

CROSS-CULTURAL ADVERTISING FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY & DIVERSITY (SDG 5 & 10)

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Abstract

The cross-cultural advertising is thus turned out as a crucial help as regards the global problems of inequality and exclusion, or providing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 10 the inclination to gender equality and to curbs the inequalities. The world is getting smaller, and in the modern time, advertisement is creating stereotypes not only about cultural value but also about gender roles, diversity and perceptions of inclusion. However, cultural bias, stereotyping and tokenism tend to cause issues related to campaigns, raising issues about authenticity and effectiveness. The present research is on the fact that an aspect of transformation that may be used to address an incumbent whichever kind of stereotypes may be to adopt cross cultural advertisement as one way to attack stereotypes by focusing on voices and selling those stories that are not marginalized in a different societies. The investigation, through exploring and questioning campaigns across different areas globally and interpreting such in relation to the other side, identifies how culturally appropriate and social sensitive communication strategies can be deployed to decide on brand campaigns that resonate with goals in advancement. In the eventual conclusion the research states how advertisement can generate cultural connection and influence behavior of society and make a substantial contribution to areas of establishing just and equal society in the globe.

Keywords: Cross-cultural advertising, gender equality, diversity and inclusion, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5 & SDG 10), representation in media.

Introduction

Today, advertisement in the era of globalization has ceased to be about promotion of products and services; it has become often high-culturized with a strong impact on values, identities of societies, social attitude. In this regard, it is essential to mention that cross-cultural advertising is among the keys capable of intersecting the attention of opposing factions and improving inclusivity to promote the objectives of the United Nations Urban ofom Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with ease, namely, SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). The cruel understanding of the above mentioned proving through the constant-humping of gender stereotyping, the Farce-underrepresentation and cultural-illness sensitivity in advertising media advertisements presents the imminent imperative to consider how those media and marketing could be engaged as tools to social change. Not only cultural issue, advertising is the active form of cultural regulation of the social life norms and influences the acceptance of those norms as well as contribution to the larger perception of the role of females and males, their status, and uniqueness. More than any previous time when multicultural market when international brands enter they face the challenge of how they negotiate the differences in culture and yet adhere to the universal human rights. That kind of tension creates the possibility to carry out an investigation of how the deeply rooted gender

patterns may be overcome with the advertisement, who should be provided with spicy voices, more often, and how it is possible to enable two or more voices to resonate cross-border. Such an investigation will not only become an important contribution to academic research, but it will also prove beneficial to policymakers, researching practitioners in advertising and activists interested in identifying how corporate communication practices could be aligned to broader developmental objectives. This paper guides the discourse on the prospects of advertising whereby the relationship between the global branding, the local situation, and the promoting force of equality is such that advertising can cultivate not just a business agenda, but societal justice as well. In addition, in digital punctuated time, the audience is not anymore a silent receiver of advertisement messages; they possess cultural, social, and personal perspectives on interactions with their signals. The understanding of the dynamics is paramount in formulation of the campaigns that are both compelling and at the same time socially responsible and cultural conscious. In such a way, cross-cultural advertising in the paper falls into the realm of the strategic and ethical intervention contributed to the dismantling systemic injustices, encouraging mutual respect between various peoples, and the formation of the concept of a more just, more inclusive, and equitable global society.

Well known, advertising may be discussed as the power tool because it can not only sell goods but also to alter cultural norms, social values, and perception of people. As its relevance extends in the globalization context so too has cross-cultural advertising become increasingly important to companies and organizations as they deliver messages to audiences increasingly reduced by geographic boundaries and cultural differences. With the world urging the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs), with goal SDG 5 focusing on Gender Equality, and with goal SDG 10 focus on Reduced Inequalities, the advertising industry may go under a revolution in ensuring social fairness. Nevertheless, lack of balance in representation and exclusion of other groups even in modern days notwithstanding, gendered representations based on stereotypes that buttress inequalities systems continues to occur in the media. The background of this work is that advertising should be scrutinized critically in relation to the manner of how it can modify as a way of not strengthening stereotypes, but as a mechanism of a tactical contrivance of inclusiveness. Once dealing with diversity in terms of culture in promoting the agendas of equality, cross-cultural advertisement should then be major in this more fair and just society.

