of the two schools of thoughts as promotions need to be either standardized or they should be adaptable to the culture. Both the schools are centered on one approach; that is catering the consumer's perspective. The promotions need to be either standardized or they should be adaptable to the culture. This actually means that the campaign a marketer produces should either be a standardized version that is suitable for all, example for this could be the campaigns of mountain dew that are same though out the world showing adventure. Irrespective to this is adaptation in which the work produced is customized according to the cultural and moral needs of a society where the promotion is to be done. Here we can take example of Telenor advertisement that showed boy and girl who are connected through face book which means that they are promoting the online dating practices. This advertisement was not according to the values of the country so it had to be banned from the television. Sometimes marketers standardize the marketing across different cultures in order to save the cost they are spending but they forget that cultures are different in different regions. It must be kept in mind that the violation of cultural values and practices in a marketing promotion can cause serious damage to the brand's popularity. Thus most of the researchers value adaptation more than standardization while introducing an international product in a target region. Promotions are influenced by language, religion, mindset, educational level so this needs the advertisements to be customized according to the requirement of the countrymen. . All these elements make up the culture of a region which defines the mainstream

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of a society Sometimes advertisements are just changed into different languages like we listen to radio ads of banks that are translated into different regional languages or family planning ads are translated into other languages according to the area in which they are played like Pashto for KPK. The minor modifications according to culture can lead a promotional activity to effectively communicate to the target audience. This may be having high cost but the effectiveness will be long term.

The introduction portion of the thesis report will cover up the background, problem statement, delimitations financial restrictions.

1.2 Background

While heading towards selecting a suitable topic for the thesis report many factors are to be considered like area of interest, previous academic experience, and the mindset with respect to the changes in cultural aspects are taken into consideration. The writer of thesis report belongs to a country where different cultures are practiced. The main areas of differentiation are language, literacy level, dress codes, open mindedness and dominance of a particular gender in certain parts of the country. To add more while studying in the institution which is the center where people come from multicultural backgrounds, the author realized how in Pakistan companies can witness challenges while advertising in different areas of the state.

Dating back after the times of partition advertisement styles has been changed initially few channels were there which made it easier for the marketers to grab the attention of the viewers but now the trend is changed as the wide spread television network is enhancing day by day with more number of channels. With increased technology the reach of advertisements and marketing campaigns has pick up the pace and now people are much aware about the market and they can compare the products and services with what they are shown through marketing. With all this culture has always played its part in the marketing of products and services. When Pakistani culture gets into spot light, one cannot ignore the fact that it offers a very conservative patriarchal society. In this male dominated culture men are considered at the center and women are marginalized greatly. It is a common notion that relations are generally power oriented. Thus, gender relation too, is a power relation. Culture and society is led by men and women are expected to stand a step behind men. They lie at the periphery and are subjugated and dictated by men. This patriarchal conception is among the common practices and behaviors and thus, makes it a key custom of Pakistani culture as its glimpses can be found in almost every practice. For instance, Pakistani media runs several different ads in which the advertisers show patriarchy as in our culture most of the time male domination is seen at houses or at corporate sector. We may deny this fact but truth is that when we see an ad of washing powder like surf excel always a mother is shown who is concerned for the stains but never do we see any father doing laundry this is because there are few things that are associated with our cultural values mentioning that a male member is not meant to do laundry.

The message related to the product is more vivid to the audience when we communicate it according to our cultural values and celebrated belief system. On the contrary, an ad depicting a man doing laundry would not get any appreciation in Pakistani culture and so the product will lose its customers. It is because, such an ad would be presenting the wrong picture of cultural practices as men doing house chores are considered laughing stock in most classes of the Pakistani society. Further, it is also evident by the example that communication is equally important as its fundamental need is to influence the customer about the product. This is stated by (Mukesh, Ranju: 2009) that for any business it is essential to understand the disliking, liking or preference of the customer. In order to understand Mukesh's words one must have a clear understanding of the concept of culture. Culture is formed by the people living together, forming an integrated unit of a society. In order to run a society effectively and to insure the peaceful living of different persons on a shared piece of land possible, people design and implement certain rules in their society. Those rules and regulations along with other perceptions and practiced doctrines such as religion, politics, life style, educational system and vice versa give essence to the very soul of the concept of culture. These sets of rules and belief systems are formed only to be followed. No one living in that particular society and following its culture is expected to break or rebel against those cultural dogmas. Or else he would be considered a rebel and a mutineer, challenging the accepted norms of a society and forming chaos and frenzy in the lives of people by breaking the laws and practicing the tabooed. Such people end up in one of the two categories. They become either an outcast or the successful mutineers of a society. But when it comes to marketing, either global or universal one must keep the notion of customer's choice in focus. Success of a product's consumer rate depends immensely on the liking and disliking of its customers. This criterion of liking and disliking is built and surged in its customers by the conventions they esteem and notions they practice in their surroundings. Cultural values if taken into account by the marketers have a more fast impact on changing customer's choices. The way in which a product is marketed has a factual power to create a separate parking space in the mind of customers. It is a common notion of structuralism approach that the images we perceive through our eyes have a symbolic significance. Likewise, all our verbal as well as pictorial communications are symbolic as well. Words are mere names of the images. These

images are formed in the mind of its listener in relation to the firsthand experience of its audience with those words. Thus, the image of the message behind every ad is symbolic. These symbols either conveyed verbally or non-verbally, carry a complete ideology behind them. That ideology can either be a sheer propaganda or the positive depiction of an honest thought. If it is propaganda of some mutineer, it can successfully inculcate the negative approach in its viewer's minds and can manipulate them beyond limits without even their realization of the fact. On the other hand, if it portrays a true picture of its society and depicts some socially acceptable norm; it would be considered normal. Moreover, we notice that the relationship that a customer and a marketer or seller of the product shares; is a power relation. Just as social classes are distributed into the hierarchy of class structures, power relation too, draws a wide line between the weak and the less weak, strong and a slight strong and a strongest one. It can be said that, customer, for a successful marketer, stands among the powerful ones who are provided to enjoy the best among the betters. On the other hand, the same relation can be reversed. Here marketers lie above the customers in the hierarchy of power relation distribution. With the position, the role of the marketers also gets promoted. Their sole focus turns to the strategy of how to control the mind of a customer by using their efficient marketing skills and coming up with the plan of receiving customer's attention and fondness of their product.

A tight spot has emerged while studying the culture aspect in advertising that either the marketing should be standardized for all types of cultures or it should be adaptive with respect to the local morals and lifestyle of the customers. It is afterwards proven by the studies that the latter is more effective for the marketers to act upon (Dow 2005; Calantone et al. 2006; Okazaki et al. 2006; Wong & Merrilees 2007). For implementation of such strategies we have to understand the culture of the market in which the product is to be marketed, as according to Geert Hofstede and Markie de Mooij, customers awareness, behavior and opinion is proportional to culture of a particular nation. A nation can be defined by the values and tradition it follows. In order to understand and learn the mindset, taste and criterion of set forth standards of a nation, one should merely learn the cultural norms and common practices celebrated among its people. So, a product must be marketed in parallel to the behavior and opinion of the people of a target culture. If this notion is ignored, people with the difference in the cultural conceptions would consider such an advertisement of the product as morally ill or tabooed or out of the target cultural context. Moreover, such a marketing promotion will also be considered a failure in the business world as it could not possibly attract much of the customers to its side.

Culture is one aspect that needs to be catered while advertising in different areas of Pakistan whereas we see a collective or standardized form of advertisements. A soft drink selling company shows ads in which we see girls dancing and enjoying the drink that is totally against our cultural values this might affect the sales of the product because in few areas of Pakistan this ad might be perfectly fine for the audience but think about this ad been played in a rural setting where people still do not accept mixing of genders. Thus, such poor selection of the school of thought leads to the failure of marketing promotion and chases away the customers as well. This research basically is plotted on the aspect of marketing according to different cultures.

1.3 Problem Statement Discussion

In this world each individual is growing with extensive information overflow by the advertisement they see through TVC's, billboards, magazines or social media campaigns. These have a sound impact on the mind of customer which ultimately help, build on the perception of the buyer.

The place where an individual is living and brought up have a great impact on how he or she thinks, feels and act in daily life. This phenomenon is explained as "software of minds" which can be named as culture in modified term (hofstede; 2010). De mooij explained that Hofstede was the first to explain customer behavior according to culture.

