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Beyond Borders to Glocal Success: Unraveling IKEA's Social Media Marketing Strategy in the Chinese Market

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Abstract

When there is always a debate about how companies should achieve a balance between globalisation (standardisation) and localization (adaptation), a new term called 'glocalization' is being referred to more and more. Glocalization is a strategy that merges globalization with localization. In business practice, global companies such as retail giant IKEA are also striving to adapt their marketing strategies to the characteristics of different markets in their global market expansion, maintaining standardised brand values but seeking local adaptations in their strategies and operations.

Previous studies have shown that IKEA had many challenges when entering the Chinese market, but by adapting its marketing strategy towards the Chinese market, the business has maintained positive growth in China in recent years. While studies have been conducted to understand IKEA's unique marketing strategy in China from a macro perspective, there is a lack of research on IKEA's marketing communication activities. However, research into the content and approach of IKEA's social media marketing in China is necessary due to, firstly, the fact that China has a unique online ecosystem and social media platforms differing from those in other parts of the world. Secondly, Chinese social media platforms are one of the main marketing channels for IKEA in China, and IKEA not only posts marketing content with high frequency, but also receives a lot of attention from consumers. Therefore, a study of IKEA's social media marketing in China will not only provide insights into IKEA's local adaptation in terms of communication and culture, and thus gain insights into its glocalization strategy, but will also give readers an insight into the uniqueness of the promotional style of Chinese social media platforms.

On this basis, in this research, I use Edward Hall's high and low cultural context theory, four communication elements of Schuster & Copeland's global business practice model, and Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions as a theoretical framework, and using multimodal analysis approach, analyse IKEA's marketing materials posted on the two most popular social media platforms, WeChat and Douyin, in an attempt to understand the communication and cultural characteristics of IKEA's posts on the two platforms and how they reflect IKEA's localization effort and glocalization, i.e. IKEA's balance between standardised and localised strategies.

My research findings indicate that IKEA's social media content on two platforms, WeChat and Douyin have a feature of high-context culture, prefers to employ implicit languages, and communicates in an indirect manner. These social media advertising are rich with vocabulary, rhetorical tactics and emotional associations to influence customers. In addition, IKEA's posts on WeChat and Douyin shows a tendency of collectivist and masculinist. My research results indicate that IKEA has adapted to the localised features of its marketing communications strategy to a great extent, but that

this adaptation is more difficult to measure in terms of the cultural dimension. Nonetheless, it reflects IKEA's glocalization strategy, as its social media marketing demonstrates a balance of standardization (brand value, product) and adaptation (market platform, communication style) to the local market, which is beneficial for its development in the Chinese market. At last, a further comparative study of IKEA's social media marketing strategies was suggested for various markets globally as it may provide a more comprehensive insight into its glocalization strategy.

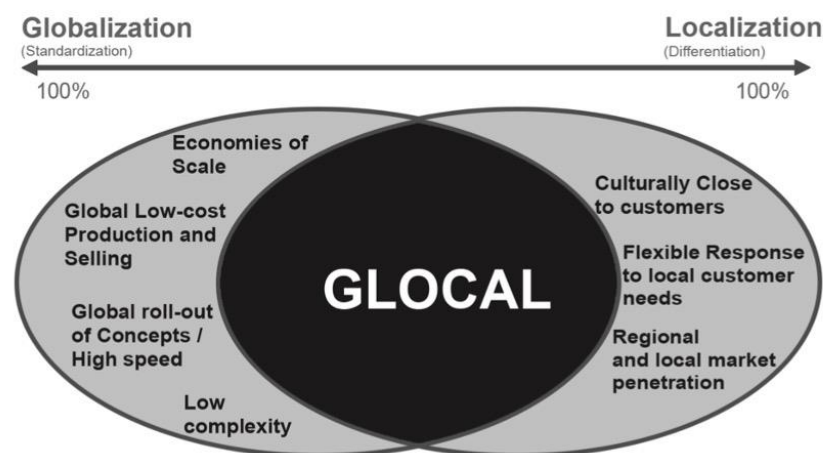
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1. Introduction

Geography plays an important role in international business because different locations have different climates, cultures, laws, politics and trade, and it links to an understanding of the behavior of people in a particular region (Berril, 2015). There has been a discussion on whether a company launching products in foreign markets should employ a standardized marketing mix with a single marketing strategy in all countries, or customize the marketing mix to suit the distinctive characteristics of each unique local market (Hollesen, 2020, p. 20). Nowadays, the view that multinational firms should adhere to a global (standardized) strategy in the global marketplace has been challenged and discredited, with the discussion focusing on how firms should find a balance between globalization (standardization) and localization (adaptation) (Vrontis et al., 2009; Steenkamp, 2019; Hollesen, 2020). As such, glocalization, a theoretical concept that combines words of globalization and localization is increasingly referred to (see figure 1). Glocalization was developed by the sociologist Robertson (1992), it relates to the customization of products and marketing strategies to meet specific local requirements, while also incorporating global or standardization features. It is a hybrid strategy that merges globalization and localization (as cited in Hollesen, 2020, p. 21).



Source: Based on Hollensen (2017, p. 22).

Figure 1: The overlap of globalization + localization = glocalization (Hollesen, 2020)

Using evidence from companies operating in Asia, Sinclair and Wilken argue that corporate giants such as Coca-Cola, for instance, have moved beyond the dichotomy between globalization and localization, opting instead for a combination of global, regional, and local strategies, depending on the specifics of their products and the conditions under which they operate (Sinclair & Wilken, 2009).

IKEA as a furniture giant that operates on a global scale, has gained much attention for its global marketing strategy. In 1958, IKEA opened its first store in Älmhult, Sweden, which has since grown to 460 stores across 62 markets worldwide as of 2023 (Inter IKEA Systems, 2023). Despite the pandemic challenges and inflationary pressures, IKEA's retail sales expanded in the fiscal year 2022, reaching EUR 44.6 billion, up from EUR 41.9 billion in the fiscal year 2021 (Inter IKEA Systems, 2023). Over the years, academic research on IKEA as a case study has evolved from examining the degree of standardization and adaptation in the company's global marketing strategy across different markets to analyzing how it balances standardization and adaptation to attain success in new markets. Research shows that IKEA's practice of global expansion has, to varying degrees, taken into account the specificities of different markets and adapted its strategy to the local market (Johansson & Thelanders, 2009; Burt et al., 2011; Chen, 2021; Johnson & Foss, 2011). Scholars are also particularly intrigued by the distinctiveness of IKEA's approach in the Chinese market, given the country's unique geographical and cultural characteristics.

IKEA entered China in 1998 with a replication strategy, however, proved to be inadequate. After adjusting factors such as strategic positioning and pricing, IKEA finally turned a profit for the first time in 2012. The company also became the largest foreign owner of commercial sites in China, with 15 million visitors to its physical shops and 24 million visitors online (Giunta, 2016). In 2019, IKEA declared a 100 million investment to expand its product offerings and solutions, create an

omnichannel distribution network, and provide greater discounts to better serve Chinese customers (Jing, 2022). In 2020, IKEA and Alibaba announce the opening of the IKEA virtual store on the Alibaba e-commerce platform Tmall, to increase accessibility for the customer to IKEA (Inter IKEA Systems, 2020). Over the past three years, IKEA's services have been extended to nearly one billion Chinese consumers through online platforms such as the Tmall shop and the online mall on WeChat (Jing, 2022). In 2022, IKEA announced investing \$772.9 million in China in the fiscal year 2023 for further business digitalization, construction of new stores and shopping malls, and integration of multiple distribution channels (Jing, 2022). The initiatives show that IKEA is still adapting its operations and marketing strategy in China to the country's fast-growing e-commerce environment, and is optimistic about its future potential.

Social media marketing has become an integral part of business and our daily lives, and China has a unique online ecosystem compared to IKEA's other markets. Major global social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter are inaccessible in China. China has its own social media platforms such as Sina-Weibo (Similar to Twitter), WeChat, Douyin (also known as TikTok outside China), and Red (a China-based cross-border e-commerce community), which are highly competitive and dynamic. Existing research on IKEA's strategy in China contains little and outdated analysis of its advertising and marketing strategies and is insufficient to provide an understanding of how IKEA has adapted to China's rapidly changing internet environment and how it communicates with consumers on social media. In fact, IKEA has official accounts on all major Chinese social media platforms mentioned above, where it launched diverse marketing campaigns, published appealing content, and received considerable followers and attention. For instance, IKEA has about 570,000 followers on its Douyin website (also known as TikTok) and has posted more than 700 videos. Some advertising videos try to appeal to audiences by combining the culture of IKEA's country of origin with the culture of the country in which it is selling. In one video, for instance, the chef combines a traditional

Northern Chinese snack called Tanghulu (a traditional Northern Chinese snack consisting of several rock sugar-coated fruits of Chinese hawthorn on a bamboo skewer) with a Swedish meatball recipe to make rock sugar-coated meatballs. This made me wonder if IKEA's social media marketing strategy in China is different from that of other countries. How are its standardization and localization (adaptation) reflected in its social media marketing? On top of a standardized product and brand concept, how does IKEA seek to resonate with the local culture in its social media campaigns in order to attract more users and consumers? Can these findings provide any valuable insights for other multinational companies seeking to succeed in the Chinese market? Such considerations led me to ask the following questions:

Based on a standardized brand concept, how does IKEA seek to adapt its social media marketing strategy to the local market in order to appeal to Chinese consumers? How does IKEA's social media campaign in China reflect its glocalization strategy, and what insights can be gained from it?

2. Methodology

This section will account for the methodology of the project, it will do so by starting with a focus on epistemological and ontological considerations. Following this, I will account for the research design, and present the chosen case. Lastly, I will present the data collection, method of data analysis and research criteria for this project.

2.1 Philosophy of Science

Epistemology refers to the “notions of what can be known and how knowledge can be acquired” (Bryman & Bell, 2019, p. 9). This research’s epistemology stance is interpretivism since I aim to understand and interpret IKEA’s social media communication behaviour in the Chinese context, by analysing its social media posts, which means I seek to “interpretive understanding of social action” and to “grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman, 2016, p. 26). According to Bryman, social reality has a meaning for people, and “they act on the basis of the meaning that they attribute to their acts and to the acts of others”, thus I as a researcher, can “interpret people’s actions and their social world from their point of view” (Bryman, 2012, p. 30). More specifically, in this study, I seek to understand IKEA’s cross-culture marketing strategy in China as their social actions, I as a researcher, is “providing an interpretation of their interpretations”, and my interpretation will be “further interpreted in terms of the concepts, theories, and literature of a discipline (Bryman, 2012, p. 31). That is to say, IKEA generates social media material based on its knowledge of the Chinese market. Through the qualitative data collected in this study, I attempt to understand the communication and culture activity for their social media campaigns, and then to interpret and discuss theoretically how their social media campaigns reflect their glocalization strategy.

Ontology “refers to assumptions about the nature of reality”, and shapes the way we see and study the research objects (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 127). For this study, an

ontological position, that of constructivism, will be adopted. According to Bryman, “social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors”, and “in a constant state of revision” (Bryman, 2012, p. 34). This study attempts to explore IKEA's social media marketing in a specific cultural contexts, where it can be said that the content posted on Chinese social media platforms by IKEA, with its brand stories, ideas, products and people, is constructed by individuals, and is "an emerging reality in a state of continuous construction and reconstruction" (Bryman, 2012, p. 34).

2.2 Research design

I have chosen a qualitative approach using IKEA as a case, as qualitative research typically emphasises the ways in which individuals interpret their social world and seeks to provide rich descriptions (Bryman, 2012, p. 36). In this study, qualitative analysis allows me to have an in-depth understanding of how IKEA's social media posts are construed in the Chinese context, from communication and cultural aspects. Besides, it also needs to be pointed out that, this study uses IKEA as a case to explore, because specific cases “provides an adequate context for answering certain research questions” (Bryman & Bell, 2019, p. 44), and choosing one case can better fit into the limited scope and time schedule for this project. However, since this study only focuses on the communication and cultural aspects of IKEA's social media content in China, rather than seeking a comprehensive understanding of IKEA's social media strategy, it is of qualitative design with a case example instead of a case study research (Tight, 2017).

A deductive approach was used for this project as this research is "theory-driven" and guided by theoretical frameworks from academic literature (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 51). The theoretical framework consists of categories that are used as a starting point for analysis. However, it should be noted that this research does not seek to test “specific hypotheses” derived from theory or phenomenon, which is characteristic of

the deductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2019, p. 6), but merely analyses selected data within the topic of the research on the premise of existing theory.

2.3 Case description

2.3.1 IKEA's global business and Strategy

As mentioned previously, the furniture company IKEA, which operates globally, is one of the giants among global retailers. In 1958, IKEA opened its first store in Älmhult, Sweden, which has since grown to 460 stores across 62 markets worldwide as of 2023 (Inter IKEA Systems, 2023). Despite the pandemic challenges and inflationary pressures, IKEA's retail sales grew in the fiscal year 2022 to EUR 44.6 billion, up from EUR 41.9 billion in the fiscal year 2021 (Inter IKEA Systems, 2023).