Rationale of the Study

This investigation rests on the fact that in addition to being a commercial phenomenon, advertising is equally a cultural phenomenon that can either reinforce the stereotypes or challenge them to effect social change. The hope of the SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) encourages advertising to have a special offer to form perceptions, awareness raising, and motivation inclusions behavior across the various societies. However, the entrenched gender bias, cultural blindness and tokenism on most campaigns have demonstrated an extensive rift between the equality of intention and the mediating media. One will also need to get information related to cross-cultural advertising since brands and organizations must address different cultural conditions to become ethical and socially relevant. The significance the work has is that, it not only examines how advertising possibly can be utilized as a source of empowerment and inclusiveness, but with a look at how marketing could be employed in the future in such a way as to lean more towards global development, so that it may be fairer.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG 5: Gender Equality

The universal development goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development as the Sustainable development Goals (SDGs) can be considered

a universal roadmap to the solution of global challenges, including poverty, inequality, global warming, and social justice. One of them, SDG 5: Gender Equality occupies the first place, as it emphasizes the elimination of all forms of negative discrimination, violence, and destructive cases of women and girls and grants them equal access to political, economic, and social life. Gender equality can be defined as not only speech about the inherent human right, but the forming constituent part of the sustainable development since the empowerment of women comes in a form of the inclusivist economical growth, heightened creativity and empowered societies. The goal encourages equity in education, healthy living, fair work and involve all levels in the decision making exercise. It also targets the elimination of gender based violence and antagonistic endeavors such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, or recognizing and valuing unpaid personality and homemaking. Women all over the globe continue to face challenges, in spite of the gains, issues concerning the cultural, long-rooted inequalities and structural discrimination in accordance with a need of unified world actions to be made a viable effect. The primary role of advertising, media, and cross-cultural communication in this space is eliminating stereotypes and promoting positive role models and setting up a situation, in which the voices and contributions of women will be heard and listened.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

Nonetheless, to make a full cycle on SDG 5, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities is supposed to close the gaps between countries and among populations by listening to the elimination of social, economic, and political inequalities based on gender, age, race, ethnicity, disability, religion, and migration. It requires liberal policies to sustain equality of opportunity, equality of income in equality of opportunity and empowering of the marginalized communities. In order to have just societies whereby any of them will contribute positively towards development without necessarily being marginalized by the system, there is a need to minimize the inequalities. This kind of an objective leads to the value of breaking into the obstacles that treat individuals unfairly and ensuring that the globalization gains are published fairly. The next step in this vision is the cross-cultural advertising as media will be taken as the location of introduced to the real picture diverse types of the identities, be despotted and inclusiveness become a habitual phenomenon. Campaigns promoting racial diversity, body positivity, LGBTQ+ rights and the role of differently-abled people can be discussed as the examples of how SDG 10 can be implemented in practice. Advertisement is the effective means of promoting equality as it does not only influence the consumer behaviour, but also, the social conscience forming the stories that are culture-free. SDG 5 and SDG 10 could be discussed as rather complementary to each other since they imply the notion that gender justice and social inclusion are extremely intertradable and only by containing both deliberate and systematic gaps, one can assist in the real development.

