

Franchising sales rhetoric: a cross cultural study of B2B advertising

Abstract

This study explores how B2B advertising communication styles are influenced by national culture by exploring franchise recruitment advertising. Whilst there is evidence that culture influences consumer advertising, little research has explored cross-cultural B2B advertising. Drawing on communications theory, the paper investigates whether culture, measured by the GLOBE dimensions of institutional collectivism and assertiveness practices, influences the communication style used by franchise brands in five countries (UK, US, Australia, India and

South Africa). It does so by exploring the extent to which they adopt elaborate versus succinct and dramatic communication styles. A content analysis programme, DICTION, is used to enable content analysis of franchise promotional materials. The results reveal that franchise promotional narratives reflect the culture in which the franchise brand is located, with more collectivistic cultures using a more elaborate communication style, compared with individualistic cultures using a more succinct approach. Furthermore, advertisements from more assertive cultures were more dramatic in style. This suggests, in keeping with consumer advertising, that cultural congruence is important in B2B advertising too. This is one of only a few cross cultural studies of B2B advertising, and to the authors' knowledge, is the first to explore the communication dimensions of elaborate-succinct and dramatic-reserved styles in a cross cultural B2B context.

Keywords: Cross-cultural advertising, franchising, B2B advertising