HOW DOES CREATIVE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION WORK? THE IMPACT OF ONE COUNTRY'S MEDIA IMAGE ON CONSUMERS IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore how the media image of one country affects consumer behavior in another country in the process of intercultural consumption. This study adopts the questionnaire survey method, quantitative data comes from Thai college students, a total of 386 students are intercultural consumers. The intercultural media and consumers choose Chinese media and young Thai consumers respectively. If multinational companies want to improve their intercultural consumption, they can start from the base of enhancing their media image. The communication content of cross-border marketing can emphasize raising consumers' curiosity in the three aspects of culture, usage, and sociality, thereby promoting the attractiveness of their social media, and ultimately enhancing their intercultural consumption.

The theoretical contribution is two fold: First, this article constructs a model that explains how to positively enhance intercultural consumption from an intercultural media image; Secondly, it helps companies master an important aspect of media marketing information: consumers' curiosity about interculturality, usage, and sociality.

Keywords: Intercultural Media Image, Curiosity Culture, Curiosity Usage, Curiosity Sociality, Social Media Attractiveness

Introduction

Under the mutual impact of globalization and localization, the impact of a certain foreign media image on local intercultural consumers is a topic that is often valued and discussed in depth. This research wants to explore this issue from the perspective of the influence process. This study argues that the influence of media image on cross-cultural consumption can be divided into four stages: (1) The media image of other countries will positively affect the cultural curiosity of domestic consumers; (2) The cultural curiosity of domestic consumers will be simultaneously; (3) Curiosity about the uses and sociability of products from other countries also positively affects the attractiveness of social media in other countries; and (4) The attractiveness of social media in other countries, it will have a positive impact on intercultural consumption in the country.

Research Background

In recent years, academia and practice have gradually paid attention to the phenomenon caused by differences in cultural environments. This difference may lead to misunderstanding or attraction between groups (Tam & Milfont, 2020). Increasing cross-group contact can reduce mutual prejudice and enhance friendship (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). When cross-group media with cultural elements

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is used, it has more intercultural and social effects (Schwarzenthal et al., 2019).

Under the influence of transnational media (including movies, advertisements, and social media) on domestic consumers, although some consumers existed in the early stage, they became less accustomed to and even rejected intercultural consumer products (Jonason et al., 2020), but with the increased exchange density of international information, consumers have been transformed and can enter a sense of novelty and widespread acceptance (Dai & Chen, 2014). The audience for this shock may be mostly young people who are more receptive to changes in new things. They are more receptive to intercultural products or services, and even actively seek, collect, or consume them, than traditional things with which they grew up very familiar (Durrah et al., 2018). People's curiosity to learn about different cultures may not only come from an attraction to positive information but also from a desire to counteract negative information (Niehoff & Oosterwijk, 2020).

The purpose of this research is to explore the influence of media images in other countries on intercultural consumption. Using Chinese media images and Thai young consumer groups as examples, this article attempts to construct a theoretical model to explain how a more positive Chinese media image can be improved the Intercultural consumption of young Thai consumers.

Literature Review

Intercultural communication and consumer purchase intentions are one of the main topics that multinational companies or researchers have long been interested in studying (Ihtiyar & Ahmad, 2014; Teng & Laroche, 2007; Zolfagharian, Saldivar, & Sun, 2014). However, more studies have focused on intercultural communication skills at the individual level (Kealey, 2015; Lieberman & Gamst, 2015). Although the research results in this area are helpful to understand intercultural

consumption, the part that companies can focus on is limited. This article intends to explore from the perspective of media image, the research results can make the part of the enterprise's focus more direct and effective.

There are many research results showing that the characteristics of media credibility will affect consumer behavior (Ismagilova et al., 2020), and the image of social media can directly reflect the credibility of the media. Studies have also shown that cultural preferences can lead to various possibilities and affect consumer behavior (Kacen & Lee, 2002). In the process of shaping cultural preferences, consumers may accept those media with better images or credibility. In addition, in the process of cultural elements influencing consumer behavior, whether individuals would like to follow or obey tradition, or individuals would like to show their individual uniqueness (Liang & He, 2012), it is important for interculturality, usage, and sociality mode of curiosity is at the core (Loewenstein, 1994).