Rationale of thesis is to understand that, what is the influence of culture in designing a marketing campaign. Explaining this we will work on the advertisements and how the cultural values are kept in mind while working on those broader areas. The concept here is to explain that whether it's good for companies to standardize their marketing activities or adapt according to the culture of any specific region. Culture is somehow a different concept every author has come up with their own explanation of culture (Hollensen, 2001). Language, manners, technology and material culture, education, religion, social institutions, aesthetics are few elements in the concept of culture (Hollensen 2001).

1.4 Significance of study

This study will ultimately help marketers to understand that how the culture plays its part while the marketing is done for a particular product or service. It will also help the new entrants to comprehend the cultural disparity or diversity in the marketing section of product introduction in addition to that what techniques they can use to influence the target audience. The marketers can identify the customer's behavioral pattern which was developed through the advertisement they saw and this would then lead to their buying actions. The cultural aspect of the

marketing is important to be known by the marketers as profitability or success of a product depends upon how the product is executed in front of the customers. Either it is acceptable advertisement or

Not; this all is relying on the marketing process that is adopted according to the suitability of the environment or socio-cultural performance of the customers.

We watch different advertisements showing mixing of genders to an extreme level whereas this is culturally not widely acceptable for example we see an ad of Shezan drink where we can see girls and boys freely enjoying and competing in racing this type of an advertisement where girls are used as a symbol of show piece could be accepted by people living in rural areas or areas where modernism is practiced but same ad when played in area where people are conservative and strictly follow the cultural values, create a wrong perception of the product in the customers mind and resultantly the buying behavior is affected. In that ad there was no need of introducing women as the product is not directed to girls or boys only. It's for the adults and kids both so using women was totally useless.

Alternative to this Olpers is best in putting forward their message according to our cultural perspective as in its Ramadan advertisement Olpers put forward different Muslims from around the world dining together, breaking fast and hence giving the concept of Hofstede's collectivism which is practiced in our society where each individual cares for the family and tradition. Olpers comes first in setting position for its product according to the cultural facet of the society. The again we recently watched the ad by Olpers where we see how a mother shows care for her children. A father inquiring his son, a daughter in law serving her family and a big family dining together shows exactly how we act in our homes on daily basis. This ad is another example of collectivism in our cultural.

A winning business must consider the culture, history, values, and personal choices of the people which will help enhance their profits in the long-term as customer will develop a positive mindset for that product. For example in a Pakistani culture you cannot sell family planning products with audacious advertisements as recently we saw an ad featuring Mathira was banned due to its bold content.

Nestle Pakistan recently presented their TVC Pyaray Pakistan in which it showed gratitude to the nation for using it in their family settings. It featured this ad near 14th of August which is a historically important event for each Pakistani. This campaign helped create a positive perception for Nestle Pakistan in customers mind and a feeling of closeness towards a brand.

Nevertheless we have recently seen an ad widely talked on social media and many memes were made regarding that advertisement. This advertisement was of national foods featuring two brothers living abroad and discussing how the great festivity of Eid will be celebrated in Pakistan. This ad silently showed emotional appeal for the product and also presented the love for food in our culture.

In a nutshell how the standardization or adaptation marketing activity can better address the profitability of the business. Standardization strategy as used by Coca-Cola worldwide is suitable for some products but with different challenges companies have to deal with cultural disparity when they work across the globe.

1.4 Limitations

Due to the financial limitations all the interviews couldn't be taken face to face, some were telephonic. Which were if conducted face to face helped yield a better data. Despite that the recording was done with high quality sound and the respondents suggested the time of interview by themselves, the time that suited them and was more convenient so that the responses were not contaminated by the interruption or uneasiness.

Research would have been more logical and relative if the researcher was permitted to have access to other industries and business. Also the major industries headquarters do not lie in Rawalpindi or Islamabad so the availability of respondents was less and financial boundaries did not allow reaching them.

1.5 Financial limitations

It was due to the financial limitations that all the interviews were not conducted face to face. Few of them were conducted face to face which were in the reach of the author. Interviews were then recorded over the phone which also gave a certain level of confidentiality to the respondent.

1.6 Research objectives

- To gain insight about standardization or adaptation in different cultures of Pakistan.
- To understand that the need of culturally fit promotions.

1.7 Research questions

- While advertising in Pakistani market what should marketers choose for being successful; adaptation or standardization of marketing campaigns?
- Why is there a need for culturally suitable promotions?

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature review

Researchers have conducted several studies to understand the behavior of people in response to the marketing campaigns that do not confront with the values and cultural aspect of a society (Waheed Akhtar et al, 2011). In order to understand the cultural aspect in marketing, this paper has drawn from several literatures highlighting the marketing in different cultures. The information that is provided in an advertisement have a great tendency to change the behavior or attitude of the consumer (Polly and Mittal, 1993).

John O Shaughnessy in his book “competitive marketing (1995: p4)”has explained marketing as”

“Marketing covers those activities that relate the organization to those parts of the outside world that use, buy, sell or influence the output it produces and the benefits and services it offers”

Also marketing has been explained by many other researchers one of them is (Alvin J silk-2006, Vii) who defined marketing as “What an organization must do to create and exchange values with customers”.

(Paul 2008) explained later that companies design products according to customer needs of specific country and then relative promotional efforts are made in international marketing. The marketing is aimed at generating revenues by satisfying the needs and wants of the customers. To understand the needs of customers and persuade them to buy we first have to understand their culture (Gillespie et al., 2004). Culture is a general yet complex element to be explained. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) collected 164 different definitions of culture but the most relevant and close to perfection definition of culture is given by (hofstede, pg 87, 1980); he says

““Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another...Culture, in this sense, includes systems of values; and values are among the building blocks of culture”.

So according to this different area of Pakistan have different languages and point of differences so marketers have to understand those points of differences and plan the marketing operations accordingly. With addition to this the underneath attitudes and values of different areas need to be catered. Huntington (1996) explained that cultural differences are the reason to conflict.

Culture

The definition of culture in relation to marketing is “the sum total of learned beliefs, values and customs that serve to direct consumer behavior in particular country market” (p.85) (Doole & Lowe, 2001). Usunier in 1993 proposed three gears of culture that are belief, value and customs. Belief is a long term thing that has been gradually inculcated in our minds regarding a product or a service. Values are the appropriate behavior that customer sets for a product or brand and that is acknowledged by all the members of a certain market. Lastly is the custom that is the way in which we behave at certain time or event like when somebody is born or married etc. These elements may affect the purchasing habits of the customer. Culture actually makes up the mind of a customer while making decision for the acceptance of a product or service. As I have already mentioned, an indigenous nation can be defined by its identity well. In this Post Modern age, once colonized slaves have started to rethink over their identity issue. In order to achieve this perspective, they are reviving their cultural aesthetics, norms and traditions, for these are what among the most essential elements to define a nation’s identity well. This of re-defining the identity and re-creating the cultural aesthetics is what lies at the core of Pakistani culture currently. It’s not been too long, when our ancestors won the freedom of re-living their traditional and religion oriented lives in Pakistan. Thus, all of the nation cherishes its cultural aspects and adheres onto them with sincere gratitude and esteem. In such circumstances, where a nation is emotionally, historically and spiritually attached to its culture, it is impossible for the marketer not to pick up and get valuable outcome of the adaptation school of thought.

Markie de mooij has conducted many researches relate to cultures but in one of her current publications “the Hofstede Model, application to global branding and advertising strategy and research(2010)” she collectively worked with Geert Hofstede and presented a model to understand the cultural aspect in the global market and according to which the strategies have to be changed.

Hofstede model

Different dimensions of culture has been cleared (Hofstede 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede 2005)in five major scopes that are power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-/short-term orientation.

Power

In this model of national culture first feature is power which is explained by Hofstede in the way that members of a society with comparatively lesser power or authority accept or expect that power is circulated unevenly. The larger power space cultures have a clear understanding of the status meaning that each individual is clear about his

and others position or class so that the respect element is to be kept in mind. So from this perspective we see that marketers in Pakistan also use this dimension while advertising their brands. Luxury articles, fashion products characteristically appeal to social status needs (Mooij: Hofstede, 2010).