According to Aggarwal et al.'s multinational classification scheme, the world can be divided into six regions based on the inhabited continents, Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, and South America. A company whose business activities take place entirely within its home country is defined as a domestic company, while a company that operates in all six regions is classified as a global company (Aggarwal et al., 2011, as cited in Berrill, 2015). IKEA has expanded into all six regions (Inter IKEA Systems, 2023) and by this metric, IKEA is able to be described as a global company operating on a global scale.

In the early 1980s, IKEA began using the franchise system to expand its business globally in order to grow the company internationally while maintaining its entrepreneurial spirit and preserving the underlying IKEA concept. Franchising is a unique and desirable collaborative entry model with low embedded risk (due to the limited investment required by the franchisor) and a high level of contractual control (through a prescribed business form) (Madanoglu et al., 2017, p. 29), it has become a dominant strategy for internationalised companies across the service sector, particularly in hospitality, retail and fast food restaurants (Jell-Ojobor & Windsperger,

2014).

Currently, IKEA's retail operation is organized with 12 franchisees in 62 markets who work to continuously improve and further develop the brand in collaboration with the franchisor and other areas of the business. Inter IKEA Systems B.V. is a global IKEA franchisor and owns the IKEA concept. Inter IKEA Systems B.V. evaluates potential IKEA franchisees, and the agreements signed will grant franchisees the right to operate IKEA shops and/or other sales channels per the IKEA franchise system and methodology. IKEA franchisees pay Inter IKEA Group an annual fee of 3% of their net sales. In exchange, they are permitted to use the IKEA trademark and are authorised to market and sell IKEA's products as well as establish IKEA stores and other sales channels (Inter IKEA Systems, 2023).

Madanoglu et al. argue that internationalisation is not a discrete activity that occurs once in the life of a company; rather, managers constantly monitor both the domestic and foreign environment and invest resources in those markets that are more attractive and uncertain based on these assessments (Madanoglu et al., 2017, p. 40). As presented by IKEA, franchising is a system that encourages everyone to contribute and collaborate, enabling IKEA's business to grow steadily and the IKEA brand and concept to develop. Inter IKEA Systems B.V., as the franchisor, is responsible for the continuous development of the IKEA concept and ensuring its implementation in new and existing markets, while the franchisees, based on their consumers and market insights to provide valuable input, working together to improve and develop the IKEA brand to make it more relevant and inspiring (Inter IKEA Systems, 2023). It can be argued that the franchise system has enabled IKEA to expand its business globally, going from local to global, while also allowing it to better integrate into new markets.

2.3.2 IKEA's local adaptation

According to Marino Magento, CEO of IKEA Al-Homaizi Ltd, they use the IKEA trademark, sell IKEA's product range and operate according to IKEA's values in accordance with proven working methods. Within this framework, they are free to make decisions about what to sell and when to sell it. And it takes a certain amount of adaptability to succeed in a climate and culture far from Sweden. For instance, while the majority of products are in the standard range, they may choose 20% of their products with local tastes in mind (Inter IKEA Systems, 2023). Ulf Smedberg (Country Marketing Manager in South Korea and later in India) presented how they usually prepared for entry into new markets:

“our first and arguably our most important step was to understand the culture of the country and the aspirations of its people. We researched what life at home is like for local consumers and tried to get a feel for their needs, expectations, hopes, and dreams. Only then could we start to position the IKEA brand and create an offer that makes sense in that context...the main challenge is figuring out how to pitch a relatively unknown brand to a new market. In addition to that, we may face legal or cultural barriers...It's not enough to respect and accept a country, you have to love it and embrace its values” (Inter IKEA Systems, 2023).

It can be argued that IKEA seeks to combine the advantages of format standardisation with local adaptation in its international expansion (Johnson & Foss, 2011, p. 1080), and it is a good practice of glocalization. On one hand, the franchise system allows IKEA's ideas and products to reach global markets, and on the other hand, it draws experience and inspiration from global markets to better develop the brand and its concepts.

2.3.3 IKEA in China

Over the years, academic research on IKEA as a case study has evolved from examining the degree of standardization and adaptation in the company's global marketing strategy across different markets to analysing how it balances standardization and localization to attain success in new markets (Johansson & Thelander, 2009; Burt et al., 2011). Scholars are specifically intrigued by the distinctiveness of IKEA's approach in the Chinese market, given the country's unique geographical and cultural characteristics. For instance, Johansson and Thelander analysed IKEA's marketing strategy in China from the perspective of standardisation and adaptation of marketing activities, arguing that while keeping the assortment, brand name, overall communication and shop concept unchanged, IKEA China had to make more adjustments in terms of price, supply chain, location and communication (advertising and promotion) to adapt to the Chinese market (Johansson & Thelander, 2009). Similarly, Burt, Johansson, & Thelander compare the similarities and differences in IKEA's marketing strategies in Sweden, the UK and China in terms of merchandise, locations and shop formats, sales environment and services, and marketing communications. They argue that the marketing strategies in Sweden and the UK are basically similar, while the strategies for the Chinese market are significantly adapted. Of these, advertising and promotion appear to be the areas where IKEA has allowed greater adaptation to local conditions (Burt et al., 2021).

Lingxiu conducted research on IKEA's market entry strategy, including the target market location, entry mode, and timing of entry (Lingxiu, 2017). Vergassola analyses IKEA's marketing strategy by using SWOT and marketing mix (4Ps) and compares it to Home Depot's market strategy in China. She argues that Home Depot failed in China because of a lack of proper knowledge of the local market. In contrast, IKEA understands that global expansion means not only innovating on a global basis but more importantly, respecting and learning from the local market environment. In essence, achieving a good balance between globalization and localization, or

glocalization, can yield more positive outcomes (Vergassola, 2019). Burt et al. argue that IKEA's business model of IKEA in China has become quite different from that found in Europe and the US, through incremental change. To maintain interest among existing customers, IKEA's response to an increasingly digital society will be essential to its future business model (Burt et al., 2021).

The above study of IKEA's marketing strategy in China is primarily based on location, products, services and advertising and marketing. However, those analysis is somewhat outdated and summarised in general terms. IKEA's promotional initiatives in China mentioned in the studies include IKEA's catalogues, providing a source of information, educating IKEA concept and preparing target customers for the shopping experience via the internet (Johansson & Thelander, 2009), investing greatly in marketing campaigns, using media, online advertising, billboards, etc. (Vergassola, 2019), as well as increasing the number of communication channels in the Chinese market (Burt et al., 2021). However, this is insufficient to illustrate how IKEA has adapted its specific marketing activities for the Chinese market. Especially at a time when social media marketing has become an integral part of business and our daily lives, it is valuable to understand IKEA's marketing content and behaviour in China's unique online ecosystem, and it is instructive for other companies that want to succeed in the Chinese market.

2.4 Data Collection & Data Analysis

2.4.1 Date collection

The data for this research include 50 posts which have been chosen from IKEA's account on the Chinese most popular social media apps WeChat (Weixin) and Douyin. WeChat and Douyin have different features in terms of the way of branding. WeChat platform promotes mainly by publishing daily articles containing images, text and links to its WeChat malls, Douyin publishes short videos.

For this study, 33 articles posted by IKEA on the WeChat platform and 28 videos posted on the Douyin platform through February were selected as research data.

Platform	IKEA's social media account page	Followers
WeChat	https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/vyXdOuGFLaZTlvQ5BftE2Q	No data available
Douyin	https://www.douyin.com/user/MS4wLjABAAAArWDaKUveZCXL6gYrXnTLwpbdxM-owK9nCrXuFgaU71k	577,000 (Accessed 15/03-2023)

Table 1: Data overview

This project's primary focus is how IKEA seeks to adapt its social media marketing strategy to the local market, to attract consumers in China, from a cultural and communication perspective. I have chosen purposive sampling to collect my data so that they are relevant to my research question that has been posted (Bryman, 2012, p. 418). IKEA's posts on two major Chinese social media were selected based on the fact that: **1)** they are the two social media with the largest user base in China, WeChat has 1.26 billion monthly active users and Douyin has 730 million monthly active users (Thomala L., 2023); **2)** IKEA has an account and active marketing campaigns on both social media platforms; **3)** the two platforms differ in their main marketing approach, with WeChat focusing on graphics and text and Douyin on short videos.

2.4.2 Method of data analysis

In this project, I have used multimodal analysis methods for data analysis, as the data collected are social media posts that function as advertisements. The multimodal analysis approach allows me to understand how IKEA seeks to resonate with the Chinese cultural context by exploring the symbolic, communicative and cultural meanings of these posts. “semiotic materials house our ideas, values, identities and templates for social interactions” (Marchin & Ledin, 2020, p. 20), and it “shape

communication and social behaviour” (Marchin & Ledin, 2020, p. 18). Using a multimodal analysis approach enabled me to “break visual designs down into their basic components and understand how these work together” (Marchin & Ledin, 2020, p. 5), thus allowing me to investigate how meaning is created in context with combinatorial elements and how semiotic materials are used in social practice.

According to Ledin and Machin, the coding of semiotic resources is based on three principles, distinctions, contextualization and configurations (Marchin & Ledin, 2020, p. 31). All codes presuppose distinctions. For instance, colour and shape can have meanings and can be distinguished through metaphorical associations. On the basis of this, we can reveal the meaning of colours and shapes by looking at them in context. At last, we can explore how things like colour and shapes are encoded with meaning and in different configurations (Marchin & Ledin, 2020, pp. 31-33).

Guided by these three principles, in this study, I have focused on the analysis of textual elements such as language, vocabulary and sentences, graphic elements such as photographs and symbols, and elements of the design, content and style of the social media posts.

2.5 Research criteria

The research criterion for my study is trustworthiness, which ensures and assesses the quality of the research. This research has been conducted with transferability and confirmability (Bryman, 2012, p. 390). According to Bryman, “qualitative findings tend to be oriented to the contextual uniqueness and significance of the aspect of the social world being studied”. In consideration of the transferability, this project has accounted for a detailed context and theories to ensure that the research question is appropriately answered, so my findings can be ‘generalizable to a larger context’, or readers can explore the research document and determine if the findings can be transferred to other settings or environments (Given, 2008, p. 887). Confirmability is

focused on ensuring that I as a researcher do not allow my preferences, preconception and own biases to shape the research findings (Bryman, 2012, p. 392). In this study, I will ensure that my research process and interpretation of the data are clearly presented and based on the literature and methodological levels, to ensure confirmability.

3. Literature Review

This section will provide background knowledge of the chosen topic area in order to provide theoretical and literature support for this project. With this in mind, this section will address the definition of glocalization, the debates around global standardisation and adaptation, and the importance of glocal strategy. Following this, I will provide an overview of social media, social media marketing, and social media marketing in China, which will lay the theoretical foundation for this study.

3.1 Glocalization

This section will elaborate on the definition of glocalization, the debate on globalization(standardisation) and localisation(adaptation), as well as the importance of glocalization in the world and in business today.

3.1.1 Define ‘Glocalization’

Globalization is a word that is widely known in academic discussions, television and news reports, but glocalization is far less well known. *Glocal* is a new term that combines the words global and local, and it has been popular since 1990, especially in the field of international business and international marketing (Roudometof, 2016, p.1) In 1992, Robertson introduced glocalization into the social science discourse as a means of abolishing the local-global dichotomy. He argues that the process of globalisation is not in conflict with the local; rather, globalisation and localness are mutually constituent concepts (Robertson 1992, as cited in Roudometof, 2016, p.12)

In 2012, Robertson further addressed the relationship between globalisation and global localisation, saying that globalisation is widely considered to involve cultural homogenisation, that is, the increasing dominance of one society or regional culture over all other cultures. However, not all those who have studied the theory of globalisation agree that globalisation implies homogenisation. The scholar stresses in

this regard that the introduction of the concept of glocalization can help clarify the 'heterogeneity' of globalisation and allow for a deeper discussion of the simple distinction between the global and the local. On this basis, he argues that globalisation is closely related in a commercial sense to 'micro-marketing', the customisation and promotion of goods and services on a global or near-global basis to meet increasingly differentiated local and specific markets (Robertson, 2012, p.194).

A series of online dictionaries and encyclopaedias also tend to define the word 'glocalization' from a business and marketing perspective. For instance, glocalization is "the fact of adapting products or services that are available all over the world to make them suitable for local needs", according to the Oxford Dictionary (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, 2023). The Cambridge dictionary defines glocalization as "the idea that local conditions must be considered in globalization (= trading in all parts of the world)" (Cambridge University Press, 2023).

These definitions emphasise the local adaptability of products and services, which has been discussed by academics a lot, in whether standardisation or adaptation strategies should be adopted in the expansion of global operations.

3.1.2 Global standardization versus adaptation (localization)

Proponents of standardisation argued that marketplaces are increasingly homogenous and global in scope and scale and that ability of multinational firms to standardize their goods and services was critical to their survival and success (Hollensen, 2020, p.20). For instance, some scholars believed that standardised products and brands and global advertising will provide multinational companies with untold advantages (Alden et al.,1999; Dunning,1993), and are positively related to organizational performance (O'Donnell & Jeong, 2000). Dicken argues that consumers live in a globalised world where consumer tastes and cultures are homogeneous and consumer needs can be met by offering standardised global products (Dicken, 1998). Schuh

argues that it is difficult to say whether standardisation of marketing plans is a winning formula with (short-term) profitability, but in a homogenous market, implementing a standardisation strategy can help companies to develop higher quality products by reducing the costs of economies of scale and achieving higher productivity (Schuh, 2000). In brief, the standardization strategy considers that consumers worldwide have the same wants and needs and promote consistent marketing messages globally, translating but not changing the original content (Hollensen, 2020, p.21).