Social change from advertising

Advertisement traditionally has been a growing capitalistic means of purchasing commodities, as well as a cultural mirrors, a social transformation through the construction of language among individuals and a social transformation through the establishment of group action. The examples of the past show how advertising has been in the rivalry with deep-rooted stereotypes, and it has led to some changes in the perception that the society is considered. Anti-gender role movements such as the Like a Girl movement by Always dealt with such negative connotation with femininity in a direct way, inverting the notion of doing something like a girl into something powerful and empowering. In the same breath, past anti-smoking and road safety campaigns serve as a good example, which demonstrates the extent to which the media can propagate health and lifestyle changes, at very large scale, in the best interest of the people. Advertising in the contemporary world has homogenized its goals with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and brand activism as organizations are ever more recording that being

on the same page with social causes encourages brand image and consumer confidence. The Dove and its Real Beauty movement, Nike and its reaction to racial and gender inclusivity, and Ben and Jerry and its publicity of climate justice and equity is what marketing can afford to can do in addition to earning profits to facilitate change in the system. However, there are no ethics of leveraging on advertising as an equality tool. There have been warnings against tokenism, lack of cultural sensitivity or even the concept of woke-washing wherein corporations leverage the plight of social issues to push their brands but is in fact, not prepared to change. The ethical dimension includes the authenticity, consistency, and responsibility on the basis that the campaigns should not simply reflect the values of equals and diversities, but necessarily to be congruent with the internal practices of the firm, the employees, and the general influence. When ethically conducted, advertising can also eliminate stereotypes, give voice to the marginalized and mainstream inclusivity in popular culture making it a potent tool in achieving the aims of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and most specifically, SDG 5 on Gender Equality, and SDG 10 on Reduced Inequalities. Lastly, advertising as a form of social change must be characterized by the balance of creativity, responsibility and sincerity which sees the media strength in convincing the behavior of the consumer instead being used in selling and creating more socially geared and developed societies more just and equitable.

Advertisements on Gender Equality

The feminine and masculine aspects of gender in advertising focus on ensuring there are infallible, equal and unbiased coverage of men and women. Traditionally, advertisement tends to perpetuate gender roles where women are portrayed as housewives and men as power figures, which was one of the causes of inequality and social prejudice. Contemporary advertising, however, can be more inclusive by depicting women and men in various professional, social and personal positions in accordance with the modern realities. Highlighting women empowerment or beauty stereotypes or relocating the stereotype against male caregivers who are caring caregivers will shatter the stereotypes. Fair play in advertising is not just the ethical choice but also the strategic one in promoting to audiences shifting towards the brands, which follow the progressive values. Genuine fronting is a plus to trust, emotional appeal and brand loyalty among customers.

Ad given options regarding diversity and not only gender is used, but also race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, and cultural representation. Inclusive advertising acknowledges the other identities and experiences such that they may signify campaigns can reach broader audience. Good advertisement that utilizes diversity should be perceived to be contributing to authenticity through display of persons in familiarized positions of empowerment as opposed to tokenism. To provide an example, including multicultural families, body positive or persons with disabilities in daily life would fight stereotypes and normalize that expression. The inclusion is also beneficial to the brand reputation as social conscious consumers demand that companies be morally responsible. The brands encourage a sense of belonging and social acceptance and a greater market space as a measure of the real diversity of society.

Literature Review

Luo, C., & Jiang, S. (2023). This study uses a bibliometric approach to map research on gender equality within cross-cultural communication, identifying major themes, research clusters, and gaps in the existing literature. Luo and Jiang analyze a large set of publications to visualize knowledge networks and trends, showing how gender equality has been conceptualized and discussed in different cultural contexts. Their findings highlight the interdisciplinary nature of the field, linking communication studies with sociology, psychology, and gender studies. The study also reveals that while research on gender equality is increasing, there are imbalances in geographical representation, with Western countries dominating scholarly output compared to

developing regions. Importantly, the article emphasizes the role of communication in bridging cultural divides and promoting inclusivity, suggesting that advertising and media are central to disseminating values of equality across diverse audiences. By offering a systematic knowledge map, the study provides scholars and practitioners with a foundation for future cross-cultural advertising strategies that align with the goals of gender equality and social justice under SDG 5.