Individualism

The next dimension about which Mooij and Hofstede talked about is individualism and collectivism. In the first one the concept of “I” is their people are more concerned about themselves and their near ones only whereas the collectivism shows that people care for the society in which they live considering the factor “we” while relating to different products. In the sales process in individualistic cultures, parties want to get to the point fast, whereas in collectivistic cultures it is necessary to first build a relationship and trust between parties. This

difference is reflected in the different roles of advertising: persuasion versus creating trust (Mooij: Hofstede, 2010).

Masculinity/femininity

Nevertheless masculinity/femininity is explained in the way that cultures with masculinity are more prone towards achievement and success factors whereas femininity cultures are more caring for each other.

Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance culture is when people sense threat by uncertain situations and tries to avoid them. The high uncertainty avoidance cultures are not risk takers so ads related to health are shown to them like good milk or better breakfast whereas low uncertainty avoidance cultures are opened to ads related to sports for better health conditions (De Mooij & Hofstede 2002; De Mooij 2010). longterm orientations involve investing in future and Short term refers to stability (De Mooij & Hofstede 2002; De Mooij 2010).

Culture and Consumer behavior

Cultural values are important when any customer is making a purchase, actually the buying behavior is in relationship with the culture of any particular area.

Culture is taken from a Latin word “cultivation”, this word culture was first used by the Roman and later Germans adopted it nearly two hundred years back (Burke, 2008). Different definitions have been presented to explain culture but the one which is so far most valid and widely accepted is by (Taylor & Samovar: 2009) i.e.

“Complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, Customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of society” (Taylor & Samovar: 2009, p 9)

Cultures in different regions have different values which could be right in one part but considered offensive for others. So this culture has an impact on the marketing behavior of the companies for example we see that family planning products are not marketed boldly in Pakistani culture or we do not see products related to family planning been advertised on billboards in countryside. Businesses need to understand this cultural perspective and promote their products and services accordingly (Jain, 1993).

Elbasher and Nicholls (1993) augmented earlier that now Islamic countries are showing growth of interest because of their expanding markets. Difference in western marketing is clear when compared with an Islamic state but the marketers are more inclined towards using westernization in marketing irrespective to the cultural needs of the region. Each culture has different mindsets, dressing, language and social class which are not genetic rather they are learned while an individual lives in a particular culture. It is a great challenge for international markets to respond to the customers according to their culture (Albers-Miller 1999) this is because a society never give up its cultural values very easily (Berry 1980). Each culture has set of values that are learned in early stages of life (De Mooij; 1998). Polly (1983) suggested that values can be transmitted through different portions of life like church, colleges, military, universities or even advertisements. Also he explaining this further he proposed that an advertisement replicate a culture but only certain attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and societal values. Putting it slightly in other direction advertising presents a picture in front of an individual; how he wants to be in his life (Belk and Pollay 1985). Some authors stress on this thing that advertising influence and are influenced by the culture (Williamson 1978).

In the mean while all the researchers do not agree on the fact that advertising imitate the culture. Advertising prevail the future values of a culture (Berger et al. 1973) on the other hand we still have sound number of researchers who believe in a advertising duplicating the culture and underpin the values that are present within a culture (Brown 1981; Khairullah et al. 1996; Pollay 1985).

Appeals

There are certain appeals that are used to communicate the cultural values in the advertising of different products. We see ads of Cadbury dairy milk in which a new foreign bride comes to her husband’s parents to meet them for the first time and she shows how she cover up her head while meeting her father in law, which is taken as our value that we show respect to the elders in this way. So values are of prime importance within the advertising message or the appeal and this is through advertising message or appeal that product and values are bonded (Polly

1988). Appeal is basically something that makes the product fascinating or smart (De mooij 1998). These advertising appeals are meant to persuade the consumer to buy the product (Appelbaum and Halliburton 1993). In Mexico people were more prone towards buying the products which had family and social advertising appeals that were related to their cultural norms as researched by Gregory and Munch (1997).

Different other examples have been seen in advertisement of an after shave in Middle Eastern country when a romantic scene was shown between a man and a woman also showing their dog. This ad was not accepted as their dog is symbolized as an unhygienic or unclean animal. It has been noticed that two different cultures may use same appeal but the frequency of appeal could vary in dissimilar cultures (Rick T. Wilson and Mark J; 2004).

Cultural influences

Mohammad Usman et al (2010) explained in their research that Pakistan is changing in terms of culture so the companies should study the cultural changes before they make advertisements it's because if people would be offended by the advertisements of any product they will not buy the product. In addition to this marketer and the company must understand that they need to include the social groups, norms, values and traditions in the marketing campaigns they design (M. Usman; 2010).

Language is another factor that needs to be understood because it is effective in cross cultural marketing practices. It was observed previously that companies pay least attention to linguistic propositions but now we see standardized advertisement dubbed in different languages as per the requirement of area; for example recently while cricket world cup was going on we used to watch same ad of ding dong bubble in four different languages that was because of linguistic diversity of Pakistani culture. Marketing communication is of two types one is explicit and other is implicit (Mehmood ul Hassan 2008) he says that implicit communication is for the cultures where we assume that awareness of customer is extensive however implicit cultures are those where the awareness is comparatively lesser. We have to understand in dissimilar cultures that either they are practicing any specific belief, they believe in collective or individualistic approach or they are family oriented power structure based culture. All these elements are important to examine as they have impact on marketing campaigns. An amazingly interesting marketing was of pepsodent when they launched a campaign to "whiten the teeth" in south Asians but later they found that people their chewed betel nuts to blacken their teeth as they found it attractive.

Similarly a soft drink was launched in Arab having label of stars that were pointed. This was because Arabs considered it pro-Israel. Pepsico launched a marketing campaign in Taiwan saying "come alive with Pepsi" which was translated by the people as something that have to potential to bring back the ancestors. So these cultural perspectives can bring chaos for the businesses when left unexamined.

Culture plays its part and is very important for the progress of any business. Marketers have worked least in this area and ignored its value in broader area. Now a day's companies have somehow started addressing this requirement. As we see print ads, billboards and electronic advertisements' in local language and related to local social groups. For example Zong has come up with extremely good concept of identifying the people who underwent the destructive earthquakes and had connection with their families through Zong. So celebrity endorsement is now reformed into customers endorsement and it have a great impact on the viewer as celebrity endorsement as become way too typical.

Hardees Pakistan has been facing objections from the local people in its first campaign "unbuckle your belt" featuring a pair of unzipped jeans. These types of marketing need to be reconsidered as such elements are highly not acceptable in Pakistani culture. Then again they came up with a new advertisement in which two buns are placed together and a woman hand firmly clutching one. We saw that this was not accepted by the people again and they faced criticism though social media and newspapers. It's not every time acceptable that a marketing strategy in a specific culture is appropriate according to their ethical values. So marketers need to customize their campaigns according to the acceptability level of certain regions because such types of obvious sexual references are considered taboo in Pakistan (Ali Ahsan 2015).

We see that the campaign of state life insurance saying "Aye khuda mairay abbu salamat rahain" is still more influential than a tea whitener had been sold through dancing and partying (syed mohsin 2011). So the cultural advertisement showing the concept of family orientation that is the vital part of our values is more attached to our minds even after decades instead of Bollywood style marketing campaigns.

Some cultures are price sensitive so marketers have to take into consideration that they respond to the public in the same way. MNCs like KFC and MacDonald's show serious concern for this type of culture as in Sri Lanka people are more price sensitive than quality oriented so the displays they use are more focused on price (Ragulan 2011). This example explains that companies have to amend their strategies to cater to cultural need of any specific region

Similarly sometimes the product has to be changed according to the cultural acceptability of a country like pizza hut in Pakistan has added flavors that are related to our cultural food and are widely liked by the customers. (Ragulan 2011) explained it by giving example of dominos at India when they launched pizza with vegetarian menu and changing the product tagline as “paneer on pizza”. In Pakistan we see that product is offered with the customer’s requirement of halal product. Lays was taken by the huge number of customers when they doubted its halal fact later lays came up with clarifications.

Promotion is to be done according to the cultural understanding of the target market as in India coke use different celebrities to endorse their product in different regions like Amir khan in north India and Vijay in Tamil Nadu so this shows that people are more comfortable when they see the people who belong to the same cultural background (Ragulan 2011).