However, the simplification and conceptualization of standardisation are questionable, as the standardization strategy does not seem to fit contemporary realities, and the idea that consumers have a common desire for “standard packing” of identical branded goods and services has been demolished (Belk, 2019, p.546). This calls for a reference to localisation, or adaptation strategies, as opposed to standardisation strategies. This strategy is based on the premise that consumers are diverse in terms of their needs and wants (Hollensen, 2020, p. 21). Supporters of the international adaptation school of thought argue that there is an insurmountable difference between countries and even between regions in the same country (Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulos, 1997). Marketers are subject to a range of macro-environmental factors such as climate, race, topography, occupation, law, culture, technology and society, consumer tastes, disposable income, taxation, nationalism, local labour costs, literacy and levels of education. Therefore marketers should map out how to modify their marketing strategy and tactics (marketing mix elements) to meet market demands (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 1998; Paliwoda & Thomas, 1999, as cited in Vrontis et al., 2009, p. 478). Hassan et al. suggest that the global market can be segmented into three main segments, which would help to resolve differences in brand standardisation and adaptability. The three market segments are groups of countries with demand for similar products, the same product for different groups in different countries, and universal market segments that exist in many or most countries (Hassan et al., 2003, p. 447).

3.1.3 The importance of glocal strategy

Vrontis et al. argue that standardization and adaptation are a matter of degree rather than all or nothing. Organizational diversity, country heterogeneity, macro and micro environmental constraints, and enterprises' desire to suit the diverse needs of consumers make widespread standardization impossible. Multinational corporations should seek to achieve and maintain a balance between standardization and adaptability based on a thorough grasp of the dynamics of the markets they service (Vrontis et al., 2009, p. 491).

Steenkamp points out that global integration is not a linear process and that it now seems to have stalled and may even be heading towards reversal due to a range of political and economic factors. Therefore, even though much of the literature focuses on standardization vs adaptation, the challenge for the current international climate is to combine them into hybrid, glocal strategies (Steenkamp, 2019, p.532). Therefore, a third school of thought in the academic debate needs to be introduced, which is glocalization. The glocalization strategy combines standardisation and localisation (adaption) and offers an eclectic approach. This strategy calls for compromises in product categories, consumer characteristics (cultural context) and environmental factors, for instance, a company using a global base of basic products but with specific content and complementary services tailored to adapt to the host countries (Belk, 2019; Hollensen, 2020). The glocal strategy approach also recognises that there must be a balance and overlap between standardisation and adaption (Svensson, 2001), and it tries to work towards the slogan "think globally, act locally" through the dynamic interdependence between headquarters and subsidiaries, in the belief that moving a subject, product or service elsewhere has a better chance of success if it is adapted to the local culture into which it is introduced (Hollensen, 2020, p.23).

Indeed, the practical confrontation with the realities of cultural differences has forced multinational companies to move towards global localisation, and many have already

opted for a combination of standardised approaches and localised brands depending on their product profile and operating conditions (Sinclair and Wilken, 2009). For example, corporate giants such as Coca-Cola have abandoned a strategy that relies solely on standardisation. In addition to this, such advantages can be seen in the marketing strategies of McDonald's, P&G (Sinclair & Wilken, 2009), Starbucks (Smith Maguire & Hu, 2013) and Nike (Kobayashi, 2012). This localisation of corporate marketing is particularly evident in Asia, reflecting the global importance of the region and the need to adapt to specific cultural contexts (Roudometof, 2016, p. 110).

The glocal strategy approach recognises the importance of balancing and overlapping standardisation and adaptation. It has been argued that simply adapting to the local area is insufficient. Companies must be connected to local distribution, supply, and talent networks, as well as the larger community, to reap the benefit of local integration. Interaction with local partners may also outcome in new insights and unexpected opportunities for global innovation (Santos & Williamson, 2015).

3.2 Social media marketing

With an understanding of globalization, it is necessary to learn the term social media in order to understand the importance of social media marketing for a multinational company such as IKEA on this basis. This section will therefore focus definition of social media, social media marketing, and the current state of social media marketing in China.

3.2.1 Social media

Social media is one of the defining technologies of our time, with over 4.26 billion people using social media worldwide in 2021 and expected to increase to nearly 6 billion in 2027¹. It has been argued that it is important to consider the future of social

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/>

media in the context of consumer behaviour and marketing, as it has become an important marketing and communication channel for businesses, organisations and institutions, including those in the political sphere (Appel et al., 2020, p.79)

Social media can be thought of as apps or website that provides digital content or information to users through online social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, or it can be thought of as a digital marketing channel that can communicate with consumers through advertising. Also, it can be seen as an important digital place where people carry out important parts of their lives (Appel et al., 2020, p.79). Appel et al. define social media marketing as

“a technology-centric—but not entirely technological—ecosystem in which a diverse and complex set of behaviours, interactions, and exchanges involving various kinds of interconnected actors (individuals and firms, organizations, and institutions) can occur. Social media is pervasive, widely used, and culturally relevant. It has evolved from being simply an online instantiation of WOM behaviours and content/information creation and sharing. It is pervasive across societies (and geographic borders) and culturally prominent at both local and global levels. (Appel et al., 2020, p.80)”

3.2.2 Social media marketing

Scholars argue that understanding the role of social media in marketing is crucial for researchers and managers (Felix et al., 2017). Recent marketing thinking suggests that value is a core concept that is not provided or created by the firm alone but is co-created with the customer in a process of resource integration (Vargo et al., 2008). On this basis, social media can be an ideal tool for integrating resources and information between companies and customers, enabling mutual value creation in the integration of activities such as sales, communication, social monitoring, relationship building and strategy implementation (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2018; Ju et al., 2021). Besides,

customers can become active value creators, contributing value through activities such as crowd-sourcing, user-generated content (UGC), and word-of-mouth (WOM) (Rashid et al., 2019).

Felix et al. underlined the complexity of social media marketing, which they also define from a value creation perspective, and articulate four generic dimensions of strategic social media marketing:

“social media marketing is an interdisciplinary and cross-functional concept that uses social media (often in combination with other communications channels) to achieve organizational goals by creating value for stakeholders. On a strategic level, social media marketing covers an organization's decisions about social media marketing scope (ranging from defenders to explorers), culture (ranging from conservatism to modernism), structure (ranging from hierarchies to networks), and governance (ranging from autocracy to anarchy) (Felix et al., 2017, p.123)”

Li et al. summarise five research directions for social media marketing from a strategic value perspective, namely social media as **1)** a promotional and sales channel; **2)** a communication and branding channel; **3)** a monitoring and intelligence source; **4)** a customer relationship management and value co-creation platform; and **5)** a general marketing and strategic tool (Li et al., 2023, p. 125). It has been argued that as a promotional and sales tool, social media offers sellers new opportunities to obtain customer information and make the initial interaction with customers more efficient, which has changed the way buyers and sellers interact (Marshall et al., 2012; Rodriguez et al., 2012). In addition, social media as a communication and branding channel, serve to create, deliver and spread content on social media platforms to communicate with customers and achieve a positive brand image (De Vries et al., 2017, Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Social media has changed the nature of marketing communications in the digital age (Hewett et al., 2016). Customer-led content generation and customer-created product innovation are increasingly being created,

with consumers shifting from passive observers to active contributors (Labrecque et al., 2013), and enabling direct communication with corporate brand customers (Hajli et al., 2017). With this, social media has gradually changed corporate communication from 'one-to-many' to 'one-to-one' and consumer WOM from 'one-to-one' to 'one-to-many' (Hewett et al., 2016). Furthermore, the value of social media information has been emphasised by academics, as social media has become a 'listening tool' or 'window' for companies to gain market insight, as well as observe and analyse their customers (Timoshenko & Hauser, 2019; Moe & Schweidel, 2017; Rydén et al., 2015). Moreover, social media is argued to influence a company's marketing strategy in a number of ways, as a general strategic marketing tool, such as by helping to develop a marketing strategy that extends its geographical reach (Li et al., 2021), increasing a company's competitive advantage and profitability (Kumar et al., 2013), by providing useful means to overcome resource constraints (Brink, 2017) and by enhancing opportunities for new resource allocation, etc (Bianchi & Andrews, 2015).

3.2.3 Social media marketing in China

In 2022, China accounted for about one-fifth of the world's 5.3 billion Internet users, with over one billion people having access to the Internet nationwide (Thomala L., 2023). Up to December 2021, the number of mobile internet users in China had reached 1,029 million, and the user size of online shopping in China had reached 842 million (CNNIC, 2022). Research shows that more than half of Chinese netizens make purchasing decisions based on the recommendations on their social networks, indicating that social media have already been incorporated into Chinese people's daily lives (Denizci Guillet et al., 2016). According to Chiu et al., competition for consumers in China's social media space is fierce and the social media space is very fragmented and local in nature. For marketers, this fragmentation increases the complexity of the social media space in China and requires significant resources and expertise. Therefore, it is vital for firms to understand China's vast social media environment, in order to effectively engage with local consumers (Chiu et al., 2012).

China has its own social media platforms such as Sina-Weibo (Similar to Twitter), WeChat, Douyin (also known as TikTok), and Red (a cross-border e-commerce community), which are highly competitive and dynamic. The number of social network users in China is expected to reach 1.06 billion by 2023 (Thomala L., 2023). The fast-changing online environment can present a range of opportunities and challenges for marketing communications practitioners (Gurău, 2008). In China, for instance, the live-streaming industry rose rapidly during the Covid period, making a huge contribution to online commerce. As of December 2021, the user size of live commerce was 464 million, up 75.79 million from December 2020, accounting for 44.9% of all Internet users (CNNIC, 2022). IKEA China has also been observed to have caught up with the craze and started promoting and selling its products through live streaming. It has been argued that companies' social media marketing efforts can significantly improve their performance in China (Bai & Yan, 2020). Clearly, the prevalence of social media in everyday life, as well as the ever-changing Internet environment, dictates the need for companies to adapt their branding and communication strategies to the unique social media marketing ecosystem in China.

Li et al. argued that social media is a tool for identifying, maintaining and developing customers in an environment characterised by increasing globalisation, competition and digitisation, and companies should tailor their communications to the specific requirements of each target group by achieving harmony between product attributes and social media (Li et al., 2023). Cross-cultural marketing communication is a two-way interactive communication (Tian & Borges, 2011, p. 112), social media marketing also emphasises value co-creation between companies and users, thus requiring companies to understand not only the social media platform and context but also the users. For multinational companies, it is particularly important to understand the cultural background of users, as all marketing behaviour is culturally based and cultural differences can be an invisible barrier for companies that want to enter or do business internationally (Tian & Borges, 2011, p. 110).

4. Theory

With an understanding of glocalization and social media marketing, in order to further investigate how IKEA's social media posts in China reflect its glocalization strategy, I will use the following theoretical framework to guide the data analysis. In this study, Edward Hall's high and low cultural context theory, Schuster & Copeland's (2006) global business practice model of communication elements, namely truth, words, style and logic, and Hofstede's (2001) theory of cultural dimensions, including power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity uncertainty avoidance and long/short term orientation, will be used as theoretical departures to guide the data analysis, as it allows me to identify if and how the communication style and cultural characteristics of IKEA's social media posts in China are locally adapted.

4.1 High and low-context culture and communications

Edward T Hall (1976) proposed a cultural framework in which he argued that all cultures can be positioned in relation to each other through the way they communicate (as cited in Würtz, 2005). Accordingly, speed of messages, context, space, time, information flow, action chains, and interfacing are all involved in the creation of both national and corporate character, many messages are implied or have a cultural meaning, and there is a tacit agreement as to the nature of that meaning, which is deeply rooted in the context of the communication. Messages can also take numerous forms (the majority that is not in words) and are embedded in the context and selection of channels (Hall & Mildred, 1990, p.29).

Hall (1976) differentiates cultures along a spectrum of high and low-context communication, and he argues countries such as Switzerland, Germany, Scandinavia and North America are low-context countries using explicit language. Explicit language implies that words have specific meanings, the meaning is tied to the exact words used and context plays a minor role in determining the meaning of what is said.

Conversely, Spanish, Latin American, Arabic and Japanese are high-context countries that use implicit language, where the words are ambiguous and have many meanings, depending on the relationship, topic and context of the people and companies involved in the conversation (Hall, 1976, as cited in Schuster & Copeland, 2006).

Furthermore, researchers underline that high-context cultures such as Asia, Africa and South America tend to communicate in more indirect and less formal utterances, where explicit messages are not as important as the contextual elements of communication, such as a person's tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and posture (Agourram, 2013). However, in low-context cultures such as North America, Northern Europe and much of Western Europe, interactions are more expressive, direct and formal (Meeuf, 2014). Therefore, it has been suggested that managers should consider the importance of direct communication and context when marketing products to global consumers via social media (Lin et al., 2017)

Taking the above into account, Hall's theory of high and low cultural contexts would help me to identify whether IKEA tends to use explicit or implicit language when promoting its products on Chinese social media, so as to learn whether IKEA shows distinctive characteristics when marketing in China, taking into account the local cultural context and characteristics.