As the products or services of online media or international multinational corporations are becoming more and more internationalized, consumers can easily access multinational media, and the messages conveyed by these media, including issues, media shooting techniques, and plots, will affect consumers to understand the intention or connotation of the country's culture (Hussein, Hassan, & Ashley, 2020), the better the overall image of these media among consumers, the clearer the message conveyed. This positive contact can also effectively reduce differences and prejudice between cultural groups (Davies et al., 2011), which in turn triggers consumers' curiosity about these transnational cultures (Wirtz et al., 2020), and their understanding of transnational cultures, after reading some content, consumers are curious to learn more (Durrah et al., 2018). Moreover, some studies have shown that poor media image will hinder intercultural communication (Ndiayea & Ndiayea, 2014). Based on the above, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1: Intercultural media image can positively affect curiosity about culture.

Curiosity about different cultures is a starting point. Under the trend of curiosity, if intercultural elements can be connected to daily life or social groups, it can better meet the needs of consumers and combine with the mentality of consumer pursuit of individual differentiation (Karsay et al., 2020).

Under the urge of curiosity, people will want to get more information, especially when the process of being interpreted by them is pleasant (FitzGibbon, Lau, & Murayama, 2020). Consumers are usually not satisfied with intercultural curiosity. They will further explore how people in these different cultures live, and they will also want to contact this cultural group through social media. Based on the above, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H2a: Curiosity about culture can positively affect curiosity about usage.

H2b: Curiosity about culture can positively affect curiosity about sociality.

With different cultural backgrounds, people's cognitive or emotional processing processes are also different (Keller & Otto, 2009). It is precisely because of these differences that they directly allow people want to communicate with these people of different cultures through social networks. When consumers satisfy some of their curiosity through products, services, and social communication, they will also want to obtain more relevant intercultural information directly through more social or social media to satisfy their increasing curiosity (Węglińska, 2020). The content of social media is diversified, and it can provide consumers with various needs for various issues, and the information is provided by ordinary people. Compared with the information provided by traditional commercial advertisements, it has higher persuasive power (Durrah et al., 2018). In addition, social media is usually interactive, and the doubts arising from the communication process can also be understood appropriately or through multiple channels. This model can improve the attractiveness of intercultural consumers to social media. Some views of neuroscience also support this view (FitzGibbon, Lau, & Murayama, 2020). Based on the above, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H3a: Curiosity about usage can positively affect social media attractiveness.

H3b: Curiosity about sociality can positively affect social media attractiveness.

If it is a certain cultural message conveyed by some social media, consumers' attitudes toward intercultural consumption will turn positive (Wirtz et al, 2020), and it may also increase intercultural consumption behavior (Dai & Chen, 2014). The influence of social media on consumers' attitudes, whether direct or indirect, tangible or intangible, has great effects. These social media usually provide positive information on a rational or irrational level in terms of cognition, emotion, and behavioral intentions through storytelling, and then change or promote consumption attitudes (Wirtz et al., 2020) and make them from negative to neutral, from neutral to positive, from positive to positive buying behavior. Based on the above, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H4: Social media attractiveness can positively affects intercultural consumption.

Synthesize the above hypotheses to construct the theoretical framework of this research, as shown in Figure 1.
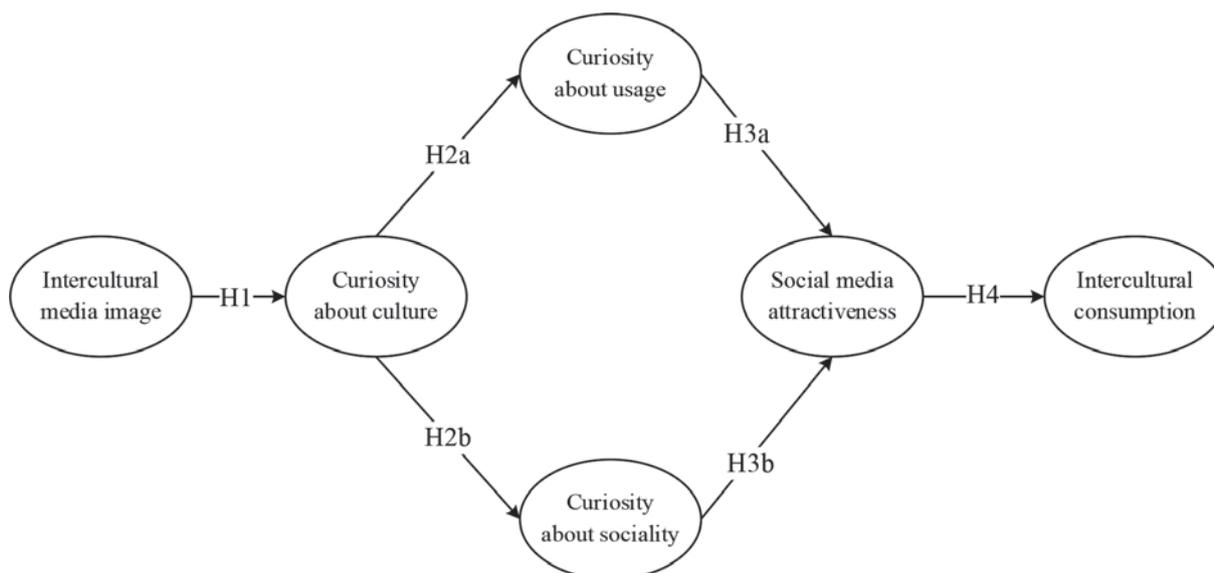
Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

