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The Research on Cross-culture Integration Strategy for Place Brand Internationalization

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Abstract. The aim of this article is to help Chinese place brand get the host country consumers' acceptance and recognition. Through literature review, the research shows that explicit culture integration strategy, behavioral culture integration strategy and implicit culture integration strategy are the three components of cross-culture integration strategy.The explicit culture integration strategy is changing the external manifestation of place brand, such as brand name and product image.The behavioral culture integration strategy means changing the place brand's communication way, like the promotion method, the charitable behavior.The implicit culture integration strategy refers to changing the managing idea and marketing idea of place brand.

Introduction

Under the background of economic globalization and cultural diversity, it is the breakthrough for brand internationalization to create brand by culture and arouse the positive cognition of consumers in the host country.For example, the German car brand gives a rigorous cultural impression, the Japanese snack brand has the exquisite and beautiful cultural characteristics, the French perfume brand is full of romantic cultural elements."Made in China" is all over the world, but the Chinese brand has a low global awareness, and is trapped in the "low quality and low price" impression, overseas consumers have poor brand association, they prefer the brands from developed countries or domestic market [1,2,3].According to the 2016 Chinese Brands Overseas Transmission report, in a survey of 1100 U.S. consumers, Chinese brands gained less trust than those in America, Germany and Japan, and only about 5% of consumers said they trusted Chinese brands,49% of consumers have a "distrust" or "total distrust" attitude.Qian and Burritt [4] believe that the institutional environment constituted by social concepts, rules, norms or cultures has an important influence on whether organizational form, structure or behavior can become reasonable, acceptable and easy to support, and this effect is institutional pressure.If the brand wants to obtain the host country consumer's acceptance and support, it has to obtain the corresponding rationality under the specific institutional pressure, especially place brand with the obvious home country culture characteristic.

Brand rationality is divided into practical rationality, moral rationality and cognitive rationality, in which cognitive rationality is considered to be the most subtle and powerful source of rationality [5].Cognitive rationality refers to the understanding and taking organizational behavior for granted from the social and cultural level of brand location. However, most Chinese brands are unfamiliar to foreign consumers, and their cultural connotations are difficult to understand and even resonate. For example, for Chinese consumers, Poyang Lake is the largest freshwater lake in China, with a beautiful environment and a paradise for migratory birds, so its ecological place brand highlights a kind of green culture. However, for overseas consumers, Poyang Lake is a strange term, cannot stimulate the host country consumers about the green health culture brand association. But the place brand of Ningbo clothing industry through the way of cooperation with foreign well-known clothing enterprises, increasing the cultural exchange with the host country, has formed a rare domestic clothing brand cluster. Therefore, cross-cultural integration strategy can help place brand open the host country market and gain the acceptance of the host country consumers. Based on this, this paper aims to explore specific cross-cultural integration strategies from the perspective of cognitive rationality.

Place Brand and Cross-culture Integration

Place brand is the extension of product brand and company brand in space concept, which has the characteristics of regional and brand effect [6]. According to Keller [7], when a geographical location (country, region, city, etc.) is branded as a product or service, the name of the geographical location becomes a place brand name. Place brand makes people aware of the existence of the region and produces relevant associations in people's mind. There are a series of unique associations about place brand, including emotion, function, connection and strategic elements, among which cultural features play an indispensable role.When place brand carries on the transnational marketing activity, the cultural conflict obstacle between two countries can bring "the foreign disadvantage", and affect the host country consumers' trust and acceptance to the place brand.Nancy. J. Adler [8] believes that through culture integration can form a new organizational culture, this unified culture not only has a strong stability, but also owns the "hybrid" advantage, can reduce the cultural distance between the two countries, and be conducive to the transnational activities.Culture integration refers to the different cultures respect each other, supplement each other, coordinate each other on the basis of recognizing and attaching importance to the differences between them, so as to form a unity of you and me, a new organizational culture.Cross-culture integration in this study refers to the process of communication, acceptance and unification between different cultures in different places.Therefore, for the place brand internationalization path, we can establish the positive brand association in the host country through the cross-culture integration strategy, thus obtains the corresponding national consumers' acceptance and approval.

The term "culture" originates from social anthropology, it was first defined by the British scholar Tylor [9]: Culture or civilization is a complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, ethics, customs and any other abilities and habits that people who are members of society acquire through learning.Then, scholars from different disciplines tried to give different definitions of culture, American cultural anthropologist Kroeber and Kluckholn after analyzing more than 100 kinds of culture definitions, summarized the definition of culture as follows: culture exists in various implicit and explicit patterns, can be learned and disseminated through the use of symbols, and it constitute the special achievements of the human community, these achievements include the various specific patterns of goods they manufacture.According to the definition, we find that culture can be divided into implicit culture and explicit culture, but these two cultures need to be transmitted to the audience through certain behaviors. Different places have different behavior culture, so this article puts the behavior culture alone, and it becomes the third dimension of culture.

To sum up, we found that cross-culture integration strategy can establish the positive place brand association in host country consumers' mind, so as to obtain their trust and acceptance, and this strategy mainly be operated from three dimensions: explicit culture, behavioral culture and implicit culture.

Cognitive Rationality

Rationality refers to the audience's perception of the organization's adherence to and support for environmental norms and their extent, which represents the overall acceptance of the audience to the organization [10,11].The studies of rationality are inseparable from the discussions of institutional theory, because the institutional environment affects consumers' definition of rationality and standard.Qian and Burritt believe that the institutional environment constituted by social concepts, rules, norms or cultures, and it has an important impact on whether the form, structure or conduct of an organization can become reasonable, acceptable and accessible, and this effect is called institutional pressure.Scott divided the institutional pressure into three parts: regulation pressure, normative pressure and cognitive pressure, and based on this, the function mechanism of rationality was divided into three levels: practical rationality, moral rationality and cognitive rationality. Among them, the cognitive rationality is from the organization location culture to judge whether the behavior of the organization is taken for granted.