4.2 Communication Preferences in Different Cultures

According to Schuster & Copeland, in any given culture, government policy, legal systems and/or the use of decision-making levels determine the structure of business operations. How activities flow, the adherence to norms of punctuality and the integration of one's public life with business activities create the process of how things happen. Whereas the role of truth, use of words, style of language and forms of logic create expectations for the role of communication in business activities (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p.262). On the basis of this, Schuster & Copeland

suggested 10 elements of culture that are necessary to consider when conducting business in different marketplaces, including **Structure** (role of government, rule of law, sense of Hierarchy), **Process** (view of privacy, punctuality, the flow of activities), and **Communication** (truth, words, style and logic) (Schuster & Copeland, 2006).

Among these, truth, words, style and logic are elements of the way people communicate; it is about understanding the language of a particular cultural group and is valuable for learning about how members of certain cultures see the world (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p.267). The different ways in which people communicate can have a direct impact on business communication. For instance, whether words have an explicit or implicit meaning can affect the role of a contract. The style of language, direct or indirect, and the form of logic determine how information is presented and whether it is persuasive. Truthfulness affects the credibility of the communication. In short, the combination of beliefs, attitudes and values of each country or region leads to a different position on the above factors (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p.266).

Based on this, Schuster & Copeland (2006) developed a Global Business Practices Model (see figure 2), that can be used to suggest to people doing business in other countries to help them adjust their business practices. From this model, in terms of communication, China has been classified as a country where many truths exist simultaneously, where words have implied meanings, with a style of indirect communication and an alternative heuristic logic.

Areas of World	Gov't.	Law	Hier.	Privacy	Time	Flow	Truth	Words	Style	Logic
Northwestern and Central Europe										
North America, Australia & NZ										
Mediterranean Europe										
Eastern Europe and Russia										
South & Central America										
India										
China and Overseas Chinese										
Japan and Korea										
Africa										
Middle East										

Figure 3. Global Business Practices Model. *Role of Government:* white, the government sets parameters and constraints to create the environment for doing business; black, direct involvement of government in business as a business partner. *Rule of Law:* white, reliance on systems and procedures; black, pragmatism or situational considerations. *Sense of Hierarchy:* white, assumption of equality; black, assumption of status difference. *View of Privacy:* white, business and private matters are separate; black, business and private matters are all part of one reality. *Sense of Time:* white, fixed time; black, flexible or 'rubber' time. *Flow of Activities:* white, time works in a linear fashion; black, time works in a cyclical fashion. *Truth:* white, universal truth; black, many truths exist at once. *Words:* white, words have explicit meanings; black, words have implicit meanings. *Style:* white, communication is direct and forthright; black, communication is indirect. *Logic:* white, formal deductive reasoning; black, alternative heuristic. From Schuster and Copeland. *Global Business Practices*, 1E. © 2006 South-Western, a part of Cengage Learning, Inc. Reproduced by permission. www.cengage.com/permissions

Figure 2 Global Business Practices (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p.273)

4.2.1 Truth

Specifically, according to Schuster & Copeland, Western cultures are based upon the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle which holds that there are universal truths so ideas, activities and constructs are often viewed as good or bad, right or wrong or true or false. However, Eastern philosophies have hierarchies as a foundation of their worldview so the goal of the interaction is to preserve harmony as opposed to working within a framework of absolutes (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p. 271). Such as in China, where there is no perception of a universal truth, agreements are different from commitments, therefore exploring beyond the obvious meaning of words is vital for success (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p. 275).

4.2.2 Words

In a country using explicit languages (e.g. Swedish, Dutch, English), words refer to specific objects, people or ideas. Precision requires the use of specific words to convey thoughts accurately and efficiently. Whereas in the case of countries like China or Japan, the meaning of words changes depending on the relationship between people, the topic and the circumstances. They tend to use groups of symbols to convey thoughts, ideas and objects (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p. 275).

4.2.3 Style

It has been argued that countries such as Sweden or the United States value language that is direct, to the point and concise. In those countries, it is often said that people should ‘say what they mean and mean what they say’. In those cultures oriented towards universal truths, language is direct and specific so that all participants are clear about directions, expectations and deadlines (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p. 271). China, on the contrary, has been recognized as a country that preferred style with indirect ways of communication, in which there are many ways to convey information without stating something literally or directly. In such cases, understanding ideas conveyed may depend upon what is not said or what is implied (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p. 275).

4.2.4 Logic

There are the formal, logical forms of deductive arguments used in Western countries such as France or the UK, in which sound premises are key, or inductive arguments used in countries such as the USA, in which objective evidence and representative examples are key. Other forms of heuristic arguments include circular logic or arguments based on honour or relationships (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p. 271). China is categorised as a country where circular or emotional arguments can be made on the basis of honour or precedent or religious principles (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p. 275).

Given that social media platforms are now one of the key channels for promotion, communication and brand building, with the role of creating, delivering and distributing content to communicate with customers (Li et al., 2023; De Vries et al., 2017, Holliman & Rowley, 2014), the communication elements of truth, words, style and logic, therefore, would help me in this study to understand whether IKEA's product promotion seeks to adapt its communication style and approach to local preferences in China. However, it is important to note that the GBPM model, derived from Schuster & Copeland's research, is designed to help businesses quickly identify regional similarities and differences in cross-cultural business in order to quickly adapt to new markets. The model, therefore, emphasises the similarities and differences in broad characteristics between countries, and it places countries in different groups on the premise that the differences between countries and regions are smaller than the differences between the groups. Thus, in the process of developing the framework, the authors argue that "some level of detail is generally lost" (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p. 272). Therefore, the communication elements of truth, words, style and logic mentioned are used in this study only as a framework to support the analysis of the data, for exploring IKEA social media posts' communication style preferences and tendencies in China, rather than as a theoretical basis that is always absolutely correct.

4.3 Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Hofstede (2001) distinguishes cultures according to five dimensions: power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long short-term orientation (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). This dimensional model of national cultures has been widely used in various areas of global branding and advertising and has been useful in understanding social media's impact and adoption in different cultures (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010; Lin et al., 2017).

In the research “Taking a global view on brand post popularity: Six social media brand post practices for global markets”, Lin et al. draw on Edward Hall's theory of high and low cultural contexts and Hofstede's cultural dimensions, suggesting possible ways certain brand social media post practices can be interpreted according to different cultural perspectives (Lin et al., 2017). A combination of Hofstede and cultural dimensions theory and Lin et al.'s research would help me explore cultural tendencies in social media posts in this study to understand whether the corresponding cultural elements and tendencies are reflected in IKEA's posts on Chinese social media sites. This will thereby enable me to learn the extent of IKEA's localisation on Chinese social media from a cultural aspect.

In the following, I will elaborate on Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions and how the tendency of social media practices in different cultures, as suggested by authors Lin et al, will be used in exploring the cultural dimension of IKEA's social media posts in China.

4.3.1 Power distance

Power distance has been defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede, 2011, p.9). He argues that in small power distance societies, for instance, parents treat their children equally, older people are neither respected nor feared, hierarchies imply unequal roles and are created for convenience, have fairly even distribution of social income etc. In contrast, in societies of large power distance, where power is a fundamental fact of society, its legitimacy is irrelevant; parents teach their children to obey; older people are both respected and feared; hierarchy implies inequality of existence, etc. (Hofstede, 2011, p.9).

According to Lin et al., in a culture of small power distance, consumers will be more likely to voluntarily engage in two-way interactions with brand-related information and entertainment. However, for a culture with a large power distance, consumers will

receive one-way communications from brands about information and entertainment and are often less likely to interact directly with brands on a voluntary basis, they will usually accept or passively reject attempts to associate and personalize brands (Lin et al., 2017, p. 626).

4.3.2 Individualism/collectivism

Individualism and collectivism refer to “the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups” (Hofstede, 2011, p.11) According to Hofstede, In individualist cultures, there is a strong sense of 'I', language in which the 'I' is indispensable and others are classified as individuals and tasks take precedence over relationships. Differently, in collectivist cultures, where there is a strong sense of 'we' and an emphasis on belonging and maintaining harmony. Others are divided into in-groups or out-groups and relationships take precedence over tasks (Hofstede, 2011, p.11). It has been stated that in a sales process, the parties in an individualistic culture “want to get to the point fast”, whereas, in a collectivistic culture, it is necessary to “first build relationships and trust between parties” (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010, p.89). Lin et al. argue that in social media practice, information and attractive entertainment aimed at individualists emphasize the status and enjoyment of the individual, while in collectivist societies the emphasis is on benefiting the consumer's family or social groups (Lin et al., 2017, p. 626).

4.3.3 Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance deals with a society's tolerance for ambiguity, and ‘to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations’ (Hofstede, 2011, p.10). In a culture that strongly avoids uncertainty, people need rules and formality to structure their lives, as reflected in the quest for truth and the belief in experts (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010, p.89). In addition, in these cultures, there is a higher level of stress, emotionality, anxiety, difficulty in tolerating deviant people and ideas, and a perception that being different

is dangerous (Hofstede, 2011, p.10). In contrast, in a weak uncertainty avoidance society, people accept the uncertainty inherent in life, dislike written or unwritten rules, live a more relaxed life with less stress and anxiety, are more tolerant of any ideas that stray from the norm and are curious about things that are different (Hofstede, 2011, p.10). According to Lin et al., In a culture with strong uncertainty avoidance, consumers will place greater value on functional information that reduces risk and uncertainty. Whereas in a society with less uncertainty avoidance, consumers will value a broader range of content that provides information and/or entertainment (Lin et al., 2017, p.626).

4.3.4 Long-/ short-term orientation

As explained by De & Hofstede, Long- versus short-term orientation is ‘the extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic future-orientated perspective rather than a conventional historic or short-term point of view’ (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010, p.90). The long-term orientation follows the values of perseverance and thrift, with a sense of shame, and people rank their relationships according to status. Family life is guided by common tasks and most of the important events in life will occur in the future. In contrast, in societies with a short-term orientation, people focus on the pursuit of happiness and personal stability and contentment rather than on peace of mind. For people in individually oriented-societies, most of the important events in life occur in the past or in the present, and service to others is an important goal (De & Hofstede, 2010; Hofstede, 2011). Furthermore, Lin et al., argue that in social media practice, consumers in long-term oriented societies tend to focus on useful information that provides functional value and meets their distinctive needs, in contrast, in a short-term oriented society, consumers would prefer information and entertainment that allows them to identify with the brand as an expression of their identity (Lin et al., 2017, p.626).

4.3.5 Masculinity/femininity

Hofstede argues that the dominant value in a masculine society are “achievement and success”, while in a feminine society are “caring for others and quality of life (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010, p.89) “ In a masculine society, where emotional and social roles between men and women are highly differentiated, work takes precedence over the family and people worship the strongest. In the family, the father determines the size of the family and deals with facts, while the mother deals with feelings. In contrast, in a feminine society, where the emotional and social roles between the genders are less different, there is a better balance between family and work. In the family, the mother decides on the number of children and both parents deal with facts and feelings (Hofstede, 2011, p.12).

4.3.6 Critically use of Hofstede’s cultural dimension theory

Hofstede presented five cultural dimensions that are most relevant to branding and advertising. This cultural classification is based on measurements of a large number of countries and is simple and straightforward for academic research and business practice (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010, p.87). It is important to note that this is a tendency towards cultural values on a national level only, based on Hofstede's research, which does not mean that it is completely accurate in reality and for individuals.

The limitations of Hofstede's theory of the cultural dimension have been addressed by several scholars, for instance, McSweeney criticised Hofstede's data collection procedures and sample, arguing that it takes an implicit, central, systematic causal, territorial, and shared approach to culture and that researchers using the theory have cemented a flawed conception of national culture (McSweeney, 2002, as cited in Venkateswaran & Ojha, 2019). Beugelsdijk, & Welzel argue that Hofstede’s dimensional concept neglects cultural dynamics, and followers should be more critical in their use of dimensions of national culture (Beugelsdijk, & Welzel, 2018). Minkov

& Kaasa point out that Hofstede's approach to studying culture by combining country-level variables into cultural dimensions is a useful tool. However, the structure of the national cultural dimension is not very stable and can change significantly over the decades, so it is not necessarily representative of national cultural differences (Minkov & Kaasa, 2021).

Even though Hofstede's theory has been criticised as being deficient, it is still applicable to the present study. This is on account of the fact that in marketing strategies, companies commonly divide homogeneous groups of consumers into different segments based on different needs and desires, and segmentation by geographic regions is one of the popular segmentation approaches (Goyat, 2011). Besides, In marketing practice, tracking the values of individual consumers is expensive and time-consuming, hence country-level data is frequently used in international marketing, although this has been criticised for ignoring differences within countries. While some countries are more heterogeneous than others, scholars have argued that differences between countries are often much greater than differences within countries (De Mooij 2015, p. 648).

