

CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS MANIFESTED IN BRANDING ON
U.S. AND CHINA SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES FAN PAGES

By

LIUYI YANG

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To my family, the source of my strength

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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By

Liuyi Yang

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This study applies Singh et al.'s (2003) framework, a combination of Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions and Hall's (1976) High/low context framework, to a new media: social networking sites fan pages. Five aspects of culture are examined in this paper: (1) collectivism/individualism; (2) uncertainty avoidance; (3) power distance; (4) masculinity; (5) high/ low context. The findings showed only partial support to Singh's framework. China SNS fan pages did not present more collectivistic features than their U.S. counterparts. The two countries showed similar use of features of collectivism, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity. With respect to the high/low context framework, the findings showed that China SNS fan pages employed significantly more high context characteristics than did those in the U.S.; however, the occurrences of low context indicators were similar in two countries' SNS fan pages. Academic and industrial implications for cross-culture advertising researchers and marketers are provided.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Research

Internet Branding

The development of interactive technologies has changed the brand sphere (de Chernatony, S. Drury & S. Segal-Horn, 2006) dramatically in the past few years (Christodoulides, 2009). The information asymmetry (Erdem & Swait 1998) between customers and firms with respect to brands has been reversed as a result of the Internet and electronic interactivity. In the industrial age, brand management was a seller-centric monopoly. "It is done by sellers, for sellers, to or at consumers or buyers" (Mitchell, 2001). The information channel was one-way, where customers were exposed to messages designed by brand managers. With the evolution to Web 2.0, a revolution in branding and marketing has occurred. It is changing the way brands are managed to a bidirectional model, between customers and firms. Increasingly marketing is both for, and by customers (Mitchell, 2001).

Rapid Development of Social Networking Sites Worldwide

Web 2.0 is defined by user exchange of ideas, information, and transactions on websites. Page (2008) indicated that this ability to share and connect with other users is the defining characteristic of Web 2.0. No online destination is more important in this regard than social networks, which are "all about how users interact and co-create content in a group setting" (Page, 2008).

Ad spending on U.S. social-networking sites in 2007 was \$865 million, up from \$350 million in 2006, and it will surpass \$2 billion in 2010, according to eMarketer. Worldwide, social-network ad spending reached \$1.1 billion in 2007, up from \$445

million in 2006 - and by 2010 spending is forecast to be \$2.8 billion worldwide (eMarketer, 2007).

Except for rapid development of ad spending on U.S. social networking sites, Lenhart and Madden (2007) also point out that the role and growth of social networking sites (SNS) has been enormous, especially among teens and young adults. More than 55% of teens online use social networks, and 48% of them visit SNSs daily or more.

Marketers are interested in leveraging the power of social networks for branding activities. This requires they “create innovative brand experiences combining aspects of social networking with personalization, building loyalty through compelling brand experiences” (Page, 2008).

Expanding Cross-Culture Research

Advertising, like all communications, is culturally bound. Many researchers, including Akbers-Miller and Gelb (1996) and deMooij (1998), argue that culturally sensitive messages are more acceptable and persuasive to consumers (see also Paek, Yu, & Bae, 2009). Although a great number of studies have examined the influence of culture on advertising, there is no comprehensive framework for its role in new media advertising (Taylor, 2005). Taylor (2005) called for researchers to move cross-cultural ad research forward in three ways: first, by expanding the range of advertising topics and channels; second, by introducing more cross-cultural contexts theories; and third, by testing specific cultural differences reflected in advertising across countries.

In the spirit of these suggestions, Singh (1999, 2003, 2005) generated a framework building on Hofstede’s (1980) cultural values framework and Hall’s (1976) cultural context framework. His approach has been empirically validated in several

studies. Singh's is employed in this study to examine cultural characteristics of social network brand pages.

The Importance of Social Networking Sites Fan Pages as Research Objects

Influence of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) on Internet Marketing

SNSs are changing advertising and branding profoundly. Advertising spending in the social networking area is rising faster than spending elsewhere (eMarketer, 2006). In fact, SNS will attract nearly half of the overall dollars generated by all user-generated content sites in the near future (Gangadharbatla, 2008).

SNSs have also changed the way marketers reach consumers (Gangadharbatla, 2008). For example, businesses and organizations use these sites to build community with customers and to communicate with members of that community. In this way, customers easily get access to businesses or organizations they are interested in, exchange information with other business customers worldwide, and express their opinions about these brands/businesses/organizations freely. Marketers are able to monitor customer feedback to improve their service and share information with customers.

However, marketers also face challenges from SNSs. "Customers are now wired and capitalize on social networks to derive power from one another" (Levine et al., 2001). They may share their own perspective on companies and brands, some of which may not be positive or accurate. When customer views conflict with the image a company wishes to convey, it poses a danger to the brand. Many will find peers opinions to be more credible than company messages. Thus, the development of SNSs is a double-edge sword for marketers.

SNS Fan Pages are an Effective Internet Marketing Tool

SNSs offer companies a way to build relationships with customers. SNSs provide companies a way to collect comprehensive data use for developing and improving customer relationships. Such data for them permits companies to “use design, communities, personalization and co-creation of content at every opportunity to reinforce the relationship” (Clauser, 2001).

One of the most effective marketing methods SNSs offer is the Fan Page. All Fan Pages have the interactive characteristics of SNSs. In Facebook’s own words, “Facebook created pages when we noticed that people were trying to connect with brands and famous artists in ways that didn’t quite work on Facebook...Not only can you connect with your favorite artists and businesses, but now you also can show your friends what you care about and recommend by adding Pages to your personal profile” (Facebook, 2009).

Facebook encourages celebrities, brands, businesses and organizations to create free pages, which users can link to by becoming fans. “Fans” can follow the business or organization and receive automatic updates. Every time someone becomes a brand’s fan, the activity is shared with friends through news feeds. Many restaurants, bars, cafes, sports teams, artists, health and fitness centers, churches, non-profit government organizations, politicians, celebrities, and organizations have fan pages on Facebook (Gangadharbatla, 2008).

The potential advantage of branding on SNS pages is that the sites are highly targeted and relevant. Gangadharbatla (2008) indicated that SNS users are more likely to pay attention to messages that come from the news feed if the information is from a friend they know and trust. Users are thought to be highly influenced by friends’

recommendations. Marketers try to facilitate brand conversations among customers to achieve marketing objectives.

Implications for Marketers Interested in SNS Pages in China

According to iResearch (2009), revenue for advertising spending on the Internet in China is \$446 million for the first quarter of 2009, an increase of 5.9% from the same quarter in 2008. The SNS market portion is still small since most internet companies are in the investing stage, but it is increasing. In 2008, revenue from advertising in SNSs reached \$111 million, and it is estimated it will increase to \$147 million for SNSs only in 2009.

Kaixin001 and Renren, the two most popular SNSs in China, have 25 million and 15 million registered users, respectively (Alexa Traffic Details, 2009). Those numbers were accumulated from the end of 2005 and the beginning of 2008 for the two SNSs separately. It is obvious that SNSs are great ways to reach markets. They are also likely to experience an exponential growth in users over the next several years.

Though SNS growth worldwide is rapid, such sites in China are not as mature as in the U.S. For instance, Renren, a site similar to Facebook, only started a Fan Page service in July 2009 and had just 104 pages by the end of 2009. The most popular applications of kaixin001 are close copies of Facebook applications. The potential of SNSs in China are not yet adequately exploited.

This paper aims to develop insights for those who want to do marketing via SNSs pages in China. It does so by examining cultural differences in SNS branding in China and the U.S. It also offers Chinese SNS developing strategies and marketing suggestions that do not copy Facebook's model.

Related Research is Limited

Research related to this topic is very limited so far, since SNSs in China do not have a long history. However, this is an important topic that needs to be explored since China is a huge emerging market and SNSs are powerful marketing tools. Study of the impact of cultural differences on advertising on SNSs in China and the US would help international marketers to better use this marketing tool to communicate with their target audiences.

How Cultural Characteristics Are Examined in This Research

Extending existing research, this study applies Singh et al.'s (2003) framework, a combination of Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions and Hall's (1976) High/low context framework, five aspects of culture are examined in this paper: (1) collectivism/individualism; (2) uncertainty avoidance; (3) power distance; (4) masculinity; (5) high/ low context.

The frameworks of Hofstede (1980) and Hall (1976) are used in many cross-culture advertising studies, and they have been accepted by many scholars in this field. In this paper, these two types of cultural characteristics are employed to develop a new topic, SNSs Fan Page and new media on the Internet.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Reasons for Examining the Influence of Cultural Values to Marketing

Marketing and culture have always been an important issue in the marketing literature. Hofstede (1980) stated that cultural values manifest and express the culture and collective mental programming deepest. Kahle (1983) believes that culture values are the intersections of individuals and societies, which are internalized from individuals, families, teams, groups, friends and media through socialization. Culture reflects but also influences an individual's personal values. It demonstrates how individuals in a culture behave in certain situations, how they interact with other members in that culture, and even shape perceptions, motivations, attitudes, behaviors, and life styles (Feather, 1995; Tse, Belk, & Zhou, 1989). Since cultural values lie in the deep structure of one's personality, we can also understand culture by learning about media, ads and marketing behaviors (Albers-Miller & Stafford, 1999; Tse et al., 1989).

Effective advertising and marketing are tightly linked to the underlying culture of the markets targeted; in another words, effective advertising and marketing reflect cultural values and culturally insensitive ads are less persuasive (Mueller, 1987; Zandpour, et al. 1994). Thus, an important job of marketers is identifying and satisfying the needs of consumers within different cultures (Singh et al., 2005). Many researchers have done studies on international advertising and communication campaigns by using country-specific values. These studies suggest that marketers should pay close attention to cultural values in order to generate powerful ad campaigns (Pollay, 1983; Singh et al., 2005).