Soni, P., et al (2024). This paper looks at the overlap between advertising, culture, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as exploring how cultural frameworks influence the success of advertising in catalyzing social change. Soni et al. believe that advertising has long been profit-oriented, but in the age of sustainability, advertising should correspond to global objectives like gender equality and inequalities reduction. As it is stated in the paper, advertising may serve as an interface between the global development goals and domestic values, as long as it does not involve homogenization and adheres to the cultural diversity. Superficial measures, which include the use of tokenism, are also criticized in the study where diversity is symbolic as opposed to real. Linking advertising with SDGs, the article also adds to the emerging field of literature that provides the context in which corporate communication is viewed as a tool of ethical responsibility, and therefore, brands need to incorporate cultural knowledge into their strategies of developing inclusivity and sustainability.

Aririguzoh, S. (2022). The article points out that attaining SDGs, especially gender equality and minimized inequalities, is highly hinged on the inclusive, culturally-sensitive and participatory communication processes. In a theoretical context, the author shares the main competencies that should be able to engage significantly with other individuals in different societies such as empathy, active listening, adaptability, and cultural awareness among others. The paper highlights the fact that communication lapses are mostly as a result of ethnocentrism and lack of contextual apprehendance, which can undermine development efforts. In the case of advertisement, the study offers a valuable basis, since it has demonstrated that ad messages that advocate equality and diversity will not succeed unless they are designed with intercultural knowledge. The paper establishes advertising as a window of social advocacy by associating communication with socially viable development rather than being obligatory as a medium of commercial activity. This is why it is of specifically high relevance in a research project on cross-cultural advertising that aims at refuting stereotypes and becoming SDG 5 and SDG 10-compliant.

Eden, L., & Wagstaff, M. F. (2020). The authors argue that while global commitments to gender equality are widespread, policy implementation often falters because of cultural, institutional, and structural barriers. They advocate for evidence-based policymaking, which uses empirical data and contextual analysis to design more effective gender equality strategies. Importantly, the study highlights the role of multinational corporations as key stakeholders in advancing gender equality, both within their organizational practices and in their marketing communication. For advertising, this article is particularly useful because it emphasizes the responsibility of corporations to go beyond symbolic gestures and contribute to systemic change. By recognizing the interconnectedness of policy, business, and cultural values, the paper underscores the necessity for advertising to be not only persuasive but also aligned with genuine commitments to equality, thus linking brand activism with broader development goals.

Ibrahim, I. M., et al (2024). This study employs a bibliometric approach to explore how gender equality has been framed in educational research, particularly across generations, and its implications for awareness-building. Ibrahim et al. analyze scholarly publications to map key themes, trends, and influential works that connect education with gender equality advocacy. Their findings suggest that education plays a crucial role in shaping cross-generational understanding of equality, with younger generations showing more progressive

attitudes due to exposure to inclusive curricula and media representation. While the study focuses primarily on education, its implications extend to advertising and media, as both act as complementary channels for influencing awareness. The authors argue that knowledge dissemination must be continuous and adaptive, addressing cultural sensitivities and generational shifts in attitudes toward gender roles. The connection between education, gender equality, and awareness makes the study pertinent in understanding the role of long-term strategies, which involves pressurizing institutional policies in conjunction with social communication, in the analysis of how cross-cultural advertising can strengthen messages about equality and diversity per SDGs number 5 and SDGs number 10.