The function of dimensions of national culture is that they “group together phenomena that were empirically found to occur in combination (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p. 24 as cited in De Mooij 2015, p. 649), and given this, it can be argued that both market segmentation strategies and cultural dimensions tend to extract broad group characteristics to meet marketing needs. Moreover, social media as platforms with a marketing function, the content posted by business accounts in it would also tend to reflect the broad characteristics of groups rather than individual characteristics. Therefore, Hofstede's cultural dimension is proper to use in this project as it enables an examination of whether IKEA takes into account the overall context and characteristics of Chinese culture in its social media practices. And based on the above arguments and with the awareness of the shortcomings of Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, its cultural dimension theory will be used as a framework

in this study to assist in the analysis of the cultural dimensions reflected in social media posts. While its theory of which cultural classifications different countries fall into will be used critically rather than being seen as the sole criteria.

5. Analysis

As previously stated, the two social media platforms, WeChat and Douyin, display advertising in various ways, with Douyin mainly publishing short videos and WeChat primarily posting promotional articles with a combination of visuals and text. IKEA China's short videos on Douyin are all accompanied by a brief headline and hashtag, and are normally less than one minute long, with a few longer movies lasting more than three or five minutes. There are often combined modalities of titles, text, narration, photos, and visuals in these videos, and most feature characters and sometimes symbols.

WeChat is a dynamic platform that primarily publishes long articles that incorporate visuals and text, since IKEA China has an online mall on the WeChat shopping mini program, these long articles have embedded links to the products and can navigate customers directly to the purchase page. WeChat has also launched a video feature and IKEA also posts videos on the WeChat video channel, but because these videos are similar in content and style to Douyin, if not repetitive, they will not be examined in this study. In addition to text and images of the products, IKEA China used a combination of modalities, such as varied headlines, colours, designs and symbols in the WeChat postings.

This part of the analysis will be divided into three sections based on the theoretical framework described previously, starting with how IKEA's posts on Douyin and WeChat reflect a high-context culture and the use of implicit language. The second section focuses on the communication preferences reflected in IKEA's social media posts on Douyin and WeChat, and the final section presents an analysis of cultural tendencies in IKEA's social media posts on these two platforms based on the Hofstede cultural dimension.

5.1 Context is essential in IKEA's social media posts on Douyin and WeChat

In this section, through Edward T Hall's theory of high and low cultural context, I want to explore whether IKEA's social media posts in China reflect distinctive characteristics and how it manifests themselves. Using a multimodal approach, I will analyse which patterns are used in IKEA's videos and posts posted in China, how these patterns are used and how they reflect a high-context culture.

The video ads posted by IKEA China on Douyin and the graphic ads posted on WeChat are consistent with what Edward describes as a high-context culture, in which context is crucial in those video and graphic ads. This is shown in **1)** the employment of numerous metaphors in the post's headline and content. The metaphors in these text must be understood in the context of the scenes, characters, and objects in the advertisements. And according to the data collected, the majority of the videos posted on Douyin contain all elements of text, images, sound and symbols at the same time, which play an important role in understanding the meaning of the text and the purpose of the commercial. **2)** These video and graphic ads emphasise the construction of context, in which the product is not presented directly, but rather through establishing a scene in which the information and applications of the product are communicated through the characters' activities.

5.1.1 An example from Douyin

There is a video posted to promote traditional wool embroidery cushions (see figure 3) can show us how IKEA constructed context for promote a single item. The brief introduction of the cushion says

'The sound of horses' hooves thumping, thumping, thumping ~ Traditional wool embroidery cushions from Swedish carriage are here! With a free and simple

embroidery method, paired with lively and playful patterns, do you like this exotic little cushion? #IKEA #Ceremony is indispensable'(YiJia [IKEA], 2023).

It may be argued that by reading this, the title already provides a sense of sound and vision through onomatopoeia. This video begins with a woman walking up to a chair and sitting in it. She turned around and adjusted the cushions on her chair. A close shot of the cushions is shown here to display detail of the cushions. She then leans back and rests her head on the chair. In the following scene, she is sitting, holding a book and reading it. In this scene, the sentence '**Embellish private peaceful spaces**' are presented in the right bottom corner (YiJia [IKEA], 2023).

The video uses the cushion for transitions and in the next shot a mother and daughter sat on the sofa throwing a cushion at each other for fun, then a line of text appears in the centre of the screen saying '**Embellish the fun parent-child time**'. Following this, a more detailed image of the cushion on the sofa appears, along with information on the name, size, colour and price of the cushion. As the camera moves away, a woman sits down on the sofa and chats with the person sitting next to her. At this time, the sentence '**Embellishing a small gathering of friends at leisure**' appears. A close-up of the cushion appears here once more. Finally, two women and a man are sitting on the couch chatting while a line of text appears in the middle of the screen, saying '**RÖDARV 洛达夫 cushions, embellish a colourful life**'. The photo of the cushion and a line at the end echoes the hashtag of the article, which is 'Every day has a sense of ceremony'.

As seen in this short 30-second video advertisement, the publisher constructs three scenarios for the use of the cushion in order to recommend it: while reading, for parent-child entertainment, and for a small gathering of friends, which encompasses family, and friend relationships. Three further brief sentences describing the scene are present in each of the three scenes, forming a sequence of parallel sentences with the final phrase. However, the text of 'embellish [...] space,' 'embellish [...] time',

‘embellish [...] gathering’ or ‘embellish colourful life’ can be interpreted in many different ways as it is ambiguous and lack of explanation. In terms of the etymology of ‘Dianzhui’ (‘点缀’, meaning ‘embellish’), ‘Dian’(点) means dot, spot or point, ‘Zhui’(缀) means patch together, link or decorate. ‘Dianzhui’ together means to embellish or decorate an object to make it prettier (Zi Dictionary, 2023). The words of ‘embellish’ used in the video do not use to describe objects, but rather more abstract notions such as space, time, gatherings and life, which must be understood in context to grasp their specific meaning. At this point, the other modal elements serve a very important purpose in interpreting the text and connecting the cushion to a ceremonial existence.



Figure 3 Screenshot from IKEA Douyin account (see appendix 1, accessed 5/5-2023)

Furthermore, in all three scenarios where the cushions are used, the colours of all the objects are in lighter shades, mimicking the colours of the cushion. There are lights in all three settings, creating a warm and cosy atmosphere. Green plants, toys and snacks are placed on the table tops in each of the three scenes, echoing the scenes on display and together creating a sense of ceremony, and attempting to communicate that

cushions can add a sense of occasion to these moments. It can be argued that the color tones and lighting in the video were carefully designed in order to create an association between the cushion and a ceremonial way of life, since “much of the meaning of colour hues are drawn from the association” (Ledin & Machin, 2020, p. 97). And “The lack of shadow along with the presence of bright light gives the effect of optimism that can, of course, be transferred to products and promotions.” (Ledin & Machin, 2020, p. 71)

This enables us to understand that the term 'embellish' in this context refers to the additional delight that the cushion can provide to individuals, families, and friends. The manner in which this video ad communicates is consistent with the characteristics of a high-context culture, in which the language used is implicit, and words and phrases can be interpreted in multiple ways and require a contextual understanding of their specific meaning. As what Hall argued that in a high-context culture, words' meanings depending on the relationship, topic and context of the people and companies involved in the conversation (Hall, 1976, as cited in Schuster & Copeland, 2006). In this case, it can be argued that in this video, an item is not just an object but represents a way of living. All the elements of the model create an association that makes people think of personal comfort and relaxation from the cushion, of enjoying time with family, of meeting and chatting with friends, thereby emotionally persuade the consumer.

5.1.2 An example from WeChat

Similarly, context remains important in the WeChat article published by IKEA, but here it is delivered primarily through a combination of images and text. For instance, an article entitled “*Here are some small bedroom storage tips! Tested and proven effective!*”, begins with an image of a corner of a bedroom area, with the primary item being a bed surrounded by lamps, plants, and books, with storage containers visible under and near the bed (see figure 4). A sense of clutter is conveyed by the not-so-flat

comforter on the bed, the randomly placed crocheted blanket and the slippers on the floor. A blurb appears beneath this image: *"Bedroom too small, too much stuff? 'xiaoyi' gives you tips! Create extra storage space with home accessories and make the most of neglected unused corners to 'lighten the load' of your bedroom storage ~"* (see figure 4). The article continues with a two-line, huge, bolded header that says *"Tapping into wall storage potential to create extra storage space."* A photo of a window with several black storage boxes on a shelf above the window and a person reaching for something from the shelf is shown below. Both the wall shelf and the black storage box have detailed pictures, information, prices, and links to the products seen in the page. In addition to this, there are two extensive instructions of how to use the product and the changes that may be achieved as an effect of using it. It is written as follows:

"Installing the wall shelf above the window creates extra storage space in addition to not having to worry about affecting your daily life. With the attached lidded storage box, you can put things you don't use often on it, keeping all your objects organised and avoiding dust." (YiJia [IKEA], 2023)



Figure 4 Screenshot from IKEA WeChat account (see appendix 1, accessed 5/5-2023)

It could be argued that the reason there is such a detailed description of the scenario in which the product is used is probably that, unlike the video, the graphic advertisement here, is unable to directly show the scenario in which the product is used, so it has opted to use textual descriptions to give detailed instructions instead. In light of this, we could argue that, even in graphic advertising, the marketer wants to present the product in as many scenarios and settings of use as possible, and present product features in the form of a mix of diverse modal elements such as photos, text descriptions, and subheadings that generate associations with each other, so that people can visualize its use.

Moreover, even though there are no persons shown in this graphic ad, it implies an anthropomorphism to create feelings and the notion that someone is narrating and presenting the use of the product for consumers. Explicitly, this graphic ad begins with a blurb, *'Bedroom too small, too much stuff? 'xiao-yi' gives you tips! [...]*'. IKEA's brand in China is called '宜家' (Yi Jia), which comes from the phonetic and harmonic sound of IKEA, and also contains the meaning of a harmonious family. 'xiao-yi' means little-'yi', which implies some existence of an anthropomorphic (and cute) IKEA brand persona: IKEA is anthropomorphised into a persona called 'xiao-yi' to narrate to you – the customer, the products. In this way, although no one person appears in the ad, the text and the imagined little-'yi' narrator performs the function of creating characters and personality. This demonstrates the emphasis that marketers place on creating context.

Furthermore, in this graphic ad, The title and introduction emphasize that these home accessories can help consumers create extra storage space and 'lighten the burden' for bedroom storage. However, extra images and thorough descriptions are still supplied to highlight the function of the goods and the benefits they may offer. This could be because the marketer is concerned that text may be misinterpreted or not convey their meaning sufficiently, thus reiterated almost the same content over and over again via

caption, photo and text. It could be argued that this is consistent with the high contextual cultural characteristic that the precise meaning of language must be understood in context and that contexture elements are equally crucial for communication.

5.1.3 Comparison of same video posted on Douyin and Instagram

To showcase the emphasis on contextualisation in IKEA's Douyin and WeChat ads, I will then explain how a video from IKEA's headquarters differs significantly from other videos released by IKEA on Douyin. IKEA posted a video about the VARMBLIXT range of products on Douyin (See figure 6), which was sourced from IKEA's headquarters, and the original video clip can be viewed on IKEA's Instagram profile (See figure 5).



Figure 5 Screenshot from IKEA Instagram account (see appendix 1, accessed 6/5-2023)

As previously stated, IKEA employs a franchise structure; IKEA China, as a franchisee, has the right to sell IKEA items and is free to decide what to offer and when to sell them. The two videos show that the VARMBLIXT product was chosen for sale in the Chinese market, and its promotional video was also adopted. This video, however, made by IKEA headquarters, promotes the products in a rather different way compared to videos normally released by IKEA on Douyin. And the

text of the videos posted on Douyin, however, is not an exact translation of the original Instagram posts, but rather original material in the style similar to other IKEA video uploads on Douyin.

First of all, the text introduction posted by IKEA headquarters on Instagram introduces the video in a very concise and direct way, as it is written:

“IKEA and Sabine Marcelis are pleased to present VARMBLIXT, a luminous new collection that explores the effects of light at home. The collection launches in February 2023. Check with your local IKEA for more details. #IKEA #VARMBLIXT#SabineMarcelis” (IKEA, 2023)

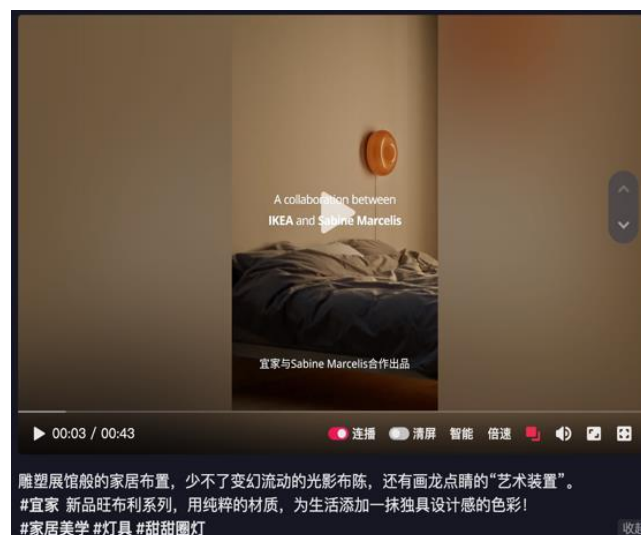


Figure 6 Screenshot from IKEA Douyin account (see appendix 1, accessed 6/5-2023)

By comparison, the text of the post made by IKEA on Douyin is like other videos mentioned before, more lively, indirect and contextualised, it has written:

“In a home decor resembling a sculpture exhibition, the interplay of changing and flowing lights and shadows is indispensable, along with the finishing touch of "art installations." #IKEA's new VARMBLIXT series adds a touch of uniquely designed colours to life, using pure materials! #HomeAesthetics #LightingFixtures

#DoughnutLamp”(IKEA, 2023)

As noted, the two introductions above provide very different descriptions of the same product. The first introduction is a direct statement that describes the product and is more of a low-context communication style. In contrast, the second one use analogies and comparing home decor to a sculpture exhibition and referring to the round ring-shaped lamp as a "doughnut lamp." It also emphasizes how using the product will bring "colour" to your life. This way of phrasing demonstrated that IKEA's advertisements on Douyin platforms maintain a consistent style of high-context communication, where contextual elements are more common to see than direct messages.