In comparisons of western and eastern cultures, the U.S. typically represents the most western and developed country and China is treated as a typical collective and traditional society. Comparison of these two countries' marketing activities could help find the most explicit cultural differences present in brand messages. China is currently the fastest growing economy in the world (Wikipedia, 2008), and its more than one billion consumers offer huge business opportunities to the world. Attention to culture differences in marketing activity is useful for marketers interested in global success.

Research of Cultural Values' Impact on Marketing in New Media

The advent of the Internet has created a new medium that has totally changed the way information circulates. The web is an open network available to people across different cultures. Its focus on user-control makes it different from traditional media for audience targeting, consumer messaging and even ad evaluation. The new media are all about interaction.

Taylor (2005) believes that it is important to conduct research on effectiveness of new media in various markets with different cultural values and economic development levels. He also encourages researchers to expand the range of topic and ad channel, import outside theories to enrich cross-culture study and do empirical test of specific cultural characteristics reflected in ads across countries. This new topic about new media, cultural differences and marketing has attracted close attentions by both academics and practitioners who study the impact of culture values on international marketing through information technology (Myers & Tan, 2002).

Culturally sensitive web content is superior for its usability, accessibility and interactivity (Fock, 2000; Simon, 2001). Different cultural values and lifestyles influence individuals' specific habits for information searching, categorizing, perception, product

choosing, etc. Thus, web users from different countries have distinct needs in navigation, customer service, security, categorization, and other features (Luna et al., 2002; Simon, 1999, 2001; Tsikriktsis, 2002). It is easier for users to process web information and understand web content on a culturally congruent site (Luna et al., 2002).

As a result, the importance of cultural differences in marketing on the Internet is becoming an intriguing topic. However, no fruitful studies of marketing on social networking sites have been done yet. Most of studies done in this field deal with the influences of cultural values as reflected in web design (Singh & Matsuo, 2002; Singh, 2003; Singh et al., 2003; Singh et al., 2005; Paek et al., 2009). These studies examined corporate web sites, anti-smoking Web sites, international product website, online stores etc. To extend the study of cultural value appeals to online marketing, this study seeks to understand cultural differences manifested in Fan Pages on social networking sites in the U.S. and China.

Cross-Cultural Advertising Theories

The most widely acknowledged cross-culture advertising theory is Hofstede's framework. This framework was originally defined as four dimensions, they are: individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and masculinity-femininity, but then developed to five dimensions that dimension of time orientation was added. This framework is thought to distinguish Western and Eastern cultures (Okazaki, 2004). In particular, the Individualism/Collectivism dimension is viewed as a cultural value construct that distinguishes western and eastern cultures. Hofstede defined I/C as "people taking care of themselves and their immediate family only in a loosely knit social structure, versus people belonging to in-groups to look after them in a tightly knit social

organization.” Generally, this bipolar cultural typology is applied to comparisons of the U.S. and Far East countries like China, Japan and South Korea.

Hall (1976) developed a cultural communication framework based on high context versus low context, which is also widely used in cross-cultural advertising literatures. In a high context society, “most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message” (Hall, 1976); by contrast, in a low context society, “the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code” (Hall, 1976). Ramaprasad and Hasegawa (1992) supported this assumption by giving showing that soft-sell celebrity endorsements are widely used in Japan, while hard-sell and direct promotions are more common in the U.S.

deMooij (1999) developed a value paradoxes concept that is also popular with cross-cultural advertising researchers. In previous cross-culture advertising and marketing literatures, polarized views of values are dominant, which state that advertising is congruent with the society’s cultural values. A culture of collectivism and tradition dominates in Eastern advertising and culture of individualism and modernity manifests in Western advertising. As opposed to these opinions, deMooij argues that values present in advertising are paradoxical to dominated cultural values in most cultures since there is a distinction between “desirable” social norms and “desired” individuals’ choices (deMooij, 1999; Taylors, 2005). deMooij (2009) believes that this may guide advertising to reflect values inconsistent with a society’s traditional values, and this is particularly true in countries with fast economic development.

China has experienced rapid socioeconomic changes in a short time period, including the return of Hong Kong in 1997, the foreign money crisis of 1998 (Paek, et al., 2002) and WTO membership in 2001. Such economic challenges, along with corresponding social alterations, have changed Chinese consumers' values and lifestyles (Shim & Cho 2000). Chinese society has faced an inrush of foreign retailers and business practitioners, multinational media such as MTV and ELLE, global advertising agencies, and so on. The most significant value change has manifested in the Chinese X-Generation, which is young, urban adults. These Chinese regard advertising as part of modern life; they are more receptive to advertising messages and welcome Western values; they are likely to buy foreign goods even if they are more expensive (Marketing Week, 1998). The Chinese X-Generation is going to be both a profitable market and a force orienting China's cultural future (China: X-Gen Study, 1996; Zhang & Shavitt, 2003). However this image of X-Generation differs from the conventional image of China presented in many studies, like Hsu (1953, 1981) and Hofstede (1980) , which argue that Chinese culture is defined by collectivism, and traditional, conservative, Confucian values, and that Chinese people tend to be moderate and modest (Zhang & Shavitt, 2003).

The differences in Generation X are consistent with deMooij's value paradoxes concept. Similarly, Zhang and Shavitt (2003) found that both individualism and modernity values are more common in Chinese magazine ads, and personal use products lean to use more individualistic appeals than shared products. Lin (2001) also suggests that Chinese ads are found to use more Western and modern appeals instead

of traditional ones. Studies in South Korea (Cho et al., 1999) also find that collectivistic appeals are not employed more than individualistic appeals.

As early as the 1970s, Rotzoll's (1976) belief that advertising encourages change instead of maintaining the status quo has been used to explain this phenomenon. Marchand (1985) states that advertising is a "revolutionary force" that "heralds modernity". McCarty (1994) puts forth an argument that advertising might not reflect current society values but the future ones, especially in developing countries. This argument is validated in several studies (Triandis 1995; Mueller, 1987).

Since the Internet is one of the newest media and fan pages on social networking site are one of the latest marketing methods, this study will examine how cultural values are reflected in this medium.

Cross-culture Advertising Framework for This Study

An examination of cultural markets in SNS requires a framework that is grounded in theory, is empirically validated, integrates various cultural perspectives and explains cultural-level diversity with full understanding of values, customs, beliefs, and symbols of a society (Singh et al., 2005). Past scholars emphasized that cultural typologies should be employed when the objective is to study the impact of values that appear in popular media and advertising (Schwartz, 1994; McCarty, 1994). Since this study is about cultural differences reflected in the web, cultural-level typologies are employed (Singh et al., 2005).

One challenge of marketing on the Internet is how to present information effectively to people from different cultures. The wording, tone, presentation, type of information and information content are important factors (Fock, 2000). The idea that advertising is a form of communication which is sensitive to cultural differences has

been examined in many studies (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996; Fock, 2000). This study uses Singh's (2003) framework, which borrows from Hofstede's four dimensions and Hall's (1976) high and low context dimensions. Singh has published several studies on cultural differences on web, and his framework is a unique and effective way to understand cultural differences on the Internet (Singh et al., 2005).

Development of Online Marketing

Results of Information Technology Development

The rise of the Internet has brought international marketing both tremendous opportunities and challenges (Melewar & Smith, 2003). According to "Statistical Survey Report on Internet Development in China" published on 2010 January, the number of Chinese internet users has now popped to 384 million, which surpasses the United States' internet user number of 228 million and ranks No.1 in the world (Nielsen Online, 2009 August). The Internet is a global channel through which existing and potential customers can be targeted (Melewar & Smith, 2003). Recent developments in the Internet have made it a popular channel for self-expression and information sharing (Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh, & Kim, 2008). This, in turn, makes possible a powerful electronic word-of-mouth communication.

Businesses and organizations are able to publicize themselves and present their commercial offerings worldwide through the Internet (Melewar & Smith, 2003). Pallab (1996) believes that this development particularly facilitates smaller organizations' international marketing efforts and enables small companies to compete on a global stage (Deighton, 1997). More recently, the Internet has become a mature global marketing and communication channel that aids virtually all aspects of marketing

strategies ranging from information sharing, database building, relationship forming, branding, customer service, etc (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 1990).

Additionally, the Internet supplies organizations a new channel of distribution (Strauss & Frost, 1999). Both traditional companies like Wal-Mart as well as virtual establishments such as Amazon have used the Internet to establish online stores where products can be purchased without consumers actually visiting a physical location. Web purchases amounted to 600 billion dollars in 2004 (Chen, 2006). With research showing larger and more frequent shopping online and increases in household online purchase, the incentive for organizations to build online stores is ever increasing (www.eg.com; Melewar & Smith, 2003).

Advantages the Internet Offers over Traditional Media

Marketers always look for relationship building based on customers' perceptions of a brand/product, specific needs, and feedback. In looking at media choices for creating this interactive relationship with consumers, the advantages of the Internet over traditional media are obvious (Chiagouris & Wansley, 2000).

For one thing, mass media are not able to communicate with existing and potential customers in a customized way. In traditional media, the same messages are sent to people irrespective of how much they know about the product/brand, and whether they are interested or not (Chiagouris & Wansley, 2000). Prospects may not get information they want and often cannot seek new information (Chiagouris & Wansley, 2000). On the Internet, different messages can be crafted based on an audience's difference in awareness, familiarity, trust and commitment (Chiagouris & Wansley, 2000). In addition, the interactive nature of the Internet enables marketers to have two-way conversations with their prospects, and do so inexpensively (Chiagouris & Wansley, 2000). In this

process, prospects work with marketers to improve the customer service, facilitate product selling, and web site modification, etc. By creating a tailored and responsive dialogue, prospects are more likely to become loyal to this marketer (Chiagouris & Wansley, 2000).