When placing a product in some cultures like Australia people believe in manufacturers own distribution so products are given away by the brand itself but some countries like uae are least bothered about the fact and are comfortable to buy from a distributor. In such type of cultures manufacturer go for outsourcing their product distribution. This cultural diversity plays its part in giving more opportunities’ to increase the business but if these are not seriously taken they can bring in many challenges for the marketers that are difficult to manage the business. Marketers have to take precautions by understanding the culture in which they are working in order to be amongst the top notch businesses.

Culture is the cornerstone of a civilized society and evolves over time with its values and norms. It is not a fixed concept, however, and can change for many reasons. One force that can cause a culture to change is the exposure to other cultures' political and economic philosophies, social structures, religions, languages, and styles of education (Hofstede, 2003).

So culture is the foundation of a society and it’s not a onetime thing it evolves over a period of time with its own values and perspective. According to some researchers it’s not a concept that is fixed, culture can change due to many reasons like more exposure or so. The exposure to other cultures' political and economic philosophies, social structures, religions, languages, and styles of education can change the cultures (Hofstede, 2003).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

In this chapter we will identify the method of our research purpose. This part will begin with explaining the purpose and then moving on towards describing the research tactic. The data collection method will be presented that will be primary and secondary. At the end of this chapter the reliability, rationality and dependability will be explained.

3.2 Research Purpose

The purpose of research is to explore why it’s important to make advertisements and run marketing campaigns according to the culture of specific area. How the cultural disparity in different regions plays its part in making customer perception towards the products and services. There are three types of research tactics amongst which the first is explanatory, then descriptive and finally we have exploratory research.

Exploratory research

When the problem area is not properly defined and worked on then to get additional information we use exploratory research method. This kind of research is used when the theory is not clear and when problem and relations are difficult to delimitate and define (Gummeson, 2002). It basically lead to future study and before a future work is done we lay a foundation.

Descriptive research

In this research after the groundwork is done we explore and explain the foundation. In this method the research explains that what exactly is happening and provide additional information regarding the subject and ultimately filling the gaps that are present there while developing our knowledge. It is done when our problem area is well defined and structured. In this situation, the researcher has to find out relevant ideas that have to be observed, developed and described (Yin, 1994). The conclusion of the study is the explained portrayal of problem and inspected alternatives (Paul and Eriksson, 1998).

Explanatory research

In this type of research we have several variables and elements that are their regarding the problem area. It aims at approval or disapproval of alternatives. It is used when the researcher want to explore the link between the reasons by collecting data.

Here we will identify that either companies should standardize their marketing activities or adapt according to the need of cultures. We will study the promotional aspect of marketing.

3.3 Research approach

We have two types of approaches that are qualitative and quantitative approach. The plus point of the qualitative is that it is more in depth analysis of the problem as compared to quantitative approach. In this approach the contribution of researcher is more and when research needs more investigation then the qualitative method is used. It's because of the researchers share that he has a great authority on the analysis of the study because of his personality and moral beliefs. In this approach, major problem comes when we have to evaluate the expected data with the collected one (Denscombe, 1988). Quantitative approach is however number based.

In this thesis we have chosen the qualitative approach as we want to have a detailed explanation of the data we have collected and it's not just that we study our topic from the broader perspective. The other reason of choosing this way is that we want to examine that how the marketers manage the cultural differences in different regions either they use the standardized form or the adaptation of culture where they conduct their promotional campaigns. This study does not intend to show any statistics due to which we have preferred the qualitative approach. The data is only in the formation of text and terms no numbers are used. As we have to investigate that how marketers mold them according to the changes in lifestyle of particular region we found out that the qualitative method is more suitable.

In the qualitative research approach we have further classified it into ethnographic research. In this research we conduct our observation in the natural setting except the artificially created environment of focus group or laboratory testing. It proposes to examine how people do certain tasks, what are their requirements and what exactly they do. This research depends on the observation, interviews, photographs or analysis of the campaign, documents that are part of the job of respondents. The ethnographic research is time consuming but the comeback is priceless. A certain degree of trust need to be established before the interview is to be conducted so time is needed.

3.4 Data collection

The data is to be collected for answering the objectives of the study. The respondents are interviewed for one to two hours in order to collect the data. For this the privacy concerns were taken into account and before the interviews were conducted a consent form with complete illustration of the objectives of the study have been given to the interviewees. There are both positive and negative effects associated to sending the questionnaire beforehand. The positive thing is that the respondent will have idea about what information is need from his side so that he or she can get prepared likewise. Also by this practice he/she will feel assertive and contented during the interview. The negative thing is that by this the respondent is not true to what he feels suddenly about certain issues and the answer might be too constructive. But regardless of all the facts we preferred sending the questions before interviews. There are different ways to conduct an interview amid that are personal interviews that are conducted on one to one basis. Then is focus group in which several people are interviewed together. Telephonic interviews are the interviews that are taken through a telephone call a certain level of privacy is retained in such interviews but the problem is that we can't detect the facial expressions so we judge the response according to our understanding. From these the most suitable for our research is the one on one meeting that is the personal interview method.

The interviews are of three types then structured, semi-structured and the unstructured ones. In structured interviews we give a complete line of questions are to be answered by the respondents'. Semi structured is designed in a way that the interviewers give the topic and the questions and then have a discussion on those areas. Nevertheless unstructured interviews are the ones in which the topic is discussed according to all the perspectives overall.

Amongst these ways we chose to go for structured interviews as by this we can control the discussion according to us as we have placed all the elements together beforehand. The approach was standardized and had open ended questions it helped the respondent to speak with full confidence and freedom about the topic on the other hand it helped the interviewer to have grip on the conversation and avoid irrelevancy. An informal flow of discussion was maintained to avoid the hesitation throughout the interview and help both researcher and the respondent to become accustomed to the nature of each other. In addition to this the experiences of the respondent were to be investigated closely. The complete interviews were recorded and then set down verbatim to gain complete understanding of the respondents. Supporting this Christensen & Engdahl (2001) said that it's better to tape the interviews in order to decrease the threat of missing information and also to focus on the dialogue between both parties. Interviews were conducted in English and Urdu both to have full understanding of the respondent. In addition to what dialogue we had with the respondents their pauses, voice tones and facial expressions were also taken into thought to understand how deeply they felt about certain subjects.

3.5 Sample size

In this research sampling used by researcher is "selective". This is most suitable for the research as it minimizes the risk of increased cost since only unambiguous people who are expert in their field are asked the questions. The reason of such sampling is that it's the most instructive sample from whom the accurate and applicable information can be hauled out. Selective sampling, a part of the active learning method, reduces the cost

of labeling supplementary training data by asking only for the labels of the most informative, unlabeled examples (Piotr Juszczak and Robert P.W. Duin)

3.6 Reliability and credibility

When you have to analyze result and conclusion of the research which you have done, the element of credibility and dependability (reliability) are very important. Nevertheless these two terms are taken in different ways which all rest on the method of research i-e qualitative or quantitative. When the substantiation or proof of a study is required, the terms reliability, validity or generalization are most of the time used (Kvale, 1997).

Reliability

By the reliability of any study we mean to say that if a similar research is conducted how much is the possibility that we will get the same results. This factor can be a problem as when we take interviews the moods or interaction of the respondent could vary every time. This is reinforced in literature saying that the interaction level between the respondents is necessary (Christensen & Engdahl, 2001; Kylan, 2004). When communication between two people is not helpful then lack of information could take place changing the results of a research the next time.

To intensify the dependability interview questions have been attached at the end of thesis. The reason is that they can also be used in other researches. Moreover the interviews were recorded so that they can be listened again and by that the risk of missing anything important has been reduced.

Credibility

In a qualitative study the credibility is dependent upon how systematically the information and analysis has been carried and how openly it has been presented (Christenson & Engdahl, 2001). The answers were not suggested to the respondents they were all according to their own understanding and belief. The quality of analysis and validity of interview is dependent upon the interview quality (kvale, 1997). The answers could be undecided because of the misinterpretation of the respondents at some points, as they answered according to their own view point. Some measures have been taken to eliminate the fact of ambiguity. This has been mentioned before that we have recorded the interviews so that we can completely conform with the responses. The sources from which we took our information are valid since they are working in the industry from a good time span and have access to all the information that is associated to our objective of study. To make it more valid, during the interview questions were elaborated and asked more to get maximum information out of one section.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Interview results

Respondent's introduction

Given below is the brief overview of the respondents who were chosen for the interview session.