Furthermore, the way the items are presented in the video is intuitive, with no excessive build-up, but simply through changes in light and shadow, highlighting the subtleties of this range of luminaires. This video from IKEA's headquarters that re-posted by IKEA on the Douyin platform, is stylistically distinct from IKEA original marketing videos for Chinese market, as other product videos focus more on providing context and storytelling to illustrate the products in real-life application.

Moreover, the data sample shows there are only a few videos post on IKEA's Douyin account are from IKEA headquarters, and most of the Douyin videos are original made for Chinese market. It can be argued that the majority of IKEA's social media posts for the Chinese market, on WeChat and DouYin, are original materials made based upon market characteristics, with a high-context communication characteristic. Even though the original promotional content comes from the headquarters, it will appropriately adapt to local customary ways of phrasing sentences to suit the characteristics of the promotional platform and consumer preferences.

5.2 Communication preferences reflected on IKEA's post on WeChat and Douyin

This section will examine the communication preferences shown in IKEA's social media posts on WeChat and Douyin in terms of expression style, word choice, logic and persuasion. I will analyse this by looking at how different modes are being presented and interact with each other, and how the combination of modes forms a unique way of communication in the specific context.

As argued by Schuster & Copeland, the combination of beliefs and values of each country or region impacts the way people communicate, and understating the language of a culture group is valuable for learning how members of certain cultures view the world (Schuster & Copeland, 2006). The following section provides some typical examples to illustrate the communication features of IKEA social media advertisements posted on WeChat and Douyin platforms and the cultural meanings they may imply.

5.2.1 words & style: Enriched vocabulary and rhetoric

As mentioned previously, IKEA China posts revealed a high-context communication style that favors implicit language, with context playing an essential role in understanding meaning. In more specific terms, we can see that whether the posting is on a short video for Douyin or a graphic ad for WeChat, there is a fair amount of textual description in the content shared on both platforms. IKEA's video introduction on Douyin is shorter than that of WeChat, but it is interlaced with a lot of narration, subtitles and some symbols. IKEA's graphic ads on WeChat contain longer text, which commonly appears behind photos with paragraph descriptions. Regardless of the platform, its textual presentation is notable for its varied vocabulary, abundance of words, common usage of metaphors, harmonic words, frequent use of prose sentences, and so on. This means that the use of words can be inaccurate sometimes

and that the same word may have multiple meanings that need to be understood in context. Thus we can observe that in these social media posts, whether they are videos or graphic adverts, the text never appears in a single form, but alongside elements of modality such as images, sound effects and symbols. All these elements together, carry the thoughts, ideas and objects intended to be conveyed (Schuster & Copeland, 2006).

For instance, in a video promoting quilts, the title writes:

“With the change of seasons, it's sometimes hot and sometimes cold, and you'll catch a cold if you're not careful. Get yourself a warm and breathable GULDBANAN warm quilt, create a temperature-balanced sleeping environment for you, deal with the "cold" night calmly, and take care of your entire night's sleep~ #IKEA #Bedroom”
(YiJia [IKEA], 2023).

In the original, 'cold' is referred to as 'leng-ku' (冷酷), and in Chinese, 'leng-ku' often means a person who is cold, harsh, and unsympathetic. A phrase that describes a person as 'cold' is used to describe the night here, most likely to emphasize the warmth of the quilt. This shows that Chinese social media copywriting can be ambiguous and varied in its wording, not straightforward, and requires consideration for its underlying meaning.

This video is inserted with four subtitles, which are a neat set of sentences in prose.

They are as follows:

“Seasonal cooling, change the warm 'core'
Take care of your sleep with softness
Guarding dreams with warmth
A good night's sleep every night” (YiJia [IKEA], 2023)

The word 'core' alludes to the quilt core in this context. The words 'care' and 'guard'

used in the middle two sentences are normally reserved for people, but here they are used to describe the quilt, possibly with the intention of using anthropomorphism to make consumers associate the quilt with the feelings between people, thus achieving the goal of persuasion. This kind of wording is common in IKEA's advertising copy in China.

Another example is a WeChat graphic ad with the title *'Add a 'beauty filter' to your bathroom, it's hard not to be impressed!'* (YiJia [IKEA], 2023) This article has three subheadings that divide the article into three sections (see figure 7):

'Green 'filter' brings freshness and vibrancy to the bathroom; black and white grey 'filter' adds a sense of style to the bathroom; natural style 'filter' for a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere in the bathroom (YiJia [IKEA], 2023).

To understand the meaning of 'beauty filter,' we must read the article in its whole, as written in the text:

'How to change your bathroom style without renovating it, actually just by changing a few small things, you can add a 'beauty filter' to your bathroom and create a very different style of space.' (YiJia [IKEA], 2023)

From this, we can deduce that 'beauty filters' relate to the addition of goods to the bathroom for decorating it. Looking at the different elements of the modalities, the graphic ad uses colour words in the three subheadings with corresponding font colours, and the text is correspondingly accompanied with photos of bathrooms in the same hues, as well as products in the same colors (see figure 7). It can be argued that the style and words employed in this graphic advert can be described as indirect and abstract, rather than straight away. Whereas the headline, the colours, the images and the links to the products are all unified in style and theme, they are able to annotate each other while also providing the consumer with a more intuitive and unique

advertising experience due to their rich elements and design.



Figure 7 Screenshot from IKEA WeChat account (see appendix 1, accessed 7/5-2023)

One example from IKEA's Douyin account demonstrated how it uses textual harmony to construct the people and things that feature in the advertisements. There is a video (see figure 8) marketing a collapsible washbasin with the theme '*record of a Kid washing 'socks'*' (YiJia [IKEA], 2023). The main character is a child who introduce how he uses the washbasin to wash his socks. The text that appears at the end of the video is '*Make good 'basin' friends easily*' (YiJia [IKEA], 2023). This is because in Chinese, **xiao-peng-you** (小朋友) means kid, **hao-peng-you** (好朋友) means good friend and **pen** (盆) means basin are pronounced similarly, thus the video has a child as the main character, introduces the basin and combines these harmonic words to write the text 'good 'basin' friend' (**hao-pen-you**). This can be persuasive by creating an association between the washbasin, the child and the best friend, and by giving a

sense of cuteness and fun through the use of harmonics.



Figure 8 Screenshot from IKEA Douyin account (see appendix 1, accessed 7/5-2023)

Another example can be seen in a graphic ad from an IKEA account on WeChat, titled '*What's the most tasty option? IKEA's Spring Taste Train departs*' (YiJia [IKEA], 2023). This graphic advertisement is intended to promote IKEA's food products.

One of the subhead '*Healthy food enjoys 'light' spring*' is used to promote Hawaiian-style chicken rolls (see figure 9). Combined with the text in the illustration, it is evident that light spring in this context can be understood as having a lighter weight or slimmer body. It can also refer to 'youth' (qing-chun) which has the same pronunciation as 'light' spring' (qing-chun). The reason for writing 'youth' as 'light spring' is to emphasize that the suggested meal is 'light food'. Light food is a food group popular in China in recent years, featuring low-fat and low-calorie dishes that promote lightness, naturalness and health, such as sandwiches and salads (Xin Hua Wang, 2018). Thus, harmonics are employed to establish a link between 'light food' (qing-shi), body 'lightness' (qing-ying), and age 'youthfulness' (qing-chun). As argued by Schuster & Copeland, China is a country that likes to communicate indirectly and there are many different ways to convey information without stating directly. In such case 'understanding ideas conveyed may depend upon what is not said or what is implied' (Schuster & Copeland, 2006, p. 275). In regard to the previous instance, it can be argued that by substituting the original word with a harmonic term, the

meaning to be conveyed becomes multiple. It can be argued that the purpose of this advertisement is to create an association between a chicken roll, a popular lifestyle, and people's ideal body shape, thereby marketing the food by selling a popular lifestyle and people's ideal body shape, to achieve persuasion.



Figure 9 Screenshot from IKEA WeChat account (see appendix 1, accessed 8/5-2023)

5.2.2 Logic and Persuasion

According to Schuster & Copelan, creating persuasive arguments and using appropriate forms of evidence vary from country to country, and objective data and charts are not persuasive in all regions of the world (Schuster & Copeland, 2006). As mentioned earlier, IKEA's social media posts on WeChat and Douyin are rich in vocabulary, not straightforward and require context to understand the meaning. Meanwhile, we can observe variety contexts and stories that IKEA may construct in order to promote a simple item. These contexts and stories may be constructed to convey a lifestyle, or an idea, or to resonate with consumers in an emotional way to achieve the goal of persuasion. Therefore, with IKEA's social media posts on WeChat and Douyin, we can argue that it is more important to build a context, a story, or to emotionally resonate with consumers than to persuade with objective data. As argued by Emery & Tian, "people in high-context cultures are often more effectively reached

by image or mood appeals” (Emery & Tian, 2010, p.53)

For instance, a graphic ad posted on WeChat titled *‘I decided to leave the most important moments of my life at IKEA’* (YiJia [IKEA], 2023), uses the experiences of an IKEA employee over 10 years to link up the entire story. It describes how the main character Mudao Chen, the main character, who transitioned from being a consumer to an IKEA employee by trying out different positions and finding his professional path at IKEA. How the marathon helped him deal with stress at work and made sport a way of life for him. He also decided to have his wedding photos taken at IKEA. Some home items such as beds, pillows, cups, backpacks, bedding and curtains are recommended in this ad.

It can be argued that this graphic advertisement intends to market the product through the life story of a Mudao Chen. In order to link the recommended items to the main character's experience, it builds the ad through the logic of main character's first visit to IKEA 10 years ago, which gave him the idea that he 'wanting a home so badly', to 10 years later, when he decides to having his wedding photos taken there as an IKEA employee, leave the important moment of his life at IKEA. The logical connection between the story and what is being sold is weak in this case, as the objects of the bed and pillow recommend below his career story seem to have little to do with the matter of him finding a professional path (see figure 10). Therefore, we can argue that this graphic ad does not try to convince consumers through sound logic, but more by allowing them to empathise with the main character's experiences, such as work pressure, balancing work and life, and building a family with his other half, associating IKEA with 'life', 'work', 'love', and persuade consumers emotionally. It can be argued that those ads 'favours Aristotle's pathos to his deductive logos' (Perloff, 2017, p.513)



Figure 10 Screenshot from IKEA WeChat account (see appendix 1, accessed 13/5-2023)

Furthermore, the sample data analysed shows that there are only a few examples of IKEA's social media ads posted on Douyin and WeChat that advertise through logical arguments or statistics to persuade consumers. In some cases, however, IKEA provides visual examples to argue how IKEA products can be used and how they can change lives. For instance, in an advertisement titled '*A burst of comfort! Who says a small renovation can't unlock a space's big potential?*' (YiJia [IKEA], 2023), the intention is to market IKEA's whole-house design. It offers authentic before-and-after conversions to demonstrate how IKEA's design can modify the traditional layout of furniture and expand a space's potential (see figure 11).



Figure 11 Screenshot from IKEA WeChat account (see appendix 1, accessed 14/5-2023)

In addition, some graphic advertising, while claiming theoretical evidence, does not give credible sources of information. Instead, the statements emphasize the experience the product will provide the consumer or the difference it will make in the consumer's life when used. For instance, in an article titled *'How many steps does it take to get a good night's sleep?'* (YiJia [IKEA], 2023), which states that *'the more you sleep, the more tired you are, most likely because you haven't chosen the right mattress'* (YiJia [IKEA], 2023). To support this claim, the post includes an illustration of sleeping positions to show what the improper mattress can do to your body and so recommends picking the right mattress, pillow, and sleeping position to get the finest sleep (see figure 12). This graphic does not, however, include any credible scientific or data sources, simply illustrations and text. The advertisement then shows images of IKEA mattresses, pillows, and other products, followed by text explaining the attributes of the item and why it helps sleep. To boost persuasiveness, these arguments are made with the notion that IKEA bedding provides appropriate spine support. However, no statistics or trustworthy sources are stated. Therefore, it can be argued that IKEA's advertising on both platforms has a less pronounced inclination to rely on rigorous

logic when advocating for product functioning; instead, it relies on emotion to connect with consumers for the purpose of persuasion.