So how can place brand obtain the cognitive rationality of the host country's consumers?Neilsen

and Rao [12] believe that the process of obtaining the rationality of any organization embodies the interaction of organization and institutional environment.In the process of interaction, the organization is an information reader, needs to understand and analyze the environmental pressure from audiences, on the other hand, the organization is the information maker, its strategic response and behavior will be interpreted by the environmental audience and thus the audience will decide whether to give the organization rationality.Therefore, when the organization is confronted with institutional pressure, it is not only to blindly comply with the institutional environment, but also to weigh the institutional pressure and the ability of the organization and then try to change the institutional environment [13].In particular, when faced with cultural differences, place brand needs to understand the host country culture, so as to formulate appropriate entering strategies, and then obtain the cognitive rationality of the host country, or even change its original cognitive rationality.

Cross-culture Integration Strategy

Explicit Culture Integration Strategy

Explicit culture is the external manifestation of brand culture, in this study mainly refers to the material culture of place brand, like the name of place brand, the enterprise image of place brand, and the characteristics of product or service.Explicit culture is a culture that people can see and touch, living in the surface structure of place brand,and it is the material carrier, expression forms and dissemination ways of brand culture,which gives people the visual impression of the brand culture.The strategy of explicit culture integration refers to combining the cultural characteristics of the host country in the external manifestation of brand culture in order to reduce the cultural conflict brought by the cultural distance between the two countries, thus obtaining the cognitive rationality of the consumers in the host country.For example, Chinese electronics brand Haier, in order to enter the foreign market, set up its high-end brand "Casarte" in 2006, "Casarte" combining the western naming culture, and it is easier to obtain the cognitive rationality of the host country consumers compared with "Haier". American fast food brand KFC, combined with Chinese food culture, has been developing dishes suitable for Chinese taste, such as chopped peppers hamburger. Now, KFC has become a well-known foreign fast food chain brand for Chinese consumers.

For place brand, at the level of macroscopic regional explicit culture, we can gain the acceptance of host country consumers by changing the names and signs of place brand.In the medium level of corporate culture, we can obtain the trust of the host country consumers by employing local spokesmen and employees.At the micro level of product or service explicit culture, it is possible to obtain the identity of the host country consumers by developing new products or services that meet local consumers' preference.

Behavioral Culture Integration Strategy

Behavioral culture is the accumulation of specific behavior patterns and behavior results when place brand enters the international market. The audience of this behavior may be the government, the whole industry, or the consumers.Different regions have different cultures of behavior.In developed countries such as the United States and France, industry regulation is not less effective than government regulation, so when brands enter the region, they need to have a clear understanding of industry standards, to make their own behavior in line with the industry standard.However, in Africa and other countries with imperfect market regulation, the power of the government is greater. At this time, the brand needs to establish a good relationship with the local government, so as to better enter the host country market.In addition to the need to fit the behavior characteristics at the macro level, when place brands enter the host country, they also need to deeply understand the behavioral cultural preferences of local consumers.In economically underdeveloped areas, local consumers are more sensitive to prices, so place brand can obtain the host country consumers' willingness to buy through regular promotional activities when entering the host country.In economically developed areas, consumers have a high demand for quality, so when entering the region, place brand needs to create a high-quality product or service image, in order to obtain the brand trust of the host country

consumers.In addition, when place brand engages in transnational charitable behavior, local consumers' good feelings will increase significantly, thus bringing positive cognitive image to place brand.

Implicit Culture Integration Strategy

Implicit culture exists in the inner structure of place brand and is used to guide place brand to carry out management activities and marketing activities.The implicit culture integration strategy aims to integrate the host country's management concept and marketing concept into place brand transnational activities in order to obtain the cognitive rationality of the host country consumers.The management concept mentioned in this study is mainly analyzed from three dimensions of efficiency, humanism and innovation, and different countries have different management concepts.For example, the United States pays attention to efficient management, the subjective initiative of employees, and the infusing new content and ideas in management. Therefore, when place brand enters the country, it needs to pay attention to the new and open management concepts, to make the brand in the region more acceptable to consumers in the host country.On the contrary, Japan pays more attention to the authoritative management of the leadership, hoping that the employees can completely obey the arrangement from their superiors and Japan pays less attention to the innovation of the management style. Therefore, when place brand enters the country, it needs to establish strict management system, in order to express its preciseness to the consumer in the host country.The marketing concept mentioned in this study mainly includes risk consciousness, competition consciousness and innovation consciousness, and different countries have different marketing concepts.Like American culture, which advocates a culture of adventure, competition, and innovation, place brand can demonstrate its unique competitive advantages when they operate in the United States in order to gain recognition from local consumers.But Japanese culture is inclined to conservative culture and win-win culture, so when place brand enters Japan, it should imitate the marketing concepts of local brands to gain the brand trust of Japanese consumers.

Conclusion

Based on reality and combing with theory, this study puts forward cross-culture integration strategy in place brand internationalization from the perspective of cognitive rationality.This strategy can provide some guidance for place brands to gain acceptance and recognition from the host country consumers.Cross-culture integration strategy consists of explicit culture integration strategy, behavioral culture integration strategy and implicit culture integration strategy.However, because this paper is mainly based on literature review and lacks the support of empirical data, it has some limitations.Therefore, the focus of the next study is to build a complete theoretical model based on literature review, then develop relevant scales, design experiments, collect and analyze data, and use scientific methods to empirically test the rationality of the model.

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