

Lutsyshyn A.

Student

Ternopil National Economic University

Okrepkyi R.

PhD in Economics, Associate Professor of Marketing Department

Ternopil National Economic University

A CASE ANALYSIS OF GLOCALIZATION: EMOTIONAL MARKETING AND “VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER”

In the world of mass-media, e-commerce, and online shopping people from all around the world can consume products and services that are outside their location. The multiculturalism and the growing popularity of traveling for a cultural experience, deforms the principals of global brand expansion. The dilemma is whether global brands need to standardize their consumer experience or diversify it meeting the cultural differences of the markets they operate in.

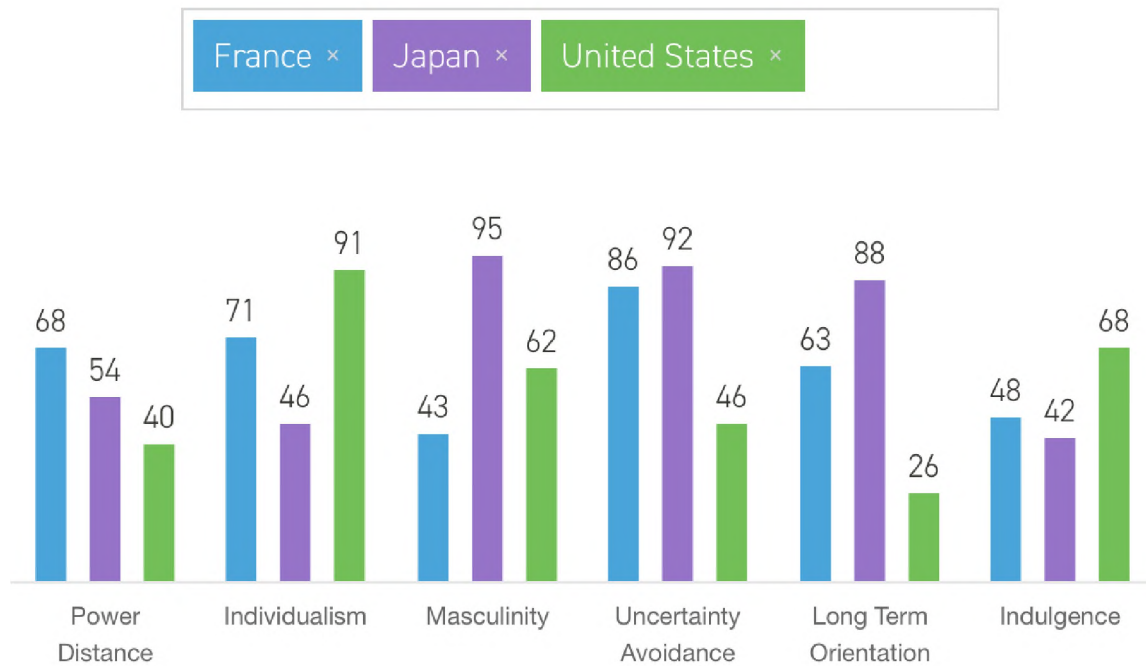
Globalization is a popular branding strategy as mass production and standardization of design, manufacturing, delivery, etc. simplifies management, lowers the overall cost and improves efficiency [13]. While, glocalization is a branding strategy that can be explained as a fusion of globalization and localization, meaning the integration of local elements into global products [11]. According to Matusitz, the glocalization strategy allows increasing the probability of successful product/service transplanting into a new market by balancing the efficiency opportunities of a global scale with the need for local adaption [7]. The main trick is to be able to standardize product features and company activities while allowing differentiation in the aspects that have the strongest national preferences [11]. To differentiate a global brand, it is important to utilize such strategies as emotional marketing and “voice of the customer”. Numerous researches have shown that nowadays emotional attributes of products/services determine psycho-symbolic features of brands and influence the consumer’s buying behavior to a greater extent than the rational attributes (e.g. price) do. The emotional marketing strategy evolves around delivering an individual socio-emotional experience for consumers to create a strong emotional link between them and the company [5]. Respectively, the “voice of the customer” stands for collective insight into customer needs, wants, perceptions, and preferences which help in closing the gap between customer expectations and the firm's offerings [2].

This paper aims to analyze how such concepts as emotional marketing and the “voice of the customer” shape marketing strategies of a global brand. To make research more valid and grounded the case study method was used and a global brand, Disneyland, was chosen. The stimulus for this was the fact that while having similar corporate philosophy, mission, and vision among all the Disney Parks, Tokyo parks are very successful in providing visitors with a unique experience. According to Morresi and Pezzi, customers' culture influences their preferences for specific features like color and taste, the distance of a market, preferred establishment mode,

costs, models to enter the market, etc. [9]. Therefore, it was decided to study how Disney parks use the emotional marketing and "voice of customers" within the product development process when talking about food, attractions, meeting points, shows, and merchandise in California, Paris, and Tokyo.