Figure 12 Screenshot from IKEA WeChat account (see appendix 1, accessed 14/5-2023)

5.3 Culture dimensions

In this section, I attempt to explore the tendencies of cultural dimensions reflected in IKEA's WeChat and Douyin posts through Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions. Through a multimodal approach, I will analyse which modes are used in IKEA's videos and posts on two platforms, how these modes are used, and what cultural values or meanings this modes convey.

5.3.1 Individualism/collectivism

China is widely regarded as a typically collectivist country, with scholars arguing that the Chinese value family, friends and their group over themselves, and subordinate their individual needs, goals and aspirations to the demands of the collective (Michailova & Hutchings, 2006; Jackson & Wang, 2013). However, it has also been shown that Chinese people are increasingly taking individualistic factors into account when assessing their happiness and life satisfaction (Steele & Lynch, 2013). Nevertheless, according to the data collected, there is a clear tendency towards a collective subject in the social media ads released by IKEA China. The main manifestations are 1) the marketing content's emphasis on 'family' and a sense of belonging; 2) in its emphasis on relationships and harmony between people.

Family and belonging

In the previously mentioned cushion promotion video, for instance, personal comfort, parent-child interactions, and friendships are highlighted in the three scenarios in which the cushion is employed. The following examples also demonstrate how IKEA imparts cultural value to products by combining diverse modalities that emphasize the importance of relationships.

Here have a video posted by IKEA China on Douyin with the theme of the Lantern Festival, the introduction of this video is

"During the festive season, when the lights are on and the family gathers together, the Lantern Festival marks the end of the old year and opens up a new chapter in the cycle of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. #IKEA and @Lens bring you four stories of different homes, accompanying you with #one gift to say goodbye to the old year and welcome the new year with new expectations, inviting you to use "intention" to bring new life to your home, and enjoying every moment of reunion together #IKEA #Happy Lantern Festival"(YiJia [IKEA], 2023).

It can be seen from the introduction that the promotion video is made with a theme of Chinese festivals, with an emphasis on family gatherings and reunions. The video begins with a sentence tapped out to the sound of a keyboard, *"Did you bring any gifts to home this Chinese New Year? (YiJia [IKEA], 2023)"*. Four stories are narrated by four narrators respectively with their sound in the background, while pictures are shown in the video to present a sense of authenticity to the video.

The first story's narrator is a photographer, and the first thing that shows in the video are two black and white images of the city, which the narrator presents simultaneously *"I am a photographer who has 'gone out' from Urumqi."* ('Going out' in this context denotes traveling from a small town to a large city). At this point, a documentary photograph of a man and a woman (presumably parents) sleeping in a car shows, as the son is driving, presumably on a trip. The image of the car's steering wheel appeared next. The narrator says *'the longer I travel from Chengdu to London and*

then to Beijing, the less trace of me is left in my old home.’ At this moment, several black and white photographs appear in the frame and fade away one by one, depicting the building and street, the living room, and a picture with several frames hanging on the wall, as well as family portraits (See figure 13).



Figure 13 Screenshot from IKEA Douyin account (see appendix 1, accessed 3/5-2023)

This is when a black and white photograph of the airport appears, and then the image changes to a colour video image showing the windows of the plane. The narrator continue says: *‘this Chinese New Year, my parents and I met at my new home in Chengdu to celebrate New Year.’* A shot of a man and a woman (the photographer's parents) just entering the door and waving in the foyer shows next. The shadow of the person taking the photograph, who is also waving, is visible through the glass door (see figure 14). Following this, the narrator says that

‘there is room for each of our hobbies here (in our new home). Dad's books, Mum's plants, and the specimens I collect. The loss of hair, the deepening of wrinkles, and the curiosity about new things.’

Along with this narrative, pictures of corresponding things appear in the picture to echo the narrative. The narrator continues *‘for the new year, I have chosen a carpet as a New Year's gift for our family, where we hope to spend more relaxing and enjoyable times together’*. This is followed by a picture of a family of four sitting on a rug playing games together, with one person holding a mobile phone recording (See

figure X). Then the scene shows a sofa with three small wooden figures sitting on it, holding hands and hugging shoulders. Finally, the image shows the carpet, the narrator's avatar and a text line *'The gift is a collision, (me) and my parents learning to embrace each other in our new home'* (YiJia [IKEA], 2023).

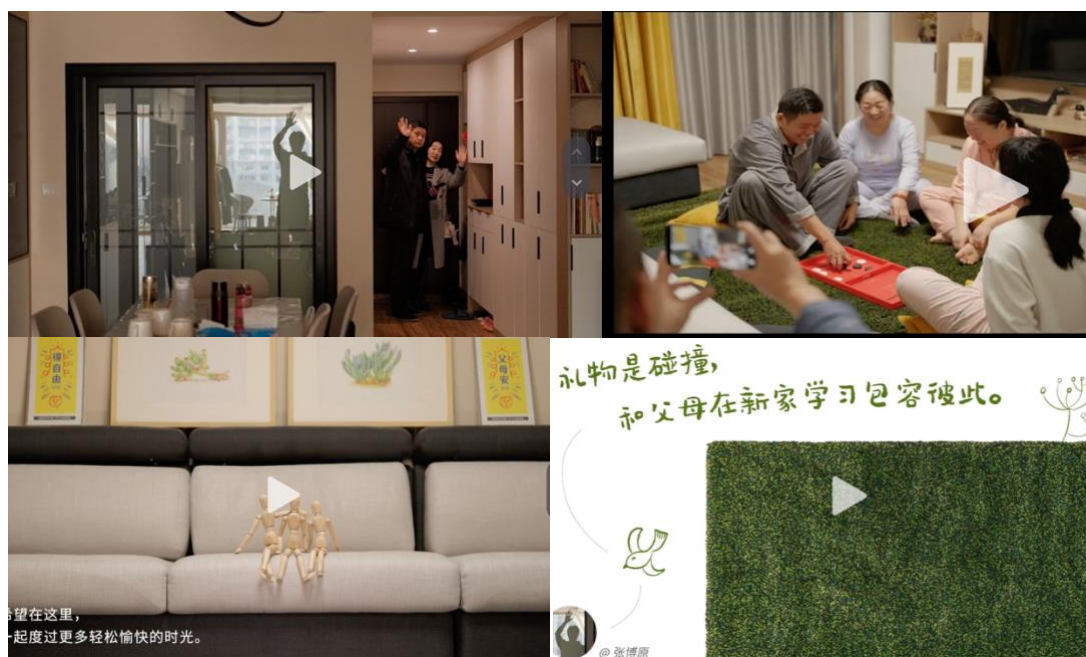


Figure 14 Screenshot from IKEA Douyin account (see appendix 1, accessed 3/5-2023)

According to Ledin & Machin (2020), “Our choices of language depend on our needs in any particular context, the choices we make will reflect what we want to achieve in that context (Ledin & Machin, 2020, p. 15).” In this video, we can see that in order to finally promote this carpet, the story is told from the point of view of a photographer, through the photos he takes and the narrative he tells, to present us with a story of a family reunited in a new city, in a new home. The 'home' here is not a home for one person, but a family of three, and the house is not just a house, but a house that can accommodate three people's hobbies. The clever use of different modalities highlights the importance of 'home', which the video is intended to convey. For instance, in the first half of the story, the images are presented in black and white, with the sound of the wind, slow melodic music, and fading photos, creating a sense of loneliness and

sadness. However, by the time the parents appear, the image is in colour and the background sound effects contain the sound of fireworks and birds singing, giving a sense of warmth and festivity. There is a clear contrast between this before and after, and it could be argued that the combination of these modalities highlights the importance of family instead of individual, and the carpet, which appears to be more suited to the harmonious atmosphere of a family reunion, as the family laughs and plays together on this IKEA carpet in the end. It can be argued that these narrative and documentary images can resonate with consumers and persuade consumers emotionally when set in a collectivist environment. A snapshot of three wooden figurines on a sofa is also representative, with the wooden figurines holding hands and shoulders (see figure 14). Three figurines signifying a family unit of three, holding hands and shoulders showing a harmonious and embracing family bond .

The other parts of the video construct three stories in a similar way, with elements of narration, documentary photos and music, the voices of people and the sound of nature, text, etc. In the second story, a child called HaoHao travels around the country with his parents, and the whole family with grandparents stopped in Hainan to cook New Year's Eve dinner together and to celebrate the New Year. Although the product recommended at the end of this video is a baby chair, the whole story emphasizes the importance of family bonding and companionship. For instance, the narrator says in the video *'In order to spend as much time as possible with him (the child), my husband and I switched from full-time to freelance work and started a trip for the three of us'*. Changing careers for the sake of family and children seems involves a sense of personal sacrifice. Besides, at the end of the story, a text shown that *'the gift is a daily thing, transformed into three meals and four seasons of companionship.'* It could be argued that the documentary style of the photographs shown throughout the video is intended to demonstrate a recording of reality and communication of ideas, if we understand them with the text and context in mind, all these elements tend to emphasise a sense of 'we' rather than me.

Furthermore, as a promotional video produced during the festive season, it relates to the essence of Chinese festive culture, which is gathering and reunion. Moreover, the interaction and use of different modes throughout this video's all highlight the importance of 'family,' the mutual companionship, devotion, and harmony between family members, and the sense of belonging that comes with family, rather than prioritising individual achievement and enjoyment. This could be interpreted as an obvious collectivist tendency.

Harmonious relationships

In addition to this, the collectivist tendencies in the IKEA China video posted on Douyin are also reflected in the emphasis on 'harmony'. More specifically, it intends to highlight how differences can co-exist, i.e. how to find the same in the midst of differences and how to maintain harmony in the midst of differences.

A video, for instance, displays two people washing vegetables, cooking, and eating meals in two different kitchens with various designs and styles (see figure 15). The actions of these two people are displayed side by side, with each scenario taken from the same position, having the goal of conveying a sense of commonality despite their contrasts. This commonality is expressed through the same way of living and the use of cuisine from their hometowns. As the voiceover and text presented in the video:

Text: *The Taste of Hometown in Parallel Dimensions*

Voiceover: *Two homes, different locations, yet the same taste of hometown*

Text: *Ingredients from different lands, and equally convenient storage; Cooking with care, the familiar taste of hometown; Experience the same hometown delicacies in different spaces (YiJia [IKEA], 2023).*



Figure 15 Screenshot from IKEA Douyin account (see appendix 1, accessed 15/5-2023)

Two people in the video prepare two popular Chinese dishes in this video: Chongqing noodles and spicy chopped chicken. These two dishes indicate that the two people are from the same hometown in China. And it can be argued that these hometown dishes hold vital cultural significance as they embody a crucial sense of seeking roots and a sense of belonging in Chinese culture. It is meant to emphasise that although we are in different spaces, we come from a common group and share a common way of life, which intend to emphasise the similarity in the midst of differences.

Another example (see figure 16) can be seen in a video with the introduction of ‘*Why Must We Have the Same Hobbies to Live Together? Two Different Styles Coexist in the Same Room in Xie Lanlan's Home. Open the Joy of Living with Friends, and Harvest Happiness in Understanding and Respect! #IKEA #TheirHome*’ (YiJia [IKEA], 2023).

This video is presented as a voice-over introduction, showing the different lifestyles of the two characters, for instance,

'She collects handicrafts, I like to decorate my home. Her bedroom has a minimalistic and fresh style, I prefer a more colourful vintage look... Despite our different hobbies, we can live happily together, and the video ends with two girls eating and talking

happily with the sentence shown '*In understanding and respect, we see another kind of happiness*' (YiJia [IKEA], 2023).

This video primarily indicate the importance of how to maintain a harmonious and inclusive relationship despite different preferences. It respects differences but values harmony even more as it addresses that happiness comes from understanding and respect, which can be argued that it is in line with collectivist tendencies because it has been argue that cultures with collectivist tendencies value family, friends and their community over self (Jackson & Wang, 2013).



Figure 16 Screenshot from IKEA Douyin account (see appendix 1, accessed 15/5-2023)

5.3.2 Masculinity/femininity

According to Hofstede, the dominant values in masculine society are 'achievement and success', while in feminine society it is 'concern for others and quality of life (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010, p. 89) The culture under the masculine dimension is inclined to emphasise masculine work-related goals and characteristics, such as income and

assertiveness. In contrast, cultures under the feminine dimension emphasize feminine interpersonal-related goals and characteristics, e.g., humanism, and agreeableness (Jackson, & Wang, 2013, p. 911).

Of all 27 video ads posted on Douyin in February this year by IKEA China, 22 featured characters with men, women and children among them. However, it was observed that the female characters generally appeared in the marketing and scenes of items related to the bedroom, home and relationships. In contrast, in the scenes recommended in relation to work and fitness, it was mostly men who appeared in the scenes.