Branding on Fan Page of SNS

Definition of SNS

Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social networking sites (SNS) as web-based services that allow users to construct profiles that others can see and to list connections with other users. This is differentiated from “networking,” a term usually characterized by a relationship initiated between strangers (Kelley et al., 2008).

Introduction to SNS, Online Brand Community and Fan Page

People use social networking sites for personal and professional purposes, like making new friends, finding dates, keeping in touch with old friends, building new business contacts, scheduling offline meetings, etc. (O’Murchu, Breslin, & Decker, 2004). Since social costs are much reduced on social networking sites, more and more people are stimulated to join in.

People join in different social networking sites for specific purposes, which has led to various types of social networking sites that represent different relationships. O’Murchu et al. (2004) categorize social networking sites into three basic types. The first type is aimed at leisure and social activities, like Facebook, orkut and Friendster. The second type includes sites such as LinkedIn, Ryze and Spoke, that caters to professional business user. A third type organizes users for offline social events, like Meetup (O’Murchu et al., 2004). The design of a social networking site differs according to the aim and purpose of the site (O’Murchu et al., 2004).

As the Internet's ubiquity increases, more people find it useful for satisfying their desire for information sharing, self-expression, connectedness and knowledge (Jang et al., 2008). Increasingly, organizations are beginning to appreciate the importance of an online brand community. An online brand community not only offers organizations the opportunity to better communicate with users, it also provides valuable information organizations can use to improve their products, brands and services (Jang et al., 2008). Brand community is not simply an additional communication channel; it is a link between the organization and its devoted users (Jang et al., 2008). When users can express their personalities through a brand with others in the brand community, the brand achieves success.

Jang et al. (2008) classify online brand communities into two major types: member-initiated communities and organization-initiated communities. Member-initiated communities are built by devoted volunteers who exchange valuable experiences and provide useful information like opinions about brands (Jang et al., 2008). Negative brand information is not be screened at such sites (Jang et al., 2008). Organization-initiated communities are built by a company or organization that owns the brand to strengthen relationships with consumers and to increase purchases and build loyalty (Jang et al., 2008). Organization-initiated communities have the advantage of offering detailed and complete information about a product or service (Jang et al., 2008). However, unfavorable opinions are often blocked here since the community is controlled by the organization (Jang et al., 2008).

An online brand community, both member-initiated and organization-initiated, has some unique attributes. It is built upon a product or service shared by members (Muniz,

2001). It has no geographic limitations (Wellman, 1979). It acts as a social discussion place that reflects a brand's ability to keep up with updated mainstream culture, and it encourages members' interpretation of the brand (Holt, 1997). Its members usually have strong commitments with common goals (Maffesoli, 1996; Cova, 1997). Community members have a high level of identity and an understanding of the commercial landscape (Muniz, 2001; Jang, et al., 2008).

One aspect of the online brand communities of a Fan Page on a social networking site is. According to Facebook,

A Fan Page is a customizable presence for an organization, product, or public personality to join the conversation with Facebook users... The Page focuses on the stream of content posted by the Page administrators... By leveraging the real connections between friends on Facebook, a Page lets Fans become brand advocates... Posts by the Page will start to appear in News Feed, giving Pages a stronger voice to reach their Fans... When fans interact with a Facebook Fan Page, stories linking to that Page can go to their friends via News Feed. As these friends interact with this Page, News Feed keeps driving word-of-mouth to a wider circle of friends (Facebook, 2009).

Influence of Online Brand Community to Marketing

Studies of the factors influencing brand loyalty are many. Product quality, service quality, price, corporate image, information quality and commitment all affect consumers' loyalty to a brand (Devaraj et al., 2001; Lee & Kim, 2005; Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001). Less common is the observation that brand loyalty can be increased by online brand community participation. In one exception, Jang et al. (2008) explored the link between the level of brand loyalty and online brand community commitment. They showed that community commitment increases brand loyalty. The analysis also showed that members' community commitment is greatly influenced by their community

interaction and the rewards for their activities, rather than by system quality and information quality (Jang et al., 2008).

Shankar et al. (2003) believe that commitment is “a set of needs to sustain a worthwhile business-to-consumer relationship,” “an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship” (Moorman et al., 1992) and “a tendency to resist change” (Pritchard et al., 1999). Kotler et al. (1989) define loyalty as “a feeling of attachment to a certain set of brands and companies.” Strong loyalty from consumers helps a company to increase its competitive strengths in marketing by reducing marketing cost, receiving great word-of-mouth effect, increasing cross-sell rate, and so on (Griffin, 1996).

Jang et al.’s (2008) study suggests that companies can improve their financial performance by increasing users’ online brand community commitment through word-of-mouth marketing, hence companies should prepare various strategies to support their online brand community. For instance, they can provide physical places for community members to have offline activities, they can support money for offline meetings, and they could even invite community leaders and opinion leaders to visit the company to help obtain customer’s opinions about how to increase brand value (Jang et al., 2008).

Jang et al. (2008) also gave some implications for community leaders to better run an online brand community. First of all, the leader of a consumer-initiated community should focus on improving information quality and system quality, hence to increase members’ active participation and commitment (Jang et al., 2008). Secondly, interaction greatly influences members’ commitment, hence leaders of both consumer-initiated community and organization-initiated community should actively provide functions and apps that help promote members’ interaction, like BBS, chat, and messenger service.

Jang et al. (2008) also point out that rewards for activities had an important impact on community commitment. Rewards to community members help to encourage members' commitment and sustain a community.

The Culture and Language Difficulties

Because of cultural and language differences, considerations should be given to online global marketing strategies like all international marketing strategies do (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 1990). Though it is argued that the Internet has shrunk the size of the world, it still does not erase the differences that exist between different cultures, languages and societies (Melewar & Smith, 2003). For example, various traditional holiday scenes from different countries are employed in Coca Cola's "Open Happiness" ad campaign in the light of different target market. Most international companies' Web sites are built on multi-language system though English is the predominant language so far. Hence, marketers still need to pay close attention to customs, values, norms and attitudes of individuals from different cultures when launch online marketing strategy (Melewar & Smith, 2003)

Some academics suggest that the use of discussion groups and online communities can help organizations to learn about local culture, laws, and customs and finally to avoid or capitalize cultural barriers appropriately (Samiee, 1998; Richardson, 2001; Bridgewater & Egan, 2001). Additionally, Nicovich and Cornwell (1998) propose that this forum can help lower cultural barriers that have been traditionally difficult to overcome. Melewar and Smith (2003) believe this is because the Internet's own "culture" and "language" facilitate international marketing strategies of organizations. "Spam" is a good example. The term refers to Internet jargon meaning unwanted or junk email, usually of a commercial nature, sent out in bulk. Lots of Internet slang is

commonly understood by Internet users from all countries (Richardson, 2001). Though the creation of its own culture and the nature of information sharing have made the Internet become “a bridge mechanism for the transfer between cultures” (Nicovich & Cornwell, 1998), the reality that all users inhabit a larger culture from their societies and countries should not be ignored (Melewar & Smith, 2003).

Introduction of Facebook, Kaixin001 and Renren

Facebook

Facebook is the most popular social networking site and the fourth largest website in the world (Schonfeld, 2009). Mark Zuckerberg launched Facebook in 2004 as a Harvard-only social networking site (Cassidy, 2006). It was opened up to other colleges and high schools in 2005, and then opened to anyone with a valid email address in late 2006 (Kelley et al., 2008). A distinct element of Facebook is its application feature which allows outside developers to build applications or “apps” utilized through Facebook (Kelley et al., 2008). These apps facilitate the personalization of user profiles and also make Facebook more interesting (Kelley et al., 2008).

Kaixin001

Kaixin001 is currently the most popular social networking site in China with 720,000 daily IP visits in August 2009. Former CTO of Sina.com.cn Binghao Cheng launched Kaixin001 at the end of 2007. Its membership spiked in several months due to its popular applications like “Friends for Sale,” “Happy Farm” and “Parking War.” These three apps are all “borrowed” from Facebook. Except for the applications, the website structure and business model are also considered copies from Facebook.

Some practitioners believe Kaixin001’s popularity is a result of the blockage of Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Myspace in China. As a result, Chinese nationals have

turned to domestic social networking site. According to Alexa, Kaixin001's Global Page ranking was 1300th on July 20, 2009, and grew to 55th (Alexa, Jan 16th, 2010). Its traffic rank in China is 9th.

Renren

The development model of Renren is similar to Facebook. It was launched as a school-based social networking site in 2005, but opened to anyone with a valid email address in November 2007. Renren has covered 90% of colleges in China and has 22,000,000 registered members as of March 2008. Renren ranks 92nd in Global Page ranking and 14th in China traffic ranking (Alexa, 2010). Renren's website structure, business model and even interface are also similar to Facebook.

Based on above introduction of this topic and related literature review, working title, research questions and hypothesis are generated as followings:

Research Questions

RQ 1: Will branding on China SNSs Fan Pages have a greater number of Collectivism indicators in content than their U.S. counterparts?

RQ 2: Will branding on China SNSs Fan Pages have a greater number of Uncertainty Avoidance indicators in content than their U.S. counterparts?

RQ 3: Will branding on China SNSs Fan Pages have a greater number of Power Distance indicators in content than their U.S. counterparts?

RQ 4: Will branding on China SNSs Fan Pages have a greater number of Masculinity indicators in content than their U.S. counterparts?