Cross-Cultural Challenges & Opportunities

In a globalized world, the task of gender equality and diversity is both a challenge and an opportunity: It is necessary to attract universal values and, at the same time, take into account local traditions. Any type of advertisement is a complex undertaking due to the differences in cultural approach to gender roles and diversity: even though the West culture may accept any progressive, e.g. by having women in authority or making the advert LGBTQ+, or gay, or by simply presenting a diverse population, a culture with stronger connection to a traditional society, politics, or religion may discard any of the above notions. This is where promotion and cultural sensitivity meet and such differences suggest that whatever can facilitate in one situation can be objectionable or even considered contentious in a different context. This complication usually compels brands to choose whether to target with ongoing standardized campaigns whereby the message is the same worldwide, inclusivity, and the other options localized where the message varies according to the local culture demands. Standardized campaigns, e.g. the Real Beauty by Dove, concentrating on universal themes of authenticity and self-esteem, are messages able to transcend cultural differences, whereas localized campaigns, e.g. Nike tweaking its inclusivity approaches to specific markets, focus on culturally-specific storytelling, which is closer to the local audiences. Nevertheless, certain difficulties also exist, because socio-political, religious, and economic background might become obstacles to inclusive advertising. In certain states, the visibility of women in their publicly-distributed media or discussion of sexuality or even government censorship of the representation of minority has shortened the campaign range. Economic inequality is as well a factor, since markets having lesser consumer spending strength can be more revenue-purchase-focused as opposed to socializing messages, so intrusivity efforts can seem to be less primary than marketing targets. Nonetheless, the same obstacles create possibilities: those brands, which managed to learn how to become culturally aware and, at the same time, preserve their belief in equality, will become champions of social change and receive trust and allegiance among diverse audiences. The issues of cross-culturality are therefore addressed as a source of innovation and the advertiser should contemplate doing business with the local community, think intersectionally and focus on the universal value of human dignity, respect and fairness. In this case, advertising can become a bridge between international social justice movements and local culture as a form of awareness and empowerment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5 and SDG 10), without sacrificing authenticity and efficacy in the process.

Methodology

The quantitative survey involved 250 respondents in the various geographical locations, such as in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas, to divide closer consumer perceptions in terms of gender and diversity representation in advertising. The survey involved the use of structured questionnaires in the forms of Likert-scale statements to evaluate the perceptions about gender stereotypes, inclusion and cultural sensitivity in campaigns. Parallel to this, a qualitative content analysis of the sampled international advertising campaigns, including those with the UN Women HeForShe, Dove Real Beauty, and Nike inclusivity advertisements, were

conducted to infer the ways that messages about equality and diversity are built and localized to the different cultures. The information gathered was aimed to underline cross-cultural disparities by observing the differences in responses thus the members of the audience. Both comparative and descriptive analyses were utilized in order to determine patterns, similarities and contrasts in perception. Combining both quantitative and qualitative objectives is necessary in order to have a comprehensive perspective of the research issue and enable the research to unite the views of the audience with what is really happening in terms of advertisement. This approachology offers a strict logical approach to gauge the performance of advertisement in promotion of social change and global growth on matters concerning, gender equality and minimized inequalities.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	120	48%
	Female	125	50%
	Other/Non-binary	5	2%
Age Group	18–25	70	28%
	26–35	100	40%
	36–45	55	22%
	46+	25	10%
Educational Level	Undergraduate	90	36%
	Graduate	110	44%
	Postgraduate/PhD	50	20%
Region / Country	Asia	80	32%
	Europe	70	28%
	Americas	80	32%
	Africa	20	8%

The demography of the respondents has brought out an equally balanced representation in the way demographic factors (gender, age, and education and regional background) are spread; thus making the views of the respondents diverse in their analysis of cross-cultural advertising. Gender-wise there was a balanced representation between males and females with a 48 and 50 percent ratio, and other/non-binary people with 2 percent. The age distribution shows that most are aged 2635 years (40%), then 1825 years (28%) which illustrates that younger and older adults who are the most active libbers of media and advertisements make up the sample. The higher level of academic orientation is latent in education as 44 percent of graduates, 36 percent undergraduate, and 20 percent postgraduate/PhDs of the study participants are highly educated and may contribute to critical understanding of equality and diversity in advertising. Locally, there is a relatively balanced distribution in Asia (32 percent), Americas (32 percent), Europe (28 percent), and Africa (8 percent), which implies that it encompasses cross-cultural perspectives in the study.

