Lausanne 2024 Abstract Submission

Title
Content Analysis on Communication of Wine Best-Sellers on E-Commerce: A Cross-Country Comparison

I want to submit an abstract for:
Conference Presentation

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Keywords
Content analysis, Wine e-commerce, Communication strategies, Wine marketing, MAXQDA

Research Question
What information do top-selling wine producers communicate on wine e-commerce in China, the UK, and the US? Are there cultural differences in the communication on wine e-commerce?

Methods
This study employs a comparative content analysis to explore cultural differences in communication strategies on wine e-commerce platforms in China, the UK, and the US.

Results
The cultural analysis revealed distinct differences in e-commerce communication: Chinese e-commerce emphasized authority, US e-commerce highlighted egalitarianism, and UK e-commerce focused on luxury and indulgence.
Abstract

Purpose: E-commerce has surged in the wine industry, particularly in China, the UK, and the US. Cultural environment and psychological aspects of communication in e-commerce significantly influence online purchase behavior. This study aims to analyze communication strategies of successful wine sellers on online shopping platforms in China, the UK, and the US and explore the potential cultural differences in the communication strategies of wine e-commerce platforms in the three markets. Three research questions were developed:

- RQ1. What information do top-selling wine producers communicate on wine e-commerce in China, the UK, and the US?
- RQ2. Are there differences in the dimensions of communication of product description among three markets?
- RQ3. What are the cultural similarities and differences in the communication strategies of wine e-commerce platforms across China, the UK, and the US?

Theoretical framework: The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in Hofstede's and Hall's cultural theories, which provide a robust foundation for analyzing cultural differences in communication strategies. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory offers insights into national cultures through dimensions such as power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term versus short-term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint. These dimensions help in understanding the underlying values and behaviors that influence communication styles across different cultures. Hall's cultural theories, particularly the concepts of high-context versus low-context communication, further complement Hofstede's framework by highlighting how context impact communication.

Methods: We identified key wine e-commerce platforms in China, the UK, and the US: Taobao and Tmall (taobao.com) in China, Naked Wines (nakedwines.com) in the UK, and Total Wine (totalwine.com) in the US. The top 20 best-selling wines from each platform were selected. The analysis consisted of two parts. The first part involved content analysis of product descriptions, including text, image, and transcribed video content. The coding process followed a two-step approach: an initial code scheme based on wine product dimensions from previous research, and additional coding categories developed from raw data. Coding was based on units of meaning, with parent codes representing communication dimensions from producers to consumers, and sub-codes representing sub-dimensions. Frequencies of dimensions and sub-dimensions were summarized for each platform to address RQ1. The Kruskal-Wallis H test and Wilcoxon rank-sum test were used to analyze code frequency for RQ2. The second part of the analysis focused on content from about pages, product descriptions, and various web design elements, including product pages, homepages, about pages, contact pages, and navigation systems. Content and web design features were coded according to seven cultural dimensions derived from Hofstede's and Hall's frameworks, each assessed on a 1 to 5 scale with specific criteria for each level. Average scores for each dimension across the three platforms were used to identify cultural similarities and differences in communication strategies. Content analysis was conducted using MAXQDA 2022 software.

Results: Eleven dimensions of product description were identified, covering aspects such as region description, intrinsic product attributes, production, certification, brand/company, product value, award/professional rating, consuming instructions, supply chain, packaging, and sustainability. Intrinsic product attributes dominated communication, especially in the US. Consuming instructions ranked second in the UK and China, while region description and product value were significant in the US. The supply chain was the third most communicated dimension in the UK, whereas production took this place in China. Statistical test results showed significant differences in seven communication dimensions: intrinsic product attributes, certification, brand/company, award/professional rating, consuming instructions, supply chain, and packaging. Specifically, the UK emphasized brand/company over intrinsic product attributes more than the US and China, while the US communicated less about consuming instructions. China showed a higher focus on certification and packaging. Regarding award/professional rating, the UK communicated more than the US, with no significant differences detected for China compared to other markets. The cultural analysis of communication on e-commerce platforms revealed distinct differences among the countries studied. Chinese e-commerce exhibited the highest power distance, indicating a strong emphasis on authority and hierarchy. In contrast, US e-commerce demonstrated the least masculinity, reflecting a more egalitarian and cooperative approach. Meanwhile, UK e-commerce showed the highest level of indulgence, with a focus on hedonic and luxurious elements in their communication.

Implications: This study fills a literature gap by examining communication strategies on e-commerce platforms in key wine markets (China, the UK, and the US), offering valuable insights for refining international communication strategies for wine producers. Recommendations based on the findings include prioritizing packaging in China, capitalizing on brand/company credibility in the UK, and showcasing unique intrinsic product qualities in the US.
The cultural analysis of e-commerce communication revealed distinct national preferences across these markets, emphasizing the need to tailor visual and textual content to align with specific cultural preferences. This tailored approach has the potential to significantly boost consumer engagement and drive sales in diverse international markets.

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