- Respondent A (Kamran Sadozai) Regional head of marketing (brands/operations/segments) for north (Warid)
- Respondent B (Asma Noreen) Senior officer business planning, strategy and research
- Respondent C (Omer khan) Manager marketing and administration Exploreville schools
- Respondent D (Haider khan)marketing coordinator, North Pakistan
- Respondent E (Hamayun javed) trade marketing business planner

4.2 Categorization

Standardization or Adaptation

When a firm enters a new market they have to either adapt according to the culture or go with a standard approach in which many times we have products or offers for all. It is a divisive topic from the early 90's. Explaining this Keegan and Green (1999) said: "the essence of global marketing is finding the balance between a standardized (extension) approach to the marketing mix and a localized (adaption) approach that is responsive to country or regional differences." (p.28) according to literature the purpose of standardization are increased sales volume, lower manufacturing cost, greater effectiveness and incorporated image around the world (Keegan & Schlegelmilch, 2001).Our respondent A explained that:

"Normally whenever the communication goes out its decided by the product team, they decide where it will be localized or standardized. It overall completely depends on the offer we make to the audience. For example if the offer is valid at the national level then we will prefer that its communication is standardized. If however we have to do promotion in Sindh or its regional based then we have a different strategy according to localized needs."

Explaining this that either we should go for standardized campaigns or the adapted according to culture our respondent B proposed that

"It depends on what kind of a campaign you are running and mostly on what kind of a base you have for that specific campaign. Whatever campaign you plan it has to be based on certain behaviors related to people present in your base, for example in the cmpak base there are callers from Karachi region and Islamabad region, so when

designing a campaign for each of those regions to generate more revenue we need to know about the needs of the people from that area, the money they have and their behavior so that our promotions can be more focused. Along with that we have nationwide campaigns, for example if Mobilink launches a campaign for inactive simcards, it will be for people all over the country. This shows that campaigns are always purpose driven and suitable to the audience that it is being addressed to."

Our third respondent who is in academia and propose marketing campaigns for institutions said that:

"I prefer Standardization in our promotional campaigns because we are in a business of education and we need to make sure that our standards our being observed in a proper manner. And it reduces the cost as well. But we do not always go with standardization sometimes we have to go for adaptation depending upon what we are offering."

These responses stress on the factor that a decision to adapt or standardize a campaign solely depends upon the situation also research have progressively identified the importance of a contingency line of attack, which claims that the best advertising strategy needs to be carefully determined depending on an analysis of factors inherent in the particular situation or environment at hand (Buzzell, 1968; Miracle, 1968; Ryans, 1969). The reason for all this is that pure standardization or pure adaptation is not the phenomenon that runs a long race so companies have to go for both depending upon the situations.

Respondent D:

"Advertisements are based upon a specific set of guidelines given by the marketing development office in which is in some ways national .We don't adapt when it comes to the advertisement strategy of the brand under consideration. In our case, we use standardization"

Respondent E:

"We don't exactly look forward to segmenting province wise. Marketing people look at things at a more national level. Marketing, designing etc. are followed at a national level looking at the mass audience being addressed"

The two responses belong to big companies that operate worldwide so their strategies do not vary in Pakistan meaning to say that they use standardized approach in all the regions. However when they move to different countries adaptation is the option that saves them from negative responses of the customers.

Where to adapt?

The respondents then mentioned the bases on which the advertisements requirement to be changed according to the need of the localized culture. Respondent A mentioned that:

"If however we have to do promotion in Sindh or its regional based then we have a different strategy according to localized needs otherwise for national level valid offers we prefer national language Urdu or English. Regional level campaigns are in the local language so while communicating in Sindh we will go for Sindh into it. The primary sector here is that what is our product and what is the region where product is offered so then the decision is made according to it. Here culture is very important because if you are going in standardization you consider culture very less and in a nationwide campaign when you consider different vehicles like tv, radio and then you have point of sales which are markets, retail stores in that we do standardization as well as regional level communication. At these point of sales the communication is adaptable to the culture because people start protecting the things when their own culture is mentioned in marketing say like we say that you can call from chakwal, pindi and Islamabad then people feel in identity in that they start owning it."

This response shows that cultural details are taken into account when the campaign is designed so that it could be understood by the people who are living in a specific place. Culture of the place is essential to be considered when you decide to familiarize the campaign according to the particulars of that area. However the respondent B stressed upon the factors that are to be considered when a campaign is designed she said that when they chose the bases to go for adaptation and standardization they focus on two things that are:

"Revenues and Customer behaviorFor example people in villages make phone calls and people in urban areas use mobile data more, so two different campaigns will be designed depending on the needs. Promotions are done according to the people being targeted. We may design activities in a cultural way to attract more people e.g. inclusion into a cultural mela, running shows on cultural tv channels."

The culture need to be taken into deliberation when we have to choose bases for adaptation each market must be considered, for the most part, as a distinctly separate unit and adaptations must be made accordingly (Pratt, 1956, p.172) due to differences in culture. Explaining this further there are some businesses that do not stress upon using both the strategies at the same time this is because the service or the product they offer is the one standard product throughout the nation. It is the standard of that service on the basis of which they compete in different markets, respondent C explained that:

"Overall, we are following standardized promotional strategy because the nature of our business is appropriate for one standardized strategy. We have set some standards that have to be followed in all of our

franchises so culture has less impact on this. Education business is a standardize system where we have to provide similar level of knowledge in all provinces to get the one comparable end product (Students) ”

The degree of the level of standardization and adaptation alters depending on the specific characteristic of the product (Maria D. Loukakou and Nampungwe B. Membe, 2012). Standardizing the various elements of the marketing process has the aim of scale economies in production thereby leading to improved efficiency (Doole and Lowe, 2008). Standardization can be an effective strategy as explained by the researchers but it is not possible to go with this strategy at all regions despite the fact it is cost effective.

Respondent D:

“When you look at subway as a brand, it is different from others. Around the globe there is no major competition for subway. McDonald’s and KFC are our indirect competitors, they don’t capture our market. That is why we are more aligned towards standardization i-e lesser competition. This type of a brand is unique and it cannot be disapproved anywhere around the globe by the audience, it works equally well in almost all parts of the globe. There is no reason for us to make a lot of changes for any specific region”.

Respondent E:

“Global qualitative measures need to be focused upon. Regions are not divided as provinces or smaller areas in our case. Standardization is applied on global levels but we do not do it locally. For example South East Asia is one of our regions so we pick out cultural values for that region, Pakistan is a region but Sindh and Punjab are not considered as regions for us.”

The big companies who have been operating in different regions are the ones who go for standardization in general however they have a different strategy to divide their regions. Referring to literature the global Company uses relatively standard brands, formulations, packaging, positioning and distribution in its global markets (Saeed Samiee and Kendall Roth). Having said that depending upon the culture they go with such strategies that are important to the beliefs of specific target market. .

Region wise changes

Region wise when we move, then we have to change our promotions according to that specific region this also happens with more frequency when the markets are expanded to other countries. When the offer is related to industry then adaptation strategy is not taken into account whereas the consumer offers are more influenced by the culture as they are directly related to the customer so one has to take care while making promotions so the people can relate. The respondent A believed that:

“Here I will quote an example of a campaign we did in Peshawar that when we put a religious element in our ads some people respect it but others say the ad is offensive, they have their own mindsets. Other example is that we had a display center at Peshawar, and the building where we were doing our activity was owned by people who had issues with placing human elements like we have different ambassadors of warid like Shahid Afridi (cricket player), Fawad Khan (actor). So we had to adapt culturally suitable campaign the reason behind this restriction of human element was that they consider picture or portrait as haram (not acceptable religiously).”

Another example which was quoted here by Mr. Kamran was of:

“Chef burger in KPK, Peshawar at university road, it’s a place which catered A class but most of the youth used to go there, like it was a hangout place for younger citizens of Peshawar. What happened there was that after Friday prayers whenever there was any rally or protest, people used to through stones, breaking all the glass. Every Friday they had to suffer this problem so they came up with a marketing tactic and wrote the kalima on the front of the building. This stopped the protestors to through stones on their building”

They put their hands on the nerves of the people as mentioned by literature studies many companies have to change their brand name because of different meanings it has when moving to new marketplaces (Nguyen and Le Thuy Dung, 2011).