Table 2: Perception of Gender Representation in Advertising

Statement (Likert Scale)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Ads often reinforce gender stereotypes.	90 (36%)	100 (40%)	30 (12%)	20 (8%)	10 (4%)
Modern ads promote gender equality better than traditional ads.	85 (34%)	110 (44%)	20 (8%)	25 (10%)	10 (4%)

Representation of women in leadership roles is improving.	80 (32%)	95 (38%)	40 (16%)	25 (10%)	10 (4%)
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The findings from Table 2 reveal that respondents perceive advertising as still grappling with gender stereotypes, though modern campaigns show progress. A significant 76% (36% strongly agree, 40% agree) believe that ads often reinforce gender stereotypes, suggesting that despite social progress, traditional portrayals remain dominant. However, there is optimism, as 78% (34% strongly agree, 44% agree) feel that modern advertising promotes gender equality better than traditional ads, showing recognition of campaigns that emphasize empowerment, body positivity, and inclusivity. Regarding women's leadership roles, 70% (32% strongly agree, 38% agree) acknowledge improvements in representation, yet 26% remain neutral or disagree, indicating that portrayals are still inconsistent or insufficient. These results highlight that while advertising has shifted towards progressive gender representation, lingering stereotypes and underrepresentation continue to pose challenges, reinforcing the need for consistent, inclusive storytelling to align with SDG 5 on gender equality.

Table 3: Perception of Diversity in Advertising

Dimension of Diversity	Well Represented (%)	Poorly Represented (%)	Not Represented (%)
Race & Ethnicity	45%	40%	15%
Sexual Orientation	30%	45%	25%
Physical Ability	20%	50%	30%
Socioeconomic Class	25%	55%	20%

Table 3 underscores mixed perceptions about diversity in advertising, with notable gaps in representation. Race and ethnicity are perceived as moderately well represented (45%), yet 40% believe representation is poor, and 15% see none at all, suggesting uneven progress across brands and regions. Sexual orientation fares worse, with only 30% believing it is well represented, while a majority (45%) consider portrayals poor and 25% feel it is completely absent, reflecting ongoing cultural resistance in some markets. The most neglected area is physical ability, where just 20% feel it is adequately represented, 50% judge it poorly represented, and 30% report no representation, exposing a major inclusivity gap. The depiction in socioeconomic class is also underrepresented, and Gender and Fairness are perceived as poor depiction, and fair inclusion is perceived by half, showing that there is an advertising bias toward inspirational lifestyles. These conclusions highlight the fact that although there has been progress in racial and gender representation in advertising, there is still a problem with adverts that strives to represent the entire characteristics of human diversity, and that is a direct threat to the implementation of SDG 10 on dealing with inequalities.

Conclusion

The current research emphasizes how cross-cultural advertising can transform the concepts of SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) in the global agendas due to its significant successes and limitations to media representation. Advertising as a cultural tool becomes more than a promotion of a product, but it has an impact on societal norms, impressions and inclusivity. Based on the findings of the campaign analysis and the survey data, despite the fact that significant progress has been made in terms of the improved representation of women, other identities, and marginalized groups, stereotypes and gaps are still present, particularly, within the areas of the physical ability, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. Similar to Dove and its Real Beauty campaign, Nike and assorted stories on equality, and UN Women and their HeForShe campaign show, advertising has the power to destroy set stereotypes, hyperbolize differences, and connect with lots of individuals despite cultural make-up. According to the threats of tokenism, cultural appropriation, and backlash, however, the importance of authenticity and ethical responsibility is noticed. Advertisements

made using Cross-cultural should therefore be aware of its local cultural, religious or socio-political settings, yet, advance the culture of equality and inclusiveness without alienating, but bring about significant change. The requirement to establish a culture of integrity towards equality, both globally and locally with culturally flexible narrations, will facilitate the brand to develop trust and consumer leviathan and serve as a social change agent. But at the culmination of it all, the study still discusses that advertising as a commercial practice can and should be utilized with good faith and inclusiveness as a tool and a powerful means of divesting a system that is unjust and unequal to a system; it can and must be used as a means to exchange cross-cultural understanding; build more equitable and just societies everywhere across the globe.

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