RQ 5: Will branding on China SNSs Fan Pages have a greater number of High Context indicators in content than their U.S. counterparts?

RQ 6: Will branding on the U.S. SNSs Fan Pages have a greater number of Low Context indicators in content than their Chinese counterparts?

Hypotheses

The following are the preliminary answers to above research questions, which are also my hypotheses:

H 1: Branding on China SNSs Fan Pages will have a greater number of Collectivism indicators than U.S. SNS.

H 2: Branding on China SNSs Fan Pages will have a greater number of Uncertainty Avoidance context indicators than U.S. SNS.

H 3: Branding on China SNSs Fan Pages will have a greater number of Power Distance indicators than U.S. SNS.

H 4: Branding on the China SNSs Fan Pages will have a greater number of Masculinity indicators than U.S. SNS.

H 5a: Branding on China SNSs Fan Pages will have a greater number of High Cultural Context indicators than U.S. SNS.

H 5b: Branding on U.S. SNSs Fan Pages will have a greater number of Low Cultural Context indicators than China SNS.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Design

Study Method - Content Analysis

This study employed content analysis as a research method. Babbie (2007) stated that it is more appropriate to address the study of communications by answering the classic question of communications research: “Who says what, to whom, why, how and with what effect?” than by any other method of inquiry. The overarching objective of this study is to describe comprehensively the cultural differences manifested in branding on fan pages of social networking site (SNS) in China and the U.S., which is part of the study of recorded human communications and will answer what cultural differences appear on these pages and what effect they produce. Hence, content analysis is chosen here.

Though content analysis has been widely used, the analysis of web-based messages is a new challenge. McMillan (2000) reviewed 19 World Wide Web studies that applied content analysis as a research method and found out some application problems. Challenges from sampling, unit of analysis, and work of coders comprise the biggest difference and difficulty of web-based message content analysis compared to traditional media. It is basically impossible to measure the number of subsequent pages under a homepage since such numbers vary considerably by site. Furthermore, most Web sites change content continuously. The resulting complexity and ambiguity complicates sampling, defining units of analysis, and reliable coding.

To address these concerns, this study will follow the “seven steps in content analysis”: (1) Hypothesis and/or research questions, (2) Sampling, (3) Categories, (4)

Coders and training, (5) Coding process, (6) Reliability and validity, and (7) Analysis, generated by Kaid and Wadsworth (1989). To be more precise, a series of pre-tests were used to develop an effective coding scheme and improve inter-coder reliability.

Universe

Universe: fan pages of Facebook, Kaixin001 and Renren

The universe included fan pages from Facebook and its Chinese counterparts Kaixin001 and Renren that were established and in use by Jan 15, 2010. This time span was chosen for two reasons; first, since new fan pages are added daily, it is impossible to maintain a complete list of fan pages on both countries' SNS. Hence, Jan 15, 2010 was chosen as a cut-off date to restrict the universe of fan pages to those set up before that date and that are still in use. Additionally, though Facebook has maintained its fan page application since 2007, its Chinese counterparts Kaixin001 and Renren did not start this service until mid 2009. We leave more than seven months for them to develop this new service and get enough users that we can collect comprehensive samples.

Reasons for Choosing Facebook, Kaixin001, and Renren

There are many social networking sites worldwide, each of which serves various functions, caters to different target audiences, and is popular in different regions.

Table 3-1: Top 15 Social Networking Sites

From Table 1, we can see that seven social networking sites are dominant in the U.S. and that they function differently from blogging, micro-blogging, photo sharing, and business social networking sites. Only Facebook and MySpace are general function social networking sites, though MySpace is more blogging inclined. To be more specific, only Facebook provides the fan page service, which enables celebrities, businesses,

Table 3-1. Top 15 social networking sites

Name	Global Alexa Page ranking	Description/Focus
Facebook	2	General
Windows Live Spaces	5(Alexa only records data for second-level domains)	Blogging (formerly MSN Spaces)
MySpace	11	General. Had lost some popularity in 2007 and 2008, but has started to experience a slight renaissance lately.
Qzone	12	General. In Simplified Chinese; caters to mainland China users
Twitter	14	General. Micro-blogging, RSS, updates
Flickr	33	Photo sharing, commenting, photography related networking, worldwide
LinkedIn	42	General but mainly business
hi5	51	General. Popular in India, Portugal, Mongolia, Thailand, Romania, Jamaica, Central Africa, and Latin America. Not popular in the U.S.
Kaixin001	61	General. In Simplified Chinese; caters to mainland China users
LiveJournal	81	Blogging
Mixi	85	Japan
Odnoklassniki	92	General. Popular in Russia and former Soviet republics
Renren	103	Significant site in China. Was known as 校内 (Xiaonei) until August 2009
Orkut	109	Owned by Google. Popular in Brazil and India
Nasza-klasa.pl	110	School, college and friends. Popular in Poland

(Source: Alexa Traffic Details, 2009)

and organizations to share their business and products with Facebook users (Facebook, 2009). For these professional entities, Facebook's fan page application is an ideal marketing tool because it is free and interactive. When a fan interacts with Facebook fan page, stories, activities, and updates linking to this page can go to that fan's friends via news feed. In this way, when more and more friends of that fan interact with this page, news feeds keep driving word-of-mouth to a wider circle of friends. Hence,

Facebook fan page has become an active, convenient, and efficient branding tool for many celebrities, businesses, and organizations. Its working model has been highly valued, especially in this interactive marketing era.

In China, social networking sites did not become widely successful until the rise of Kaixin001 and Renren in 2008, though the first SNS in China was established in 2000. As opposed to Facebook, which is popular among both students and older people, Kaixin001 targets white-collar workers, while Renren is more popular among college students. Kaixin001 and Renren were chosen as Facebook's counterparts in this study for two reasons. First, these two SNSs target very specific users, white-collar workers and students, respectively, but Facebook covers a much wider range of age groups; 46% of Facebook users are between the ages of 13-25, while 54% are between 26-55 years old (insidefacebook.com, 2009). To gather exhaustive data to reflect the manifestation of cultural elements on SNS, the two most popular SNS in China is chosen since only in combination are they equivalent to Facebook. On the other hand, the business models and even interfaces of both Kaixin001 and Renren are similar to Facebook, as discussed in the literature review section of this study. The Facebook business model in the U.S. is unique, and has never been successfully copied by many Web sites in China. Hence, it will be more effective to indicate the cultural differences as well as marketing implications by comparing the SNSs Facebook, Kaixin001, and Renren that are rooted in different countries but have similar business model and interfaces.

Sampling

Facebook divides its pages into 17 types: places, products, services, stores, restaurants, bars and clubs, organizations, politicians, government officials, non-profits,

TV shows, films, games, sports teams, celebrities / public figures, musicians and Web sites, and more than 40,000 fan pages in total. However, its Chinese counterparts have far fewer categories, which is probably due to the still immature development of SNS there. Kaixin001 has only five main categories of fan pages: organizations, products and services, celebrities, newly built, and activities, and thirty-three detailed subcategories. There were a total of 314 fan pages by Jan 15, 2010. Renren has five types of fan pages without subcategories: they are celebrities/public figures, organizations, TV shows and films, media, businesses / companies, and activities, for a total of 127 extant fan pages by Jan 15, 2010.

With the goal of including fan pages that fully reflect cultural differences, fan pages in two countries for the same host were chosen as samples. They are official ones established by companies/organizations that brands belonged to, rather than by fans or unofficial groups. Pizza Hut fan page was selected, for it has fan pages on SNS in both the U.S. and China. Those hosts that have fan pages in both the U.S. and China must be international brands. That means they have to use standardized or localized marketing strategies to cater to oversea markets, which requires full understanding of local cultures to help marketers catch local audiences' attention. Hence, fan page, one of the marketing means, would be a good mirror of efforts marketers made to adjust to local culture.

Since the Chinese SNSs are not as developed as their American counterpart, samples were collected based on categories of Kaixin001 and Renren instead of Facebook since it would be easier to get available comparison pairs. For example, Facebook owns a great number of fan pages for politicians, but neither Kaixin001 nor

Renren has even one in this category since politics is a sensitive topic in China. That means if samples are selected based on Facebook's categories, then many of its Chinese counterparts would be shortened, like categories of Place, Store, Game, Bar/Club, Politician, Website, etc.

Unit of Analysis

With the goal of including all the hosts that have fan pages on SNSs in both China and the U.S., a full list of fan pages of Kaixin001 and Renren was compiled. Then all hosts of these fan pages were searched for in Facebook to determine whether corresponding fan pages existed. If they did, then these hosts were chosen as samples. For example, because Loreal has a fan page on both Kaixin001 and Facebook, it is thus qualified to join the sample set. However, because the cartoon character A Li has a fan page on Renren, but not on Facebook, it was excluded. In this way, 30 pairs of fan pages were selected as units of analysis. They are fan pages of ELLE, Marie Claire, Wall Street Journal, China Daily, Loreal, MINI, BMW X1, LG, Reader's Digest, Dime, Miss Tourism International, Pizza Hut, British Council, Switzerland Tourism, WWF, Red Cross, MTV, Friends, Big Bang Theory, Twilight, Avatar, DotA, Harlem Globetrotters, Adidas Soccer, NBA, UEFA Champions League And Europe League, Jackie Chan, Jet Li, Michael Jackson, and Jane Zhang, belonging to eleven categories: Product, Service, Restaurant, Organization, Governmental Official, Non-Profit, TV Show, Film, Sports Team, Celebrity/Public Figure, and Musician.

Coding Scheme

The cultural categories are entirely based on previous research and publications cited in the review of literature.