Methodology

This research takes Thai university students as the research object. Thailand and China have had close cultural and economic exchanges for a long time. Although Thai Chinese account for 12% to 14% of Thailand's total population, the new generation of Thai young people are less restricted by traditional culture and may have a higher degree of acceptance of intercultural matters and a higher degree of curiosity. Existing, therefore, we took Thai university students as the survey object and obtained 386 valid questionnaires. The analysis results are shown in Table 1.

Since this study was in the period of a questionnaire survey, which coincided with the high incidence of COVID-19, we adopted the online questionnaire survey to collect data. In order to prevent the respondent from answering without seeing the question clearly, this study adopts time and logic criteria to judge whether the questionnaire is valid. For the time criterion, before the actual test, 5 respondents were asked to test the answering time in the pretest, with an average of 120 seconds (standard deviation of 18 seconds) to complete the questionnaire, because the answering time is based on 102 seconds if the questionnaire is less than 102 seconds, it is considered invalid questionnaire and deleted. Under this criterion, 39 questionnaires are deleted; in the logical criterion section, two forward items are randomly selected and changed to reverse questions, repeated questioning. If the two questions (forward question and reverse question) have the same answer numbers, the questionnaire is deemed invalid and deleted. Under this criterion, 27 questionnaires will be deleted. In this study, a total of 452 questionnaires were collected. After 66 invalid questionnaires were deleted according to the above criteria, 386 valid questionnaires were obtained, and the effective sample rate was 85.40%.

Measures

Sort out the questionnaire item content of each variable in this study, as shown in Appendix 1. The measurement method of each item is a 7-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

1. Intercultural Media Image

Intercultural media image refers to the attitudes of members of communities of different national cultures towards the media image of other cultures, in which individuals have a strong psychological comparison, and want to understand the similarities or differences among these cultures points, which may manifest as their cognitive, affective, or behavioral intentions. The questionnaire is modified from the measurement of Hussein,

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Hassan, and Ashley (2020) and Xiang (2013).

2. Curiosity about Usage

It refers to the degree of curiosity of individuals in a cultural community about the use or use of other cultural elements, which may be specific products or abstract media services, which may include media such as advertisements, movies, and TV dramas, in other words, it can also be expressed more deeply in these media, such as the clothing presented, the way of expressing emotions, the way of interpersonal communication and other elements. The questionnaire was modified from the measurement of Birenbaum et al. (2019) and Kim, Shim, and Ahn (2011).

3. Curiosity about Culture

It refers to the degree of curiosity about the culture of a specific country in terms of cognition, emotion, or behavioral intentions, and the individual's motivation to understand in these three aspects. The questionnaire was modified from the measurement of Birenbaum et al. (2019) and Jani and Hwang (2016).

4. Curiosity about Sociality

It refers to the degree of curiosity that members of a certain community want to interact with members of other cultural communities, which implies that community members believe that through community interaction, they can accelerate their understanding of other cultural connotations. The questionnaire was modified from the measurement of Birenbaum et al. (2019) and Fang, Tang, Li, and Wu (2018).

5. Social Media Attractiveness

It refers to the willingness of a member of a cultural community to want to use the social media used by members of other cultural communities, and the stronger the willingness, the higher the attractiveness of the culture. The questionnaire is modified from the measurement of Wirtz et al. (2020) and Mandal, Roy, and Raju (2017).

6. Intercultural Consumption

It refers to the willingness of members of a certain cultural community to consume the products or services of another cultural community. The questionnaire is modified from the observation results of qualitative research by Vorster, Kipnis, Bebek, and Demangeot (2020) and Rodrigues and Paradies (2018).

Results

Correlation Analysis

In terms of the correlation coefficient, as shown in Table 1, the correlation of each variable is within a reasonable range, which also conforms to the theoretical relationship.