Respondent B however stressed on the fact that when region wise we change then

“Ads must be in a language understood by everybody (the accent may vary). Whereas posters etc. are designed in different languages for ease of the people”

On contrary to this respondent C was in a business which prefer standardized promotion campaigns so he explained that:

“We normally do not change much on our campaigns because no matter which province or region we are going, we focus on the same target audience that understands our message”

Respondent D:

“Main change is the size of the advertisement campaign. For example, branches of subway are a lot more than that in Pakistan, so the scale of campaign is larger in India.

For example, there are different tactics, if there is a price in Rawalpindi the customers are price sensitive as compared to Islamabad because of the culture. So deals need to have discounts and offers. In Islamabad people might think that a product is cheap because the quality is being compromised.”

Respondent E:

“Regions are larger for us that don’t mean we lose any kind of cultural detail. Marketing activity is designed accordingly for India and Pakistan but not for areas inside them, it shall stay constant throughout the region”.

Here in Pakistan they do not change according to the specific cultures because the overall Pakistani culture is taken for designing the campaigns. It is due to the reason that they take the whole world as target and segment according to continents taking the general culture of that place where they advertise.

Impact of competition

When promotions are done the competition has to be considered when one considers that culture is important and other do not think it’s important then there is the difference in how the customer perceives the campaigns of both. Our respondent A explained:

“In telecom the offers we provide are changing every single day. So it’s an industry where competition has less time. But at the regional level we do adaptation depending upon how important that place is for us in terms of the sales we get from there. When we talk about Peshawar people do understand Pashto but they don’t read in Pashto whereas moving in Sindh people can read and write the language so we go with what people want there.”

But overall in this he wanted to say that competition cannot follow us when we design a campaign according to culture, reason being the diversity in this industry. Further explaining it Hill (2002) argues that, Firms usually face two kinds of competitive pressures that are pressure for cost reduction and pressure to be locally responsiveness. For supporting this argument respondent B emphasize that:

“Competition only effects by how we price those activities. Zong sells internet at a higher price because they want people to have perception that quality would come at a price. Depends on the overall strategy as well, for example if a competitor drops its price per mb we will not drop our price to match it because it is our strategy to maintain the prices”

Sometimes we can’t move according to the competition reason here is that each product has its own perception or image when they go for promotion they do not want to comply with competition since each marketing strategy is adapted according to region as well as the offer they are making. The respondent C however was more assertive in his response saying that:

“As we follow standardized strategy for all the regions we face competition from those who are using customized promotional strategies according to the region’s culture. So people at times get attracted towards the cultural aspect, which is shown in the promotions of the brand. They can relate the promotional campaign with their lifestyle”

Respondent D:

“There is no direct competition for subway in Pakistan”

Respondent E:

“Our competitors have exactly the same global or local region based marketing strategy as ours so there is not much of difference in that case”

According to the executives of big global companies the competition is taken differently respondent D says they do not consider that the fast food operators are big enough in Pakistan to be their competitors so they do not feel any pressure while making the advertisements. However the respondent E explained that their competitors follow their footsteps so they believe they have so firms grip on their marketing strategy which is designed according to the culture of the region. In all that it is suggested that companies should be able to adapt global marketing tactics to specific local markets when needed.

Maintaining image and minimizing confusions

The products or services have to understand that they have to maintain their image when they communicate to the consumer through advertisements and promotional campaigns. Like Hardees Pakistan has a challenge to adapt their communication according to the cultural needs of the country since their current outdoor advertisements were highly criticized by the customer. Respondent A said:

“Every brand have its own personality for example we have Warid we say the best network that we have so the interaction we have with customer is according to it but Ufone is comparatively a young brand and personified it as open and tagline used is “tum hi ho” this is sometimes taken as informal or friendly environment whereas at some levels it is taken as offensive or misbehaving way. Ufone is presenting its ad as humor factor it’s the personality of that brand. In a rural background lifestyles are changed and Telenor is taking it that way meaning that they have localized their promotion style with lollywood influenced advertisements. So that way people can relate to what they are watching to what they are facing in real life. So for rural setting aspirations are like that people like to watch

ads that are lollywood influenced that's their lifestyle. There is a difference in the way they eat, live and breathe. A major portion lives in rural setting.....There is another target audience that is more localized we have drivers, working class etc so ads are made for them as well like we see talkshawk for locals and then we have dejuice for youth. The target of this offer is the youth they need watsap, texting, social networking so the ads for them are more exciting and trendy the way they are living their lives"

Different products have their own image depending upon the market they are offered. The localized needs are catered by the companies in order to get customers satisfaction regarding the offers. For maintaining this image respondent B said that:

"Design it in a way that it has something for everybody".

It means that the image of the product is maintained through promotion by placing such concepts that are associated with people in one way or the other.

"By showing and mentioning the success in already established regions and the success of our franchisees that are working with us. Through this we can convey the message that it's a successful brand across Pakistan and this will be a success in your region too. We show our state of the art classrooms and kids that are studying there along with people that are working there"

This response of the respondent C was regarding the maintenance of their image by showing what they had already achieved. By showing this they had built an awareness that they are doing well in their core business.

Respondent D:

"There are no specific changes actually. I feel that as time is progressing, brands are becoming more national because of social media and people are following trends that are globally generated. For example, Even in Jhelum and Gujranwala, people believe in healthy food and want to open franchises for us"

Respondent E:

"It's all part of the marketing plan that how an audience will be dealt with, all the designing, adverts are done accordingly. The targeted audience is the main factor in defining it all".

The image maintenance is important because sometimes because of the advertisements the customers might get offended in terms of their culture so marketers have to design the campaigns according to their mindsets, values and lifestyle.

In order to minimize the cultural confusions marketers come up with the research. They understand the mindsets of the customer of a particular region and then come up with ideas that fulfill the requirements. Respondent A explained this minimization of confusions by this statement:

"Now the researchers go deep down to the territory level and understand the minds of the customer and not standardization is working so far to all levels. We have to adapt the culture of the segment that we are targeting. So confusions are automatically catered. For example you might remember that once Mobilink was considered as a very expensive brand they used to show them as very high fi brand which could be an inspiration for normal people but they cannot relate the brand to them. So when you have to communicate to the masses then it's important to first research the area where you want to hit"

Similar to this respondent B's answer was somehow same as respondent A saying that:

"Mostly the campaigns are region related so that people don't get confused."

The respondent C who explained it with reference to academia said:

"The message that is conveyed in the Ads should be clear and to the point so that people do not get confused. Language that is designed for the Ad should be according to the target audience and anything that is not acceptable in that specific region should be removed and that will help to reduce the confusion regarding the ads."

The small details have to be kept in mind when we make a campaign like language and other elements of culture that do not confuse the audience rather they get aware of the product information that is provided by the markers and are in cultural boundaries of that region.

Respondent D:

"We keep the same standard or same reflection in different areas. So issues like this do not arise due to a generic brand image. For example, controversial marketing campaign of Hardees was a controversy because their brand image was not as generic as ours".

Explaining this he said that they do not target a specific sect or region because of the sensitivity of the people towards things, but moreover he says that these controversies do not have impact on their sales people do discuss or criticize these things but they do not ever give up on the products they like it's a one thought that could be right or wrong

Respondent E:

"In the initial stages audience are informed with other products and in phase two it is told that is why our product better, telling people what the offer includes. There hasn't been any such cultural confusion as yet in our company."

They believe in decreasing the confusions by simply communicating to the customer. So when customer becomes satisfied they go with the promotions that are widely accepted by the people.

Importance of culture

Today when marketers plan an activity they always come up with lots of research that is based on the cultural knowledge of the people of that area. The decision to choose the marketing strategy depends upon the objective of business as well as the culture of that region (Hollensen, 2001). Explaining the culture to be an important element respondent A says:

“Its (culture) really very important to be considered. The sensitivity of culture is very essential to be looked at in nationalization campaigns. Many things are happening in our society but the level of acceptance is not there widely. So we have to see that in 20 corer population how many of them can relate to a particular advertisement. The ads which were banned do not have an element that was not practiced in our society but it was banned due to the reason that most of the people do not want to relate to them. We do not have middle class either we have affluent class or we have population who are living below the poverty line. So thinking patterns are different, this type of the promotions goes in negative promotion.”