Hofstede (1980) built the foundation of the inter-culture advertising study framework. His cultural framework has been employed widely in most culture differences research in advertising and marketing. This framework is composed of four independent dimensions: individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity-femininity. Many studies have operationalized Hofstede's dimensions to study cultural differences in advertising and marketing, such as Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996), Okazaki (2004), Paek et al. (2009), etc. However, a few studies have applied Hofstede's framework into social networking site content.

To better reflect the perspective of marketing as a form of communication that is sensitive to differences between cultures, Singh (2003) built his framework by combining Hall's (1976) high and low context dimensions with Hofstede's framework. In high context communication, more visuals or symbols are employed to make indirect messages. Conversely, low-context communications tends to use direct messages like textual argumentation, analytical statements, facts, and data (Okazaki, 2004).

Hence, the coding scheme used in this study included (1) collectivism; (2) Uncertainty avoidance; (3) power distance; (4) masculinity; (5) high/ low context. The categories and indicators that comprise each category were basically adopted from Singh (2003) framework with certain adjusting according to characteristics of social networking sites. The following paragraphs offer operational definitions for each indicator.

Collectivism

Collectivism is an widely used indicator of cultural values generated from Hofstede's (1980) individual-collectivism (I/C), which can be defined as "people taking care of themselves and their immediate family only in a loosely knit social structure,

versus people belonging to in-groups to look after them in a tightly knit social organization” (Hofstede 1980, p.87). In individualistic society, people are centered on “I”; hence people value self-reliance, achievement, independence and freedom (Hofstede 1980). Advertisements in individualistic cultures usually emphasize individuality, independence, self-reliance, competition, success, autonomy, non-conformity, and self-benefit (Cha, 1994; Paek et al., 2004; Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996; Cho et al., 1999; Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996; Mueller, 1987; Zandpour et al., 1994). In collectivistic cultures, the emphasis is “we.” People’s identities are based on the groups and society in which they belong (Cha, 1994). In this strong group-tie society, people are encouraged to follow group norms, group success, and even sacrifice themselves for the betterment of society (Yau, 1988). Therefore, ads in collectivistic cultures typically reflect family security, family ties, group belonging, group fulfillment, harmony, and benefits to others (Lin, 2001; Han & Shavitt, 1994, Cho et al., 1999; Han & Shavitt 1994; Miracle et al., 1992; Mueller, 1987).

In this study, Community Relations, Clubs or Chat Rooms, Family Theme, Country Specific News, Symbols & Pictures of National Identity, Loyalty Program and Links to Local web sites are employed as indicators of collectivism.

Uncertainty Avoidance

The extent to which a society is averse to tolerant of risk is also an indicator of cultural values. A high uncertainty avoidance society tends to avoid uncertain situations and risk, and values security over adventure, which reflects the culture’s traditional beliefs and conservative values (Hofstede, 1980). As Gudykunst (1998) stated, individuals in such cultures prefer clear directions, instructions, and rules. A global internet use study by Lynch et al. (2001) indicated that Asian consumers feel less

secure when shopping online. A study by Straub et al. (1997) also indicated that societies high on uncertainty avoidance use electronic media less often since electronic media are intangible, which increase feelings of uncertainty. Hence, since the Internet is a technologically complicated new medium, marketers need to make great efforts to help consumers in high uncertainty avoidance society to reassure and reduce uncertainty in their online experience (Singh, 2003).

The subcategories we used to define uncertainty avoidance include: Customer service, Guided Navigation, Tradition Theme, Local terminology, Free Trials and Downloads, Customer Testimonials, and Toll Free Numbers.

Power Distance

Hofstede (1980) stated that the power distance indicator explains how different cultures treat inequalities in social structure. Singh (2003) further pointed out that high power distance societies emphasize social status, referent power, authority, and legitimacy; conversely, low power distance societies usually care more about egalitarianism, equally rights, and less hierarchy. Hence, people in high power distance societies are more likely to respect authority figures and the elderly, whose opinions and suggestions greatly influence people (Singh, 2003). Japan is famous for its strict societal hierarchy, and Mueller's (1987) study proves that social status appeals are used extensively in Japanese advertisements. Many previous studies have shown that higher power distance societies usually use higher power distance related appeals.

The indicators used to address power distance are: Hierarchy Information, Pictures of the Subject, Quality Information and Awards, Vision Statement, Pride of Ownership Appeal, and Proper Titles.

Masculinity

According to Hofstede (1980), masculine cultures emphasize directness, power, explicitness, decisiveness, and mastery over nature because these qualities emphasize boldness, ambition, and success. To such culture, ads focus on showing a product's superior performance and capacity to accomplish goals (Singh, 2003). On the contrary, feminine cultures value nature, beauty, and ambiguity of gender roles, and are more inclined to fantasy, imagery, and oneness with nature (Singh, 2003). We can find in several of Hofstede's studies (1980, 1991, & 1993) that Japan is the most masculine culture, followed by the U.S.

Indicators of masculinity: Quizzes and Games, Realism Theme, Product Effectiveness, Clear Gender Roles.

High Context-Low Context

Hall (1976, p. 91) believed "a high context communication or message is one in which most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message." Accordantly, Cho et al. (1999) also pointed out that in high-context cultures harmony, beauty, and oneness with nature are emphasized. Hence, advertisements in these kinds of cultures are implicit, indirect, polite, modest, and even ambiguous, and characterized by indirect verbal expressions, and few direct comparisons (deMooij, 1998; Mueller, 1987). According to the study by Hall (1976) and Hall and Mildred (1990), China and Japan are high-context cultures.

Conversely, in a low context, information is expressed in explicit code. Thus, messages conveyed in the form of discounts, sales promotions, and aggressive selling with direct, explicit, and confrontational appeals are common in such cultures (Culter &

Raj Shekhar, 1992; Singh, 2003). The U.S. is a good example of a low-context culture, where comparison ads and hard-sell appeals are common. (Mueller, 1987)

Indicators of high context that we will use in this study: Politeness, Soft sell, Esthetic. Indicators of low context: Rank or Prestige of the Company, Hard Sell Approach, Explicit Comparisons, Use of Superlatives, and Terms and Conditions.

Coding

A standard coding sheet served as a guide and orientation for the coders. Data were recorded on the coding sheet first and then entered into an Excel database. All units were coded by the researcher. A trained co-coder, who speaks both Chinese and English and experiences in content analysis, co-coded a random sample of 50% of the units. A detailed coding book (Appendix B) was used to train and guide both the coder and co-coder through the coding process.

Since the coding scheme employed in this study is borrowed from Singh's (2005) study on international companies' Web sites, we needed a pretest to modify this coding scheme to apply to the study of fan pages of social networking sites specifically and make sure that the indicators reflect the real meanings of the concepts.

A pretest was done to train the co-coder and modify the coding scheme and reveal any inconsistency between the coder and co-coder. It found that the most challenging thing is to identify indicators on fan page, especially abstract ones. For example, abstract indicators like "community relations" are defined by coders' personal understanding of whether "group well being" and "preserving the welfare of others" are evident on certain fan pages. This, as a result, generates inconsistencies between the coder and the co-coder since different understandings of concept like "community relations," "family theme," "tradition theme," "hierarchy information," etc, induce

incongruent coding results. It was decided that the best way to overcome this obstacle would be to specify all indicators with specific measures. For instance, the sub-indicator for “community relations” is the absence of unfriendly conversations, disrespectful speech or disputes displayed in wall and discussion boards.

Meanwhile, overlapped indicators reflected by the same phenomenon are deleted. For example, “tradition theme” indicates the same phenomenon as “community relations” and “family theme” does in fan pages; hence, “tradition theme” is eliminated. Similarly, “pride of ownership” is eliminated because it overlaps with “hierarchy information” and “quality and awards,” “use of superlatives” is deleted for repeating “ranks or prestige,” “picture of the fan page owner” is screened for repeating “vision statement,” and “product/service effectiveness” is eliminated because of overlapping “quality information and awards.” Table 2 is the comparison of original framework of Singh (2003) and modified framework used in this study. The final coding book is showed in Appendix B.

The inter-coder reliability was measured by implementing Holsti’s Coefficient of Reliability to items co-coded when co-coding was completed with the revised codebook and codesheet. The overall Holsti score was .80.

Table 3-2. Comparison of the original framework of Singh (2003) and modified framework used in this study

Singh's (2003) Framework	Framework of this study
Collectivism	Collectivism
1. Community Relations	1. Community Relations
2. <u>Clubs or Chat Rooms</u>	2. Family Theme
3. <u>Newsletter</u>	3. Country Specific News
4. Family Theme	4. Symbols & Pictures of National/Group Identity
5. Country Specific News	5. Loyalty Programs
6. Symbols & Pictures of National Identity	6. Links to Local Web sites
7. Loyalty Program	
8. Links to Local Web sites	
Uncertainty Avoidance	Uncertainty Avoidance
1. Customer Service	1. Customer Service
2. <u>Secure Payment</u>	2. Guided Navigation
3. Guided Navigation	3. Local Terminology
4. <u>Tradition Theme</u>	4. Free Trials or Downloads
5. <u>Local Stores</u>	5. Member Testimonials
6. Local Terminology	
7. Free Trails or Downloads	
8. Customer Testimonials	
9. <u>Toll Free Numbers</u>	
Power Distance	Power Distance
1. Company Hierarchy Information	1. Hierarchy Information
2. <u>Pictures of CEO's</u>	2. Quality Information and Awards
3. Quality Information and Awards	3. Vision Statement
4. Vision Statement	4. Proper Titles
5. <u>Pride of Ownership Appeal</u>	
6. Proper Titles	
Masculinity	Masculinity
1. Quizzes and Games	1. Quizzes and Games
2. Realism Theme	2. Realism Theme
3. <u>Product Effectiveness</u>	3. Clear Gender Roles
4. Clear Gender Roles	
High Context	High Context
1. Politeness	4. Politeness
2. Soft Sell Approach	5. Soft Sell Approach
3. Aesthetic	6. Aesthetic
Low Context	Low Context
1. Hard Sell Approach	1. Hard Sell Approach
2. Ranks or Prestige of the Company	2. Ranks or Prestige of the fan page Owner
3. Explicit Comparisons	3. Explicit Comparisons
4. <u>Use of Superlatives</u>	4. Terms and Conditions
5. Terms and Conditions	

Items with underline are not included in this study's coding scheme.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Final Sample

The final sample consisted of 28 pairs of fan pages. Two pairs were eliminated, including the fan page of Switzerland Tourism, (excluded because its Facebook link became a dead link since the day starting coding) and the fan page of the Harlem Globetrotters, (discarded because the language on its Facebook page is not English

Overall, 28 pairs of fan pages, 56 pages in total, were coded. Among these, 28 were from Facebook, 17 were from Kaixin001, and 11 were from Renren.