Table 1 Correlation Analysis Table

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Intercultural Media Image	4.55	1.70	.90					
2. Curiosity about Usage	3.82	0.92	.34	.90				
3. Curiosity about Culture	3.24	1.21	.22	.28	.89			
4. Curiosity about Sociality	3.75	0.86	.28	.62	.21	.90		
5. Social Media Attractiveness	3.62	1.02	.41	.42	.35	.41	.90	
6. Intercultural Consumption	4.10	0.83	.24**	.25**	.25**	.19**	.39**	.82
AVE			.65	.63	.63	.64	.64	.52
CR			.90	.90	.89	.90	.90	.84
$(AVE)^{1/2}$			.81	.79	.79	.80	.80	.72

Source: 1. All correlation coefficients in the correlation table are $p < .001$, and the diagonal is Cronbach's α. 2. AVE is the average variance extracted. 3. CR is composite reliability.

Reliability and Validity

In terms of reliability, as shown in Table 1, Cronbach's α values are all greater than 0.8, which is consistent with past research and has reasonable reliability.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The overall fitness of the measurement model is good ($\chi^2 = 487.27$, df = 390, χ^2/df = 1.25, GFI=.92, AGFI=.91, CFI=.98, RMSEA= .025, SRMR = .033), and the load of each standardized factor is greater than .5. Calculate the AVE and CR values based on the results of the above analysis. Please refer to Table 1, where CR is greater than .8, AVE is also greater than .5, and the square root of AVE is also Both are greater than the correlation coefficient between its variables and other variables, showing that the variables and the items of each measurement have convergent validity, and each variable has discriminative validity between variables.

Structural Model Analysis

The overall fitness of the structural model is good ($\chi^2 = 756.74$, df = 399, χ^2/df = 1.90, GFI = .89, AGFI = .87, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .048, SRMR = .138), and all indicators are in the acceptable range. As a result of the analysis, please refer to Figure 2 for the standardized coefficients of each path. Hypothesis 1 is supported ($\beta = .26$, p <.001), intercultural media image can positively affect curiosity about culture. Hypothesis 2a is supported ($\beta = .35$, p <.001), curiosity about culture can positively affect curiosity about usage. Hypothesis 2b, support is obtained ($\beta = .27$, p <.001), curiosity about culture can positively affect curiosity about sociality. Hypothesis 3a is supported ($\beta = .34$, p <.001), curiosity about usage can positively affect social media attractiveness. Hypothesis 3b is supported ($\beta = .27$, p <.001), Curiosity about sociality can positively affect social media attractiveness. Hypothesis 4 is supported ($\beta = .33$, p <.001), social media attractiveness can positively affects intercultural consumption.

The above-mentioned statistical test results are summarized and sorted out, as shown in Figure 2.
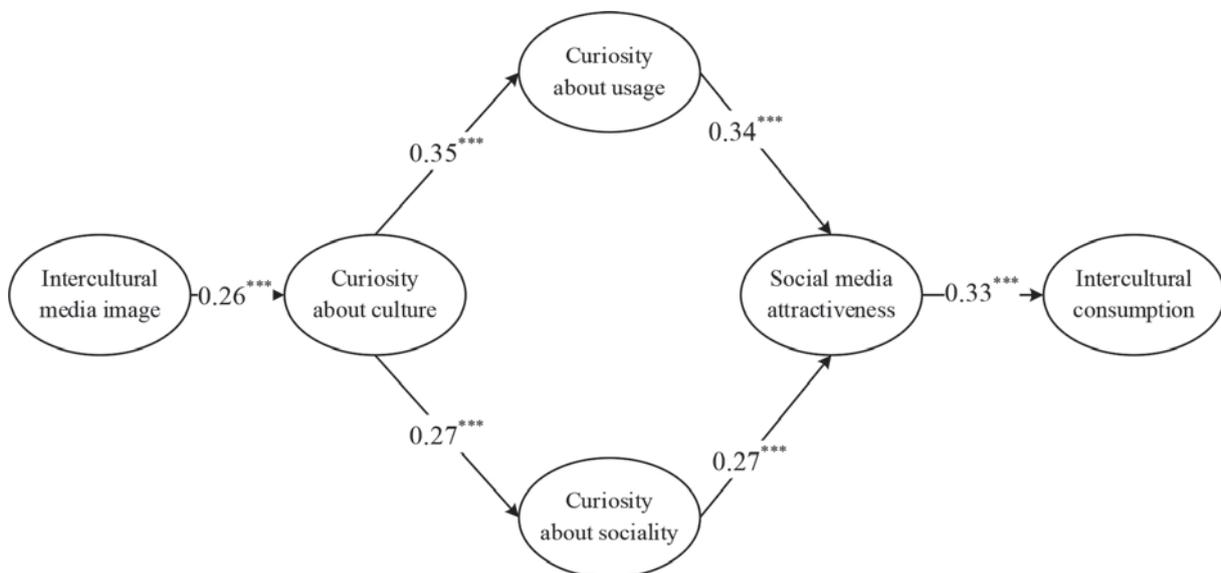