According to him out of a large population the acceptance is not their widely for the promotions that do not go with our cultural requirements, but this depend upon the fact that the product they offer is a product for masses. There are some products that are for a specific target who are different in perceiving things. They might be open to accept new things that are not relevant to our culture. Respondent B in this regard explained:

“Culture is one of the most important things in making these campaigns. It affects audiences in a better and more effective way if we include culture in our campaigns”

In this she wanted to explain that when the culture is considered for the promotions customer can relate to it. For example she refers to the example of their recent zong ad in which they showed every culture which was necessary because it is the product for all people no matter they are Sindhi, Balochi, Pathan or Punjabi. In this way they can relate to their cultural sections and sense a feeling to own the product, respondent C whereas mentioned that:

“Culture does impact on consumer reacting behavior but due to globalization and rise in use of social media people are more aware and adopting new things from other cultures. It is more like a “Tribes”, example can be Using IOS or Android. No matter which region or race people belong to they are using these systems and connected to each other, but as far as promotions are concerned we have to go deep down in the cultural details and then plan our activities. People might get offended to what they can't relate.”

Examining this further explained that culture is not an element that can be ignored. From the viewpoint of anthropology all the actions in promotion are culturally unavoidable.

Respondent D:

“Culture is important as we should have adverts that are relatable but you see Restaurants are using funny or in a way offensive adds to get attention of people, controversy in a way is leading to the marketing success of a product. Clothing brands like khaadi are using the same models or images for Islamabad as well as for Peshawar and rural areas, so if a brand catches popularity nationally then people mostly follow it blindly without any issues resulting in better success rate”.

Respondent E:

“It is very important and also depends on our targeted audience. Everything in planned and done according to the audience very precisely so that culture is kept alive in the campaign. You wouldn't be wasting a lot of money if you are precise about what you want to capture.”

This is explained by the University of Newcastle that in some areas adverts are made in which nudity or racism are openly presented but the same ad would not be culturally ok to be presented in religious regions of the world where people do not believe or accept this exposure (David S. Waller, n.d.). However the people have lots of importance for the culture so they will not ever accept the ads that do not comply with cultural regulations.

Changing culture and tolerance level

We are living in a society where marketing and communication is changing with each passing day. This can ultimately change the scope of profitability in different markets. In this era where world is shrinking, people are culturally sensitive and societies are diverse, so marketers have to come up with the most relevant advertisements in order to be efficacious as explained by research Within the business world intercultural communication is vital for success (Mehmood ul Hassan 2008). Somehow the culture is changing but there are some elements that still are associated with our culture and are praise by the people respondent A in this said:

“Somehow the culture is changing if you ask professionally but personally I believe it's not changing too much people still like that ad of dentonic then statelife ad and the ad of naz pan are still appreciated by the people and they recognize those ads because they all were the ones that can be related by the peoples lifestyle here.”

Supporting this research says that no matter marketing has become a world common discipline but actually the difference in nations, religion, language, heritage ethnic groups in terms of culture still exist in market place having obvious impact on the marketing practices of the business organizations(ragulan,2011). So the underlying factors do not change no matter if the outlooks of people change.

This however is explained by our respondent B that culture is changing she said:

“People have developed more tolerance towards new things. If they see that an advertisement is not according to their culture they might try to accept it”

Now people are more open to new things they have started accepting things and becoming a part of the changes. The respondent C however perceived it with respect to the changing trends of consumption that is:

“Yes, it’s changing because of education, knowledge and awareness from social media. Eating habits and lifestyles are changing with time for example frozen food was not very successful in Pakistan but when K&N’s chicken launched their brand, they started showing the ease and usage of their products and now frozen food concept is acceptable in Pakistan. The acceptability has been increased in terms of promotions as well because in my point of view ads are more open in communicating the message but there is a large population who do not accept this openness hence criticizing the ads”

Respondent D:

“It is becoming more flexible. We were very conservative people but that isn’t the case anymore”

Respondent E:

“Pakistan is a nation where the culture is evolving these days. One of the most popular evolving nations these days, our culture is also evolving but it’s a process.”

The culture of Pakistan is so far changing n evolving with the education and better lifestyle. We see that initially lawn ads were criticized by the customers but later on the started tolerating things and accepting them widely.

Explain the change in culture we have also explored where the tolerance level of people is increased when we talk about the activities that are suited to our culture following were the responses:

Respondent A:

“But people are slightly accepting the bold ideas sometimes. Not completely agreed upon this aspect”

Respondent B:

“People have developed more tolerance towards new things. If they see that an advertisement is not according to their culture they might try to accept it”.

Respondent C:

“Right now there is a resistance among people in accepting things that doesn’t go along with our culture. We have seen many TV ads on social media that are banned on TV because of cultural of religious aspect”

Respondent D:

“Yes, the adverts running these days would have been banned 10 years ago but definitely the culture has changed.....The Hardees issue didn’t do any harm to their sales, it became a controversy and It actually gained more popularity for them”.

Respondent E:

“We don’t come up with such marketing activities that are not culturally suitable. What we need to do is to inform people first by globalizing the culture so that they can accept new activities later on but this is not the right time.”

The overall analysis of this section will be that people have start accepting things so far and now they believe world is changing but still there is a large section of people who would never compromise on the cultural needs of the advertisements. This forces marketer to adapt according to the needs of the local target market, where they change their material, campaigns according to the will of countrymen (David S. Waller, n.d, para.9)

There are some ads that are presented in a way that they deliver the information of the product no matter how controversial it is the content of communication plays its part. So there are some ads that are not accepted by the people to a large extent respondent A said:

“This is somehow changing but the fact is that for every product we have different target market to which we refer so for them we use the promotions which are acceptable for them. Many things are still a taboo.”

Respondent B:

“People are changing if you observe these advertisements these days they are pretty bold in various ways. But still there are certain people that will always criticize”

Respondent C:

"It is still a taboo in Pakistan. It will take some time for the people to accept bold ads. Because Pakistan is a Religious country where such things are not acceptable, even a girls photo on billboards are not highly appreciated in different parts of the country".

Respondent D:

"Things are not as much taboo anymore these days. People may talk a lot about controversial things but they don't act upon it."

Respondent E:

"I don't think we have a lot of cultural tolerance right now. I had to shut down a lot of campaigns because of this. People are coming up with a lot of perspective based ads though. We need to prepare our people for tomorrow with the education we give them."

Only one respondent gave the response against the fact that many kinds of ads are taboo in Pakistan, reason of this unacceptability was that he was working with a chain that is global and he is working in a most educated region of country where people tolerate things more often but to wider extent things are still a taboo. We cannot show bold advertisements in that only small or minute changes can actually control the responses of the customer (Douglas & Craige, 1995).

Need for shift

In this new era when culture is evolving we need a shift in marketing activities. Conducting regular research with consumers and customers enables us to make sure we are constantly adapting and evolving our brands to meet long-term needs (Brian Fletcher, 2013). In that respondent A projected that:

"They do need a shift because the research element is missing in ads. The marketers have to see the smart strategy or the business strategy. They need to understand what they are offering and to whom they are offering".

Respondent B:

"There is a need for shift in the way marketers present their ads because we see that most of the times ads are having no logic, humor is there but they are not supporting any idea. Having said that we can say that research in detail is needed about what the audience wants to see and how they can relate to what they see. Create ads in a way that highlight or differentiate them from other regions e.g. mentioning Hospitality of the Punjabis".

Respondent C:

"Yes, I do believe that our marketers need to think differently especially when they are making an ad for TV. I have observed that most of the brands are using the same pattern to make ads. Either they show musical dancing models or they make typical simple ads. So marketers need to explore other ideas to present their ads."

Respondent D:

"People should come up with strategies that can create a word of mouth buzz from social media or anything; the Hardees example is quite visible. Another example was of a restaurant in Karachi which said you can pay as much as you want for a product, which created a buzz and brought more customers."

Respondent E:

"We need to be very careful with what we plan our ads with. Children viewership should always be kept in mind. Every marketer should be careful about that while planning."

The respondents were supporting the fact that we need a strong shift in how we present our campaigns due to the reason that people cannot relate to what is happening in the ads we see humorous ads but they are not related to what we actually do in our lives. Similarly we have to go deep down in the customers mind and find out that what the thing he or she wants to watch is. The products are presented in a way that is totally fancy and people do not care about what they are watching so research is extremely important having said that we can further elaborate it from literature that the research is important to be conducted on regular basis because it will help evolve their brand and adapt the activities according to the needs of culture which will help them to survive in the long-term (Brian Fletcher, 2013).