Results

Paired-samples t-tests were performed to discover cultural differences in U.S. and China SNS fan pages. All 25 cultural value variables were compared between Facebook fan pages and Chinese social networking sites fan pages to test for cultural differences.

For the purpose of testing the research hypotheses, an overall score of each category (Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance, Masculinity, and High & Low Context) was computed. Singh's (2003) method of calculating frequency of each indicator was used, which is: "calculating the average presence of each of the sub-categories within each dimension, and recording it as an aggregated score for that cultural dimension" (Singh, 2003). For instance, the aggregated score for the cultural dimension collectivism was calculated by counting the presence of all six indicators of collectivism on a fan page: Community Relations, Family Theme, Country Specific News, Symbols and Pictures of National/Group Identity, Loyalty Programs, and Links to Local Web sites, and then divided the number by six (Singh, 2003). A paired-samples t-

test was then executed. Results are shown in Table 3. Each cultural dimension is represented by the aggregated data for each dimension.

Collectivism

The first research question asked whether Chinese SNS fan pages are more likely than U.S. SNS fan pages to have collectivistic indicators.

As shown in Table 3, the occurrence of collectivist features on Chinese SNS fan pages (56.6%) is not more than that of U.S. pages (57.1%). A t-test revealed that the collectivist features are common in both Chinese and U.S. SNS fan pages (U.S. = 3.43, China = 3.39, $t(27) = .19$, $p < .91$). Hence, Hypothesis 1 that China SNS fan pages will have a greater number of collectivism indicators than U.S. SNS was not supported.

Closely examined, all indicators, except Links to Local Web sites, seem to present in equal numbers in the two countries' fan pages: Community Relations (U.S.: 60.7% vs. China: 75%), Family Theme (U.S.: 57.1% vs. China: 67.9%), Symbol and Pictures of Nation/Group Identity (U.S.: 92.9% vs. China: 96.4%), Country Specific News (U.S.: 50% vs. China: 39.3%), and Loyalty Programs (U.S.: 50% vs. China: 57.1%). In particular, Community Relations, Family Theme, Symbol and Pictures of Nation/Group Identity and Loyalty Programs were common (frequency > 50%). However, there were many more Links to Local Web sites (U.S.: 32.1% vs. China: 3.6%, $t(27) = -.009$, $p < .83$) on U.S. fan pages.

Uncertainty Avoidance

It was hypothesized that Chinese SNS fan pages would show a greater number of uncertainty avoidance features than its U.S. counterparts, due to the high uncertainty avoidance nature among Chinese people (Singh, 2003).

The results showed that the overall frequency of occurrence of uncertainty avoidance was similar in two countries (U.S.: 51.4% vs. China: 53.6%, $t(27) = -.89$, $p < .38$). Thus Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Table 3 shows that all indicators that comprise the Uncertainty Avoidance cultural value dimension occur in equal frequencies in two countries: Customer Service (U.S.: 3.6% vs. China: 10.7%), Guided Navigation (U.S.: 100% vs. China: 100), Local Terminology (U.S.: 89.3% vs. China: 100), Free Trial or Downloads (U.S.: 3.6% vs. China: 7.1%), and Member Testimonials (U.S.: 60.7% vs. China: 50%). Guided Navigation, Local Terminology and Member Testimonials are widely used (frequency >50%) in both countries. Conversely, Customer Service was less prevalent, especially in the U.S. SNS fan pages (frequency <10%).

Power Distance

The third research question asked whether more Power Distance indicators will be present in Chinese SNS fan pages than U.S. ones. Hypothesis 3 proposed that China would show more power distance features on its SNS fan pages as compared to those in the U.S.

Power Distance indicators were significantly different between the two countries' SNS fan pages. As expected, the occurrence of Power Distance indicators was relatively higher in Chinese versus U.S. pages and the difference is significant (U.S.: 44.7% vs. China: 55.4%, $t(27) = -2.12$, $p < .043$). Hence Hypothesis 3 was supported.

China SNS fan pages employed more Hierarchy Information (39.3%), Quality Information and Awards (82.1%), and Proper Titles (17.9%) indicators than did the U.S. SNS fan pages (25%, 53.6%, & 10.7%, in that order). Indicator of Quality Information and Awards was much more prominently depicted in China SNS fan pages than the U.S.

ones (U.S.: 53.6% vs. China: 82.1%, $t(27) = -2.83, p < .009$). However, the frequency of occurrence of Vision Statement was equal in both fan pages (U.S.: 89.3% vs. China: 78.6%).

Masculinity

Research question four asked if branding on the China SNS fan pages would have a greater number of masculinity indicators than U.S. ones, and it was hypothesized that the China SNS fan pages would score higher on Masculinity.

The results of the analysis revealed that masculinity indicators in China SNS fan pages (51.2%) did not differ from the U.S. (41.7%). Thus Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

The occurrence of all sub-categories of the Masculinity cultural value dimension, including Quizzes and Games (U.S.: 39.3% vs. China: 57.1%), Realism Theme (U.S.: 71.4% vs. China: 78.6%), and Clear Gender Roles (U.S.: 14.3% vs. China: 17.9%), were similar in both countries.

High vs. Low Context

The fifth research question asked whether Chinese SNS fan pages would be more likely than U.S. SNS fan pages to have High Context indicators. Hypothesis 5a proposed that branding on China SNS fan pages would have a greater number of High Context indicators than the U.S. SNS, while hypothesis 5b proposed that U.S. SNS fan pages would show Low Context indicators more prominently.

The results of the analysis showed that only hypothesis 5a was supported: China SNS fan pages contained a greater number of High Context indicators (U.S.: 35.7% vs. China: 58.3%, $t(27) = -4.42, p < 0.001$) than did the U.S. SNS fan pages. About 75% of the China SNS fan pages, compared with only 21.4% of the U.S. SNS fan pages, used

a Politeness indicator. In a similar vein, 71.4% of China SNS fan pages employed Soft Sell Approach indicators, compared with only 57.1% of the U.S. SNS fan pages. However, the percentage of occurrence of Aesthetic indicators was the same in both China and U.S. fan pages (U.S.: 28.6% vs. China: 28.6%).

With respect to the Low Context, however, there was no mean difference between the U.S. and China SNS fan pages (U.S = 1.75, China = 2.07, $t(27) = -1.27$, $p < .21$). Thus hypothesis 5b was not supported. Closely examined, the overall frequency of the occurrence of Hard Sell Approach was slightly higher on the U.S. SNS fan pages (57.1%) than on the China SNS fan pages (39.3%), and the overall frequency of the occurrence of Ranks or Prestige of the fan page was slightly lower on the U.S. SNS fan pages (50%) comparing with the China SNS fan pages (71.4%). However, indicators of Explicit Comparisons were not found in either country's SNS fan pages (U.S. = 0, China = 0). In addition, the use of Terms and Conditions differed significantly in two countries' SNS fan pages (U.S.: 67.9% vs. China: 96.4%, $t(27) = -2.83$, $p < .009$), which was much more prevalent in China SNS fan pages.

Table 4-1. Frequency and mean of items under cultural value categories: A comparison of the U.S. and China SNS fan pages

Items	U.S.		China		t-test	(p<)
	Frequency (%)	Mean	Frequency (%)	Mean		
Collectivism	57.1	3.43	56.6	3.39	0.118	0.91
1. Community Relations	60.7	0.61	75.0	0.75	- 1.441	0.16
2. Family Theme	57.1	0.57	67.9	0.68	- 0.827	0.42
3. Country Specific News	50.0	0.50	39.3	0.39	0.827	0.42

Table 4-1. Continued

4. Symbols and Pictures of National/Group Identity	92.9	0.93	96.4	0.96	- 1.000	0.33
5. Loyalty Programs	50.0	0.50	57.1	0.57	- 0.570	0.57
6. Links to Local Web sites	32.1	0.32	3.6	0.04	2.83	0.009
Uncertainty Avoidance	51.4	2.54	53.6	2.68	- 0.891	0.38
1. Customer Service	3.6	0.04	10.7	0.11	- 1.000	0.33
2. Guided Navigation	100.0	1.00	100.0	1.00	/	/
3. Local Terminology	89.3	0.89	100.0	1.00	- 1.800	0.08
4. Free Trial or Downloads	3.6	0.04	7.1	0.07	- 0.570	0.57
5. Member Testimonials	60.7	0.61	50.0	0.50	1.140	0.26
Power Distance	44.7	1.79	55.4	2.21	- 2.121	0.043
1. Hierarchy Information	25.0	0.25	39.3	0.39	- 1.441	0.16
2. Quality Information and Awards	53.6	0.54	82.1	0.82	- 2.828	0.009
3. Vision Statement	89.3	0.89	78.6	0.86	0.570	0.57
4. Proper Titles	10.7	0.11	17.9	0.14	- 0.570	0.57
Masculinity	41.7	1.25	51.2	1.54	- 1.982	0.06
1. Quizzes and Games	39.3	0.39	57.1	0.57	- 1.544	0.13
2. Realism Theme	71.4	0.71	78.6	0.79	- 0.812	0.42
3. Clear Gender Roles	14.3	0.14	17.9	0.18	- 1.000	0.33