Figure 2 Results of Analysis

Discussion

The results of this study are helpful for the application of personal social media and organizational online platforms, although both are online tools and resources in the field of digital technology that help to facilitate communication, collaboration and information sharing.

Social media can be defined as web-based applications that allow users to create, share, and exchange content, ideas, and information with other users (Xiang, 2013). Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok. Social media platforms are primarily designed for social interaction, and tend to focus more on personal expression, social networking, and entertainment (Wirtz et al,. 2020). Therefore, cross-cultural media images may need to combine personal cross-cultural characteristics to arouse consumers' curiosity and the attraction of social media before they can have an impact on their cross-cultural consumption behavior. An online platform, on the other hand, refers to a digital environment that facilitates the interaction of multiple parties, such as buyers and sellers, service providers and consumers, or content creators and viewers. Examples of online platforms include Amazon, Airbnb, Uber, YouTube, and GitHub. Online platforms focus more on facilitating transactions, communication, and collaboration among users. Therefore, the image of cross-cultural media may need to shape the characteristics of cross-cultural online platforms in advance to arouse consumers' curiosity and the attraction of social media before they can have an impact on cross-cultural consumption behavior.

Thus, several key differences remain between the processes by which intercultural media images influence intercultural consumption when applied to social media and online platforms. First, social media platforms are more oriented toward personal expression, while online platforms are more oriented toward transactions and communication. Second, social media platforms are more social and entertainment-oriented, while online platforms are more business and collaborative. Third, social media platforms are usually more decentralized and user-driven, while online platforms are usually more centralized and controlled by a single entity or organization.

Conclusion

Intercultural media image can indeed increase the attractiveness of social media by promoting consumer curiosity, thereby enhancing intercultural consumption. The theoretical model proposed in this research can be appropriately explained: in an intercultural context, how a better intercultural media image can enhance intercultural consumption. Under the trend of inducing consumers' cultural curiosity, consumers will actively seek to satisfy their usability and social curiosity; then consumers may devote themselves to communication channels through social media to understand The more they know about various intercultural products or services, the higher their willingness to consume (Harlam et al., 1995).

Research Implications

When making marketing plans, manufacturers can emphasize the image of intercultural media to enhance the curiosity of consumers in countries where the intercultural is located, thereby promoting the attractiveness of social media, and ultimately promoting intercultural consumption. In terms of academic significance, on the basis of this research, follow-up researchers can also explore other consumer attractiveness factors generated by the image of transnational cultural media (Węglińska, 2020).

The results show that the influence of media image on intercultural consumption is divided into four stages: (1) The media image of other countries will positively affect the cultural curiosity of domestic consumers; (2) The cultural curiosity of domestic consumers will simultaneously positively affect their curiosity about the usage, and sociality of other countries' products; (3) The curiosity about the

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usage, and sociality of other countries' products also positively affect the attractiveness of other countries' social media; and (4) The attractiveness of other countries' social media will be positive affect intercultural consumption in the country.

Companies that promote intercultural products or services can first review the current stage of the company's cultural products or services, find possible obstacles to advancement, and then take corresponding measures to promote intercultural consumption.

Research Limitations

This study takes students as the research object, and the results prove that their higher intercultural media image may produce higher consumption intentions of transnational culture. Follow-up researchers may consider using practitioners or other consumer groups, some of which have actual comparative advantages. Those with high spending power will be able to better determine the theoretical significance of this study if they can get support. In addition, in order to further determine the causal inference relationship of this study, follow-up researchers can also try to adopt the experimental design method to test in stages to determine the stability of the theoretical relationship.

This research does not include some personal internal (for example, personal knowledge, professionalism, personality, values, beliefs) or external (for example, the nature of work, community participation, family background) situational factors into the exploration, future research can be considered incorporating these contextual factors that may affect cross-culturalism can effectively test the boundaries of the theory.

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