Specifying campaign elements

We tried to find out that what is most important element that is considered while making any promotional campaign. For that we have some options like education, lifestyle, religion and language which were in relevance to the culture the respondents had their own views explained below.

Respondent A:

"You cannot segment it because it depends on product and where it is to be delivered and what is the framework we need. In Pakistan when we design campaign in Ramadan we will deliver it that way when its independence day the campaign will be designed according to that cultural need when it will be world cup then its related to it so the factors all depend upon what time it is and what is the event that people are looking up to".

Respondent B:

“Education/language is very important to obtain results but mostly most of the ads are understood by everybody so it doesn't have much of an impact.”

Respondent C:

“Well it is dependent on what the nature of your product/services is and which time or season you're going to air that campaign. For example I have observed that during Ramadan in Pakistan mostly brands target their consumers on religious appeal”.

Respondent D:

“Lifestyle is definitely the most important factor in designing a campaign. A person might not be able to speak English but he might love McDonald's fast food”

Respondent E:

“All of them are important at some level. Language is important to convey the message while the lifestyle is a more vital aspect.”

Analyzing this we came to know that education, lifestyle, language and religion are equally important but it entirely depends upon the product we are offering. The time during which the ads will be played are also important because people develop association with the occasions and likewise when they watch ads that are related they own the product.

Westernization, feminism or patriarchy

We find out that why the western element is increasing in our ads like we see more of music, dances and foreign places in our campaigns. The respondents had following justifications.

Respondent A:

“People are acceptable to dances, foreign places, and foreign clothes like you see Q mobile ads they take actors from other countries so acceptability is high now. Campaigns are standardized or adapted to the culture but it merely depend on the fact that the region where we are presenting the communication. You just have to see that the market where you are going, how much relevance your promotion have with the local market. It's more like when you are making a presentation and you make it either standardized or specific there is nothing wrong it's the way you go with your business strategy plan which says to reach the depth and adaptation at all levels like languages, regions etc. When you make campaign you define each and every thing beforehand then things are made according to that. You have different channels like Tv, radio, ATL and BTL so you decide which touch point you will take”.

Respondent B:

“At a level that is tolerable by the audience. By looking at the adverts these days it quite visible that people have been quite acceptable towards the westernization”.

Respondent C:

“Well acceptability level is very much. This acceptability depends on the level of education and awareness in a region. Westernization is an element that is quit visible due to the fact that world is becoming smaller they are becoming aware of other cultures.”

Respondent D:

“There is a lot of flexibility these days. People have become more aware of what is happening globally these days. This is not westernization it is becoming aware of the world. Shawarma is an Arabic recipe and it is popular in Pakistan because of the media and their marketers.”

Respondent E:

“We are actually promoting it. Whatever local companies are doing is not westernization but if we look at global organizations they focus more on westernization. Local organizations focus more on making their companies big”.

The ads are promoting what the people want to see, it's not westernization it's actually becoming more alert to the cultures and adopt the cultures for change. People have started accepting the new things they watch through ads.it is due to the reason of more foreign channels being aired in our country that westernization is becoming eminent is our advertisements then we will discuss how we have seen that patriarchy is been played in our ads, feminist is more clear. We see that some things are truly associated with the male members of the society like caring for the whole family which is a collective perspective (hofsted, 2004). Whereas women are objectified in some most of the ads now also we see women are more dominated as compared to the male members. This is how the culture has been changed that people do agree that they are having setups in which woman lead the house.

Respondent A:

“Your family setups are like that in our middle class segment things are like that you would never see a father concerned about the washing of his kids clothes so this is actually relevant to the lifestyle we see. Fathers are responsible for the needs and want of the family. On the other hand you see feminist as well when female domination is seen in a Honda automobile advertisement. It's actually the appeal the marketers are using”.

Respondent B:

“It depends on the product we are selling. A modern woman is shown in the ufone hisaab add who is strong and has her hold on the family, while the laziza add portrayed a grandfather’s hold on the family. It depends on the marketing strategy of the seller.”

Respondent C:

“I do not agree with this statement of male domination in ads, you might have seen male in mostly ads but you must notice that females are more dominant in our TV ads. Even for selling a shaving stick, companies put in females in their campaigns with knowing the fact that they are not the real users.”

Respondent D:

“There is more woman objectification and it is actually more effective and beneficial around the globe.”

Respondent E:

“This culture is not ready for female domination yet. I’ll be okay with presenting women in our ads though. If you are selling car tyres etc. okay but this mostly depends on your targeted market.”

The women are placed in ads which more of the times are totally unrelated but yet we see people it and accept it, so in the advertising industry women are not always shown to be oppressed rather they are either dominant or they are objectified.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

To conclude we can say that standardization or adaptation could not be considered separately for marketers it is important to research the market according to the cultural requirements of the study and decide what to do in order to generate maximum output. In Pakistani market the marketers need to work a lot in order to understand the culture. Promotional marketing has to be different with in different cultures, few things might be acceptable in one region but they are totally offensive to the people of other regions. Some people are more sensitive to religious practices so they do not want marketers to hurt their emotions however there are cultures that appreciate exposure. Language, religion, lifestyle are all very important to be considered in promotions so marketers have to adapt to the things to which customers can relate. When people can relate to what they watch then they develop a sense of possessing things. This can help brand loyalty also. By the findings of the research it will be totally harmless to say that regions have different types of customers in terms of cultural perceptions. Every region and area is quite exclusive when we refer to culture. So this implies that an advertisement in one setting cannot be properly executed in order situation. So it is very important for the companies operating in Pakistan to consider the cultural differences and search for the ways that are suitable in other or dissimilar regions. Firms need to think big but they have to comply with the local differences.

Recommendations:

After going through literature and conducting interviews the researcher believes that there are some recommendations that need to be mentioned in the research paper.

- Marketers should study the culture according to behavioral perspective, so that they can get idea about how to go deep down to the level of local people in order to get more output.
- Standardization is important and cost effective but bigger firms should also consider the local culture of places so that customer can retain the product and possess it.
- The future researchers are recommended to increase the sample size which comprises of people belonging to different cultures, this will help yield a better data.

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Appendices

“Interview Questions for Research Purpose”

These are the interview questions that are to be answered in order to get the objective of our study. Your interview questions will be recorded so that not a single thing is missed. This information would only be used for research purpose. The purpose of research is to explore why it's important to design advertisements and other marketing campaigns according to the culture of specific area. How the cultural disparity in different regions plays its part in making customer perception towards the products and services.

1. While making your promotional campaigns what do you prefer standardization or adaptation in four provinces? (Standardization or adaptation)
2. On what basis you decide that you have to go for standardized or adaptation strategy according to the culture of the region in which you play your ad or perform other promotional activities? (bases to choose the option)
3. What are the changes you make in your marketing activity when you move to other regions? Please explain? (Region wise changes)
4. What is the impact of competition when you decide that you have to go with setting your activity according to the culture or standardize all over? (impact of Competition)
5. How do you maintain your image in the mind of customer while you go in other markets? (Maintaining image)
6. How to minimize the confusion regarding the advertisements? (Minimizing confusion)
7. In your opinion do you think that culture is still important? Explain it? (Importance of culture)
8. Is the culture of Pakistan changing for example opinions or mindsets? (Changing culture)
9. Are people accepting the marketing activities that do not go with our culture? (Culturally Unacceptable activities)
10. Do think that a rapid change is observed by the customer side and now marketers can come up with bold ads or it is still a taboo in Pakistan? (Change in customers tolerance)
11. What are the appeals that are suitable for different regions of Pakistan? (Appeals)
12. Do you think there is a need for a shift in the way marketers are presenting ads these days? (Need to shift)
13. Amongst religion, language, lifestyle and education which one is the strongest element that is to be considered while designing a campaign? (Campaign design elements)
14. Is westernization eminent in our marketing campaigns? What is the acceptability level for that, when you say that people are changing these days and are more open? (Westernization)
15. Why we always see male domination in our advertisements, does patriarchy play its part while marketing a product? Answer with reference to the cultural impact on our promotional activities? (Patriarchy)