Table 4-1. Continued

High Context	35.7	1.04	58.3	1.75	- 4.423	0.001
1. Politeness	21.4	0.21	75.0	0.75	- 5.582	0.001
2. Soft Sell Approach	57.1	0.57	71.4	0.71	- 1.441	0.16
3. Aesthetic	28.6	0.29	28.6	0.29	/	/
Low Context	43.8	1.75	51.8	2.07	- 1.274	0.21
1. Hard Sell Approach	57.1	0.57	39.3	0.39	1.411	0.17
2. Ranks or Prestige of the Fan Page Owner	50.0	0.50	71.4	0.71	- 1.652	0.11
3. Explicit Comparisons	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	/	/
4. Terms and Conditions	67.9	0.68	96.4	0.96	- 2.828	0.009

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

We examined six cultural characteristics in a new channel of advertising: social networking sites fan pages. This is consistent with Taylor's (2005) call for progressing cross-cultural advertising research forward. Those characteristics include cultural values and cultural context, which were imported from two prominent frameworks in cross-cultural advertising research: Hofstede's individualism/collectivism framework and Hall's (1976) high/low context framework. Cultural values were constructed from indicators of collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and masculinity, while cultural context was comprised of high cultural context and low cultural context.

Perhaps surprisingly, the findings showed only partial support for differences in China and the U.S. for these two dominant cultural research frameworks. China SNS fan pages did not present more collectivistic features than their U.S. counterparts. The two countries showed similar use of features of collectivism, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity. With respect to the high/low context framework, the findings showed that China SNS fan pages employed significantly more high context characteristics than did those in the U.S.; however, the occurrences of low context indicators were similar in two countries' SNS fan pages. Under the sub-category of terms and conditions, China showed significantly higher frequency than did the U.S.

Why were so few differences found? Perhaps the cultural framework of Hofstede's individualism/collectivism does not fit SNS fan pages context well. Hofstede's I/C framework was developed from survey of IBM employees in different national subsidiaries around 1970, the sample of which were "nonmanagerial

professionals, technical and clerical employees of marketing and service divisions, and first-line and middle-level managers in national IBM subsidiaries around the world. As IBM employees, they represented a well-matched, but rather narrow, segment of each of the 40 countries and, simultaneously, a strong corporate culture” (Hofstede, 1998). Hence, the samples of narrow segment made the effect of the I/C framework limited. On the other hand, the time of implementing the survey makes its result, the I/C framework, outdated (Hofstede, 1998). Thus the I/C framework is possibly a misfit (Paek et al., 2009) for one of the newest marketing tools: SNS fan page, which targets population worldwide.

deMooij’s (1998) “cultural value paradox” may offer another explanation for the findings. deMooij (1998) argues that values present in advertising are paradoxical to dominant cultural values since there is a distinction between “desirable” social norms and “desired” individual choices (deMooij, 1999; Taylor, 2005). deMooij (2009) believes this leads advertising to reflect values oriented to progress, rather than a society’s traditional values. He suggests that this is particularly true in countries with rapid economic development. In this case, the findings indicated that China SNS fan pages showed many similarities in cultural values with their U.S. counterparts, such as high collectivism, high uncertainty avoidance, and high low-context. It suggests that branded SNS fan pages in China head reflect modern, western culture values.

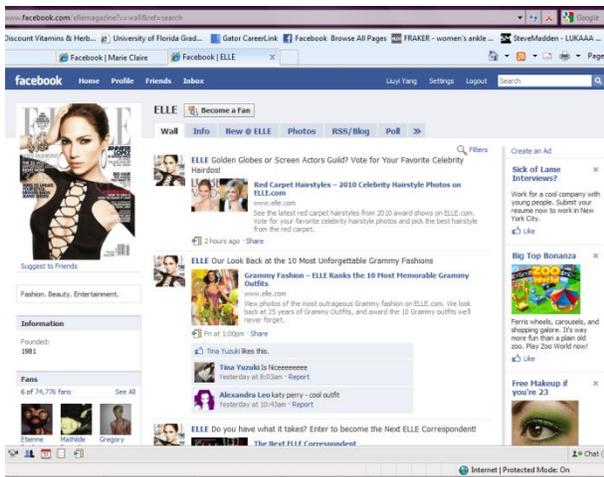
Third, the findings may be due to the unique nature of the Internet as a new medium. The Internet’s new features, like information sharing and interaction, are leading to “cultural convergence” (Paek et al., 2009) and the “global village,” where “universal culture” (Paek et al., 2009) emerges along with traditional cultures and

national borders disappearing. Though cultural and language difficulties still exist, the trend toward integration is dominant on the Internet.

Fourth, the culture on SNS fan page is even more converged (Paek et al., 2009) than in other internet activities. SNS fan page is one of the best interaction tools between marketers and customers, where customers from different regions and cultures are able to communicate with their favorite brands directly. To better communicate with their customers with diverse cultural backgrounds, the fan page hosts are making information and activities provided in fan pages widely understandable and favorable, which requires good ability in cultural convergence, especially for international brands. This nature and ability of SNS fan pages make it impossible to measure them with polarized cultural framework. On the other hand, the nature of a SNS fan page is a community and the purpose of the community is to increase members' brand loyalty by attracting their participation. These decide that members, especially active members, of a fan page are high on group belonging, co-fulfillment, and co-benefit. Thus the community nature of a SNS fan page makes it generally collectivistic.

Last but not least, the two China social networking sites we studied this time are both established based on Facebook. They have the similar business model and functions design including their navigation design and interface design (see Figure 5-1), which generate more or less similarity in perceptions and behaviors of both host and members. In many cases it appears both sites make a conscious effort to imitate Facebook as a way to benefit from its popularity.

To sum up, we did not see clear evidence of cultural differences manifested in branding on the U.S. and China social networking sites fan pages from this study.



ELLE's Facebook page



ELLE's Renren page

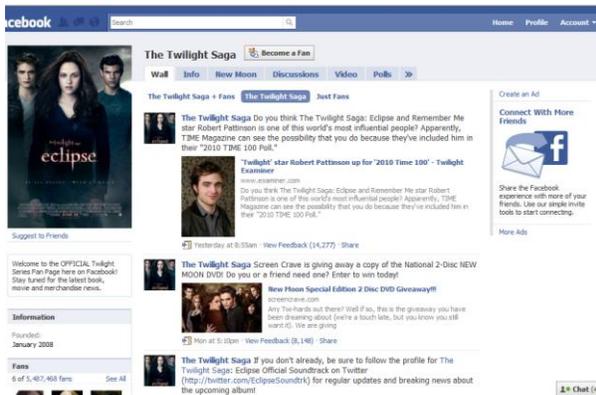
Figure 5-1. ELLE's Facebook page vs. Renren page

Though China SNS fan pages used relatively more features of power distance and high context than did the U.S. SNS fan pages, they behaved similarly under most cultural dimensions including collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, and low context.

Implications

First of all, this study suggested that international marketers who want to market on China SNS fan pages should pay more attention to communication context over cultural values. High context indicators were more frequent in China SNS fan pages than in U.S. ones. Chinese SNS fan pages are more fancy and colorful, and use more emotional appeals. Many pages use customized layouts rather than default ones (see Figure 5-2).

The findings also suggest that international marketers should be cautious about applying cross-culture theories when marketing on China SNS fan pages. Generally, traditional cultural values are not dominant in China SNS fan pages, while behaviors of fan pages' members are reflecting modern, western values. However, collectivistic features facilitating interaction in fan pages should be paid close attention. For example,



Twilight's Facebook page



Twilight's Renren page

Figure 5-2. Twilight's Facebook page vs. Renren page

features of community relations, family themes, symbols and pictures of nation/group identity, loyalty programs, guided navigations, local terminology, member testimonials, quality information and awards, vision statement, and soft sell approach are frequently (frequency > 50%) emphasized in both countries' SNS fan pages. The findings indicated that these features are not only typical eastern culture characteristics, but also elements facilitating SNS fan pages activities.

Third, China SNS fan pages are surprisingly high in using informative appeals. Frequency of occurrence of quality information and awards indicators and terms and conditions indicators are higher on China SNS fan pages. This is particularly true for international brands, such as ELLE and L'Oréal. Hence, the findings indicated that detailed information of history, development, honor, quality, and characteristics of a brand and product is applicable and useful for helping international companies entering emerging markets like China.

Finally, there are four suggestions for China SNS fan pages that stem from successes on Facebook. The first is that the China SNS fan pages should feature more member testimonials. These are frequently used in Facebook (frequency = 60.7%).