To bring the American concept of the amusement park to European and Asian markets it is extremely important to adapt to the specifics of local religions, social norms, languages, traditions, and beliefs. This process can be called "cultural flow within the core", according to Aviad E. Raz, and explained as dynamic and bilateral nature of cultural exchange [10]. And while Tokyo parks are perfect examples of how popular American culture can be actively manipulated to standardize it according to the values and norms of the local market, Paris Disneyland had a tough time in the beginning. When Disney decided to provide Europeans with the authentic American experience, the company miscalculated cultural differences and ignored the "voice of customers", which led to unsuccessful transplantation of the brand and loss of 900 million US dollars in two first years [6]. Originally, the park in Paris was called Euro Disney, which for Americans meant "implied style" and/or "glamor" but for Europeans brought negative associations like "commerce" and a sense that all the unique European nations were treated as homogeneous [7]. A false assumption that Europeans don't have breakfast led to many unsatisfied visitors who couldn't find a morning meal. During lunch, most visitors wanted to sit down but cafes were not spacious enough to serve that many people at once as in the USA people prefer "grab & go". Plus, unlike in America, many Europeans enjoy their lunch with a glass of wine as a given so the no-alcohol policy wasn't understood [12]. Unlike Americans and Japanese, people in Europe, especially in France aren't as much interested in merchandise [7]. Additionally, Europeans have fewer but longer vacations, they are not likely to take children off school for a day trip to an amusement park, and the weather in Paris is less sunny and dry than it is in California, what made the park fairly popular in summer but almost unvisited during the studying year. All these factors along with the cultural ignorance led to French referring to the park as "wasteland". The park started to generate profit in 2008, only after it was renamed and the "voice of customer" strategy was implemented [6].

To understand why culture is a crucial aspect for global brands the Hofstede Model can be used. It distinguishes cultures according to six dimensions: power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-/short-term orientation, and indulgence [8]. The findings suggest that these three markets have significant differences in many dimensions (see figure 1: "Hofstede Model: Japan, USA & France"). Explaining these further, the "power distance" dimension suggests that Japan and France are "borderline hierarchical societies" in which people act accordingly to their hierarchical position. It is typical for the French to raise children being emotionally dependent on them. While American kids tend to have more freedom for actions and opinions. "Individualism" dimension suggests that Japanese society puts the harmony of the group above the expression of individual opinions, which makes them very loyal to trusted brands. Japanese have a drive for excellence and perfection (*monotsukuri*) and they pay a lot



of attention to services and presentations (e.g. gift wrapping). While in France it is important to get enough rest time (five weeks of holidays per year), Americans tend to work more but they also “buy” status through brands. Both Japan and France are countries with a high level of uncertainty avoidance, which means a lot of attention is paid to emergency plans and precautions for sudden natural disasters. While Americans hate to be controlled and are very open to new things. Finally, the “indulgence” dimension illustrates that both French and Japanese cultures can be described as “restraint” because people do not pay much attention to leisure time and control the gratification of their desires. In contrast to that, Americans value leisure time being willing to send money and time on what makes them happy [3]. Therefore, when utilizing the Hofstede model in the case of Disneyland, it is clear that each park should pay a lot of attention to the “voice of customers”. For example, power distance suggests that Japanese and French cast are expected to treat their visitors with a lot of respect and subordination. Individualism dimension has shown that in Japan consumers have a strong need for personalized options within the food, merchandise, service, etc. In contrast to that, French children are very subordinate to their parents, meaning that their food and attraction choices, as well as buying habits, are mainly controlled by parents. Finally, uncertainty avoidance dimension illustrates that for Americans it is very important to treat everyone equally (e.g. by providing disabled people with accessibility to rides, shops, cafes, etc.), while for French and Japanese the most crucial point is the security (e.g. bag checks, routine patrols, etc.) and avoidance of uncertainty.

Figure 1: Hofstede Model: Japan, USA & France [3].

The success of Disney in Japan can be partly explained by the “kaizen” - management system the aim of which is continuous improvement. The research has shown a verity of examples of how customer orientation of Tokyo Disneyland & DisneySea influences marketing decisions. The “Duffy” case is one of the greatest

examples of glocalization. It shows how the “voice of customers” and emotional marketing can ensure the success of a product. A new toy was introduced in America in 2002, but the bear was highly criticized and because of poor sales, the distribution had stopped. In 2004 the toy was introduced in Tokyo. With the use of “voice of the customer” the look and feel of the product was improved (Japanese preferred the bear to be a light brown color and the material to be fluffier), and with the use of emotional marketing the “story” was developed (a toy got a name - Duffy, the biography, and a catchy original song). All of these marketing decisions created a “kawaii” character, which matches consumers’ preferences and goes along with the local ideology, resembling love and care [4]. Duffy in Japan is like Mickey Mouse in the USA when talking about cultural significance (because of a huge popularity there are restrictions on purchase) [1].

The research has shown that for global brands it is crucial to have local orientation and the unique “voice of customer” approach makes it possible to hear what customers want and adjust the product/service in a way to meet their expectations. Disneyland is mainly not about advanced rides but the experience of a magical atmosphere, joy and childhood. Emotional marketing ensures that visitors have a long-lasting customer-journey that will stimulate them to come back. As the company has a slogan “never built up”, parks are utilizing a "three-three" system every year building one-third of new attractions, replacing one-third of old equipment, and developing one-third of entertainment contents to bring freshness to the experience. The mentioned above actions not only ensure consumers’ satisfaction but also extend the parks’ life cycle by constantly innovating products and services based on changes in operated markets [14]. Global brands with local orientation are more appealing, as people who love Disney as a brand are more likely to visit parks all around the world if each of those while having a common mission and vision has a unique spin (e.g. Duffy). All in all, Disneyland is a great example of a global franchise that successfully implements localization brand strategies and the use of the “voice of the customer” and emotional marketing within the strategy development.

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