By looking at the use of personas and related modal elements in the videos, we can see how men and women are represented in IKEA's Douyin social media ads. For instance, women are shown in the above-mentioned advertisements for pillows, quilt covers and beds, with text used in the videos such as *"Feel the romance of bedtime"*, *"Gentle this dreamland"*, *" Pamper your sleep with softness"*, *"Give your sleep more comfort"* and *"Give your morning wake up a gentle cushion"*. These words of romance, tenderness and softness, combined with the image of a woman with a sweet smile in the video, seem to create an association between women and bedroom home objects and to label softness and gentleness as a feminine feature. In addition, the images in these videos are generally light in tone and low in saturation, such colours giving a "toned down, subtle, gentle, even peaceful or possibly moody" feel (Ledin & Machin, 2020, p. 100), which further intensifies this portrayal of femininity.

Furthermore, in scenes about harmonious relationships between people, friends living together, close friends meeting together, etc., the characters featured are also mostly women, and these women are generally smiling, affable and friendly, where the text interspersed in the video also emphasises understanding and respect, which, it can be argued, creates an association between the female characters and features such as harmony and conformity. In addition to this, in some of the domestic scenes, the

characters that appear are always female. For instance, in the aforementioned video of making hometown food, both of the people cooks are female. There are also videos showing scenes of drying clothes and storing garments, in which the character all appear to be female (see figure 17).



Figure 17 Screenshot from IKEA Douyin account (see appendix 1, accessed 15/5-2023)

In contrast, when work-related products are shown, it is generally men who appear in the scenes. For instance, in a video showing BRUKSVARA series of products, the male is shown how a small table or wardrobe can facilitate both his work and his hobbies, while the female is shown how the storage items in the room help her with the daily routine of putting on make-up and trying on clothes (see figure 18).

Meanwhile, the scenes in which men appear in this video use dark colours such as black and grey and are more saturated. Whereas when the women appear, the images are brighter and richer in colour with bright lighting. Another video with recommended items for the living room also features a male character. In this video, the emphasis is on how small mobile tables, pillows and cabinets for storage in the living room help him to be more efficient and comfortable in his work and exercises (see figure 19). Ledin & Machin (2020) argue that gender roles can be coded into routine everyday objects (Ledin & Machin, 2020, p. 131). The above examples show that men are placed in scenarios related to work and achievement, while women are placed in scenarios such as family and relationships, with a clear contrast between the

social roles of men and women. It can be argued that these settings is more aligned with masculine societies characteristic. This is not the case in all the videos, however; in some of the videos that referring to parent-child interactions, both the father and the mother play a part. Nevertheless, we may observed more mmasculinity society features from the chosen data, as women in those videos and posts are more connected with family, harmonious relationships and gentle, softness qualities. Men, in contrast, are associated with success factors such as work and hobbies.

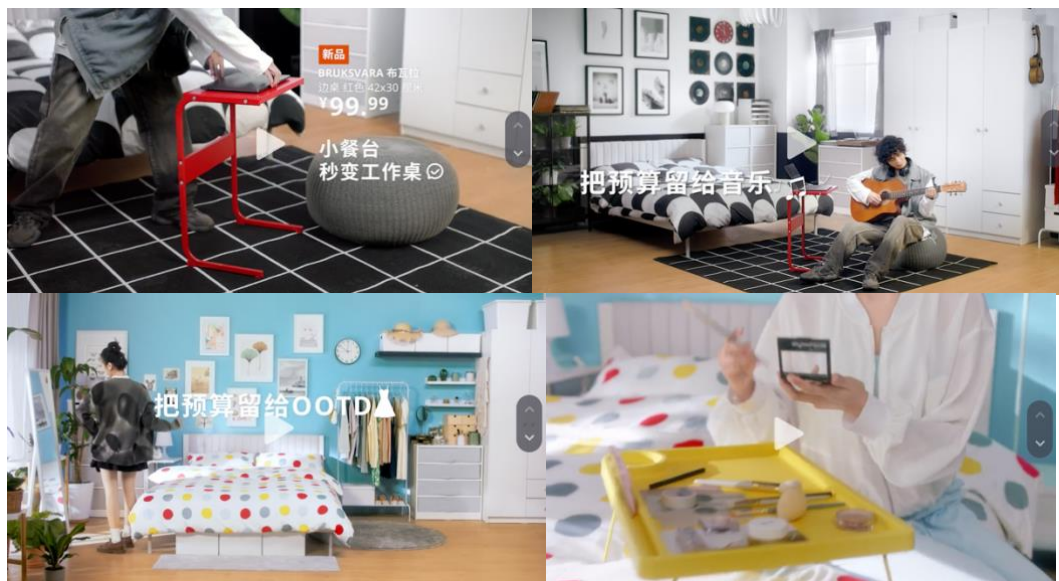


Figure 18 Screenshot from IKEA Douyin account (see appendix 1, accessed 16/5-2023)



Figure 19 Screenshot from IKEA Douyin account (see appendix 1, accessed 16/5-2023)

6. Discussion

In the previous section, I analysed communicative and cultural characteristics that shown from IKEA's post on two most popular social media platforms WeChat and Douyin, with a departure of chosen theory. The analysis demonstrates the distinctive characteristics of IKEA's advertising on the two social media platforms, where the communication style shows a stronger local adaptation feature, but the cultural aspects do not necessarily demonstrate the degree of adaptation to local.

6.1 IKEA's adaptation to Chinese social media platforms

In general, from the chosen data, it can be seen that the majority of the promotional content posted by IKEA China on the two social media sites are localised original videos and graphics, with only a few videos being direct transplants of promotional materials from IKEA's headquarters, with subtitles and localized introductions added. This shows the clear localisation of IKEA's advertising on a standardized operation.

More specifically, the content and formats posted by IKEA on the two social media platforms are designed and tailored to the attributes of both platforms. The Douyin platform posts mostly short videos, where the use of the product in practice is presented by characters, stories, contexts and colourful designs. The WeChat platform, on the other hand, mainly publishes long posts, which are mostly graphic advertisements with eye-catching headlines, lots of text and images, links to products' purchase page and, in some cases, also have videos attached in the posts. From this point of view, IKEA seems to be perfectly adapted to localised social media marketing platforms and communication styles in terms of the overall ad design, vocabulary phrasing and communication style.

Secondly, in terms of specific content, the products marketed by IKEA China, although sourced from IKEA's headquarters design (as evidenced by the product

names), nevertheless incorporate many local Chinese cultural elements when marketing the products. For instance, the aforementioned video released at the Chinese Lantern Festival shows how whole family together cook reunions meal which implies the importance of family reunions during the festival in China. Another example is the two people who live in different location but share a similar lifestyle, cooking the same Chongqing local dish in different spaces and times. In addition, even though the recommended products such as food originating from the country of origin or other countries, the marketer still attempts to relate it to the local culture or lifestyle. For instance, creating a new dish combined with Swedish meatballs and a Chinese dessert called Bingtanghulu, as mentioned in the introduction section, or linking the Hawaiian-style chicken rolls to the lifestyle of eating light food that is becoming popular in China in recent years.

6.2 IKEA's adaptation to Chinese market in terms of culture dimensions

In terms of the cultural dimensions, the content of IKEA's marketing in China shown a distinct collectivist tendency, emphasizing family and relationship ties, as well as the harmony of interpersonal interactions. Besides, there is also a more visible masculinist societal tendency, which is reflected in the advertising' distinct separation of social roles between men and women.

However, the result of analysis is not sufficient to suggest that the related content was designed to suit localised cultural characteristics as, firstly, it may have chosen specific characters to advertise for reasons of advertising effectiveness, in order to “forge an association between the product and a pleasant, memorable image (Perloff, 2017, p.519)”. Secondly, while studies have shown that China is a more collectivist culture, it is insufficient to argue that the collectivist tendencies shown in the social media content were created with localization in mind. Moreover, the distinctions in men and women’s roles in the social media marketing content in this research were

not necessarily designed to accommodate the local culture, but may simply due to gender bias, since stereotypes are prevalent in advertising, especially in relation to the gender's occupation status (Eisend, 2010).

In addition, cultural dimensions such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, long-term and short-term tendencies are difficult to identify from the data collected.

Besides, It has been argued that cultural values change much more slowly than consumer values (Emery & Tian, 2010), it is therefore difficult to judge whether the design of the social media ads posted by IKEA on Chinese social media platforms is driven by the broad cultural characteristics of the market or by current consumer interests.

6.3 Reflections on IKEA's glocalization strategy in terms of marketing communication

According to this study, IKEA is a good example of glocalization since it balances standardization with adaptation in its marketing communications. While retaining a standardized brand idea and selling standardized products, it operating on Chinese social media sites across the platform, taking full account of the platform's features and providing customized marketing materials. It also keeps all marketing platforms up to date on a frequent and regular basis. In addition to this, IKEA kept up with the rapid development of e-commerce in China by launching live-streaming sales.

Although there have little consumer interaction on IKEA's Douyin and WeChat accounts, the number of Douyin followers (580,000) and WeChat posts review (34 posts in February, with a total of one million viewers) indicated that users remained relatively active and the marketing content is popular with consumers.

This study did not investigate customer opinions regarding IKEA's social media postings in China, nor was it possible to quantify how much positive benefit the

localised nature of its marketing communications has brought to the brand. However, it can be argued that balancing standardisation and adaptation in marketing communications, i.e. implementing a glocalization strategy, is necessary, and that brands are more likely to succeed in their target markets if they take account of consumer preferences in the target market. As mentioned earlier, IKEA's marketing content in China makes extensive use of phrases appropriate to local language habits, which will undoubtedly be well received by consumers. However, for a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding IKEA's glocalization strategy from marketing communication aspects, a comparative study combining different markets may provide more findings.

7. Conclusion

This project has research in how does IKEA seek to adapt its social media marketing strategy to the local market in order to appeal to Chinese consumers, how does IKEA's social media campaign in China reflect its glocalization strategy, as well as the insight that we can gain from it. This has been done with the use of theoretical framework include Edward Hall's high and low cultural context theory, four communication elements of Schuster & Copeland's global business practice model, and Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions. The analysis was inspired by a multimodal approach, given that the chosen data are videos and graphic ads comprise multiple modes.

My research findings indicate that IKEA's social media content on two platforms, WeChat and Douyin have a feature of high-context culture, prefers to employ implicit languages, and communicates in an indirect manner. These social media advertising are rich with vocabulary, rhetorical tactics and also like to influence consumer with emotional associations. In addition, IKEA's posts on WeChat and Douyin shows a tendency of collectivist and masculinist.

My findings suggest that IKEA has adapted to a large extent to the localised characteristics of its marketing communications approach. However, this research shows that its adaptation is more difficult to assess in terms of the cultural dimension. Nonetheless, the research reflects IKEA's glocalization strategy, as its social media marketing demonstrate a balance of standardization (brand value, product) and adaptation (market platform, communication style) to the local market, which can be argue that it is positive for its development in Chinese market. However, further comparative research is needed to provide a more comprehensive insights in terms of IKEA's glocalization strategies in various markets.

8. Limitations

My research has been conducted with a point of departure of chosen theoretical framework and multimodal analysis approach. This approach is beneficial given that it provides a focus for the study, but it also opens up for the issue of missing out on other valuable findings, such as underlying culture, value and society issues. Therefore, a discourse analysis approach may have been more beneficial.

Besides, my study focus solely on Chinese market from social media marketing perspective, which is insufficient to gain a comprehensive understanding of IKEA's glocalization strategy. Therefore it could be beneficial to conduct comparative studies between IKEA's different markets globally.

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calization](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/globalization?q=Glo%20calization)
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Appendix 1: Source of data

Figure No.	Source of data	Access date
Figure 3	https://www.douyin.com/video/7195151726993870084	Accessed 5/5-2023
Figure 4	https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/vyXdOuGFLaZTlvQ5BftE2Q	Accessed 5/5-2023
Figure 5	https://www.instagram.com/p/Cnho8KVAocs/	Accessed 6/5-2023
Figure 6	https://www.douyin.com/video/7195884063058595107	Accessed 6/5-2023
Figure 7	https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/9OoVqgKVZhQ9ETB62aa8Vw	Accessed 7/5-2023
Figure 8	https://www.douyin.com/video/7199987203861236995	Accessed 7/5-2023
Figure 9	https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/mszDzAhgVVhmMCyvAbipWw	Accessed 8/5-2023
Figure 10	https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/FDsdipcOPolonljF9-pWmq	Accessed 13/5-2023
Figure 11	https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/yboDD15g5qKx7L_73S8TSQ	Accessed 14/5-2023
Figure 12	https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/wqBH9Xz6GcgBw805Z4nl4w	Accessed 14/5-2023
Figure 13	https://www.douyin.com/video/7196616333293849860	Accessed 3/5-2023
Figure 14	https://www.douyin.com/video/7196616333293849860	Accessed 3/5-2023
Figure 15	https://www.douyin.com/video/7203696774903500065	Accessed 15/5-2023
Figure 16	https://www.douyin.com/video/7203642963446992139	Accessed 15/5-2023
Figure 17-1	https://www.douyin.com/video/7203696774903500065	Accessed 15/5-2023
Figure 17-2	https://www.douyin.com/video/7203642963446992139	Accessed 15/5-2023
Figure 17-3	https://www.douyin.com/video/7202250245265214723	Accessed 15/5-2023
Figure 18	https://www.douyin.com/video/7198004679182241057	Accessed 16/5-2023
Figure 19	https://www.douyin.com/video/7200021796173778209	Accessed 16/5-2023