Electronic word-of-mouth is an effective marketing tool because people are more likely to trust peer endorsements over marketing ones. A second suggestion is to add discussion boards. Discussion boards are lacking in two China SNSs' fan pages that were sampled. However, fostering discussion topics is a great way to increase community participation. Third, China SNS fan pages should be multifunctional. Many successful fan pages on Facebook are not only places where fans exchange ideas and share information, but micro-Web sites where fans can easily purchase a product, get customer service, etc. Finally, China SNS fan pages hosts should study their American counterparts for marketing insights about products like movies (e.g., Twilight), TV shows (e.g. Friends), and deceased celebrities (e.g. Michael Jackson). It is very difficult to market products related to movies, TV shows, and musicians when they become part of history. However, Facebook pages of Twilight, Avatar, Friends, and Michael Jackson are used to sustain their influence and to sell related products. Some special elements of these fan pages include update information of actors, gift (real or virtual products) centers, contents/works reviews, and downloads of related iPhone apps.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

First, the sample size was rather small (28 pairs of fan pages), which may have resulted in a lack of statistical power. The small size is due to the immaturity of China SNS fan pages that they don't have enough international companies set fan pages there. The strict standard of sampling is probably another explanation for the small sample size. This research focused on fan pages that serve the same brand in two countries' SNS. This strict sampling is a better way to identify cultural differences in two countries' SNS fan pages. However, future studies should examine a larger sample size of SNS

fan pages as China SNS become more mature in order to test if the findings in this study are true.

Second, the coding scheme is borrowed from Singh's (2003) framework. Though some modifications were made to make this coding scheme fit SNS fan pages better, it would be more useful to have a customized coding scheme for cultural differences on SNS fan pages.

Third, in certain pairs of fan pages, members of each page are significantly different. For example, UEFA's Renren fan page has 70,712 members, but its Facebook page has only 10 members. This difference of membership makes some comparisons suspect. Fortunately, the number of samples with great difference of member numbers is small (2 of 28).

Fourth, due to the function design, the coding scheme may not be comprehensive enough. For instance, the indicator of a chat room/discussion board is eliminated from the sub-category of collectivism because discussion boards are a function that Facebook page provides but neither Kaixin001 nor Renren does.

Fifth, we looked at only one type of social networking sites fan pages. We selected fan pages from social networking sites of general function, like Facebook, but ignored other types of social networking sites like MySpace, Twitter, and so on. Because the coding scheme of this study is empirically applicable (Singh, 2003), future study can replicate it to SNS in other types and languages.

Finally, because only attitudinal aspects of culture were measured in this study, future studies should combine a more complete list of cultural dimensions to measure

“perceptual, attitudinal, behavioral, and symbolic aspects of cultural reality” (Singh, 2003).

In spite of these limitations, this study helps develop the scope of cross-culture advertising research by applying it to a new medium: SNS fan pages. We believe this study will help international marketers brand on the U.S. and China SNS fan pages.

APPENDIX A
CODE SHEET

CODE SHEET

Website: _____ Uncertainty avoidance: _____
Fan Page Category: _____ Power Distance: _____
Name of Fan Page Owner: _____ Masculinity: _____
Coder ID: _____ Number of Fans: _____ High context: _____
Unit of Analysis ID: _____ Collectivism: _____ Low context: _____

CODE SHEET

Website: _____ Uncertainty avoidance: _____
Fan Page Category: _____ Power Distance: _____
Name of Fan Page Owner: _____ Masculinity: _____
Coder ID: _____ Number of Fans: _____ High context: _____
Unit of Analysis ID: _____ Collectivism: _____ Low context: _____

APPENDIX B CODING BOOK

1. Coder ID:
 1. Coder, 2. Co-coder
2. Unit of Analysis ID: (pre-entered by researcher)
3. Website: Use number that corresponds to the website.
 1. Facebook
 2. Kaixin001
 3. Renren
4. Fan Page Category: Use number that corresponds to the website.
 1. Products
 2. Service
 3. Restaurants
 4. Organizations
 5. Government officials
 6. Non-profits
 7. TV shows
 8. Films
 9. Sports teams
 10. Celebrities / public figures
 11. Musicians
5. Name of the Fan Page Owner: enter the name of the Fan Page owner as it appears at the headline of each Fan Page. For example, enter ELLE for ELLE's Fan Page.
6. What indicators of collectivism are appeared in this Fan Page? Enter number that corresponds to the indicator showed in a Fan Page. Enter "A" after the number when the indicator is indicated by Fan Page Owner, and enter "B" after the number when the indicator is indicated by members. A Fan Page may contain more than one indicator. Enter numbers of all indicators presented in that Page, separating with comma. Enter NONE when no indicators presented.
 1. Community relations: emphasis on group well being (Cho et al., 1997) and preserving the welfare of others (Gudykunst, 1998). No unfriendly conversations, disrespectful speeches, or disputes showed in wall or discussion or chat rooms, etc.
 2. Family theme: appeals about nurturance theme, wherein fans of this page provide each other with support and sympathy. Appeals about the integrity of or belonging to family or social groups. For example, active response to other members' speeches, opinions, comments, and etc.
 3. Country specific news: updates, ideas, opinions, or comments related to country's specific news.

4. Symbols and pictures of national/group identity: obvious symbols and pictures of national or group identity. For example, national flag, country name, and logo of an organization/business/celebrity are all qualified to be this indicator.
 5. Loyalty programs: program to increase members' participation, commitment and loyalty. Like offline activities.
 6. Links to local websites: Having links to local websites shows that the company is well connected in the country, and has legitimate relationships with local companies/organizations.
7. What indicators of Uncertainty avoidance are appeared in this Fan Page? Enter number that corresponds to the indicator showed in a Fan Page. Enter "A" after the number when the indicator is indicated by Fan Page Owner, and enter "B" after the number when the indicator is indicated by members. A Fan Page may contain more than one indicator. Enter numbers of all indicators presented in that Page, separating with comma. Enter NONE when no indicators presented.
1. Customer service: assistance for fans' problems related to the page or the Fan Page owner. Like toll-free number, email address or other contact methods.
 2. Guided navigation: simply and clearly designed page navigation to help avoid ambiguous situations.
 3. Local terminology: widely used local metaphors, puns and idioms from both marketers and fans.
 4. Free trials or downloads
 5. Member testimonials: members' endorsements of using the product, service or attending activities and recommendations to a product/service/activity.
8. What indicators of Power Distance are appeared in this Fan Page? Enter number that corresponds to the indicator showed in a Fan Page. Enter "A" after the number when the indicator is indicated by Fan Page Owner, and enter "B" after the number when the indicator is indicated by members. A Fan Page may contain more than one indicator. Enter numbers of all indicators presented in that Page, separating with comma. Enter NONE when no indicators presented.
1. Hierarchy information: information showing hierarchical structures and social statuses. Appeals advocating that the product/service/celebrity is a symbol of high social status and activities of following it will bring you to high social class.
 2. Quality information and awards: quality certifications and awards that strengthen members' confidence to this product/service/celebrity.
 3. Vision statement: pictures and videos showed Fan Page owner's power.
 4. Proper titles: titles that the Fan Page owner given to itself/himself/herself, given by the members or imported from the third party.

9. What indicators of Masculinity are appeared in this Fan Page? Enter number that corresponds to the indicator showed in a Fan Page. Enter “A” after the number when the indicator is indicated by Fan Page Owner, and enter “B” after the number when the indicator is indicated by members. A Fan Page may contain more than one indicator. Enter numbers of all indicators presented in that Page, separating with comma. Enter NONE when no indicators presented.
1. Quizzes and games: applications of quizzes and games that emphasize the basic value of enjoyment (Pollay, 1983), mastery over nature, and reflect adventure theme, thrill and gaming (Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996).
 2. Realism theme: appeals reflected or emphasized on reality rather than fancy. Focusing on showing a product’s superior performance and capacity to accomplish goals (Singh, 2003).
 3. Clear gender roles: gender roles are clearly differentiated (Hofstede, 1991). Appeals admire women’s beauty, men’s power, and emphasize men’s domination in the society.
10. What indicators of High context are appeared in this Fan Page? Enter number that corresponds to the indicator showed in a Fan Page. Enter “A” after the number when the indicator is indicated by Fan Page Owner, and enter “B” after the number when the indicator is indicated by members. A Fan Page may contain more than one indicator. Enter numbers of all indicators presented in that Page, separating with comma. Enter NONE when no indicators presented.
1. Politeness: politeness and respect to each other are highly emphasized. Members and the Fan Page owner try hard to make friends with other members in the group. Members are unlikely to argue with others. Fan Page owner tries to resolve any problems and relieve any conflict in the page.
 2. Soft Sell approach: messages are implicit and indirect. Direct comparisons are not viewed favorably (Mueller, 1987).
 3. Aesthetic: emphasize harmony, beauty, and oneness with nature (Cho et al., 1999). Use of art, designs, beautiful scenery, and nature appeals are emphasized (Mueller, 1987; Gudykunst, 1998).
11. What indicators of Low context are appeared in this Fan Page? Enter number that corresponds to the indicator showed in a Fan Page. Enter “A” after the number when the indicator is indicated by Fan Page Owner, and enter “B” after the number when the indicator is indicated by members. A Fan Page may contain more than one indicator. Enter numbers of all indicators presented in that Page, separating with comma. Enter NONE when no indicators presented.
1. Hard sell approach: communications are direct, explicit and even confrontational (Hall, 1976). Use of direct and confrontational appeals in the form of discounts, sales promotions and aggressive selling is common (Cutler and Javalgi, 1992).
 2. Ranks or prestige of the Fan Page owner: highlight ranks, the benefits, and the prestige of the product/service/brand/celebrity (Mueller, 1987).

3. Explicit comparisons: appeals of direct and explicit comparison with competitors.
4. Terms and conditions: communications are informative. Emphasize clarity, background information, and directness. The information is vested in the explicit code (Hall, 1976).

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Liuyi Yang came to the University of Florida to pursue her master's degree in advertising after finishing her BA in advertising in Beijing, China. Her research interests focus on cross-culture advertising and interactive advertising.