MARKETING TO CHINESE YOUTHS: THEIR CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND ITS STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

Since the adoption of the open-door policy and the one-child policy in the late 1970s, China has undergone sweeping economic, demographic, social and cultural change, much of it involving the youth. Western marketers may find the youth market of particular interest not only because of its market significance, 416.8 million aging 5 to 24 and commanding a market value of $75.32 billion, but also because of their economic clouts and the aspirations they have for Western products and lifestyles. To compete more successfully for their attention and buying power, it is urgent for marketers to study this younger generation in a context of transforming culture values relevant to their functioning as consumers in today’s Chinese marketplace. The underlying rationale is that this younger generation is growing up with a package of attitudes and behaviors that make them so unique and different from the earlier generations who still hold firmly the traditional Confucian norms. To effectively communicate and market to this group of people, several important issues should be addressed: what makes them so unique and attractive? How are their consumption attitudes and behaviors different from previous generations in light of the influence of Chinese culture? What are the marketing implications of this youth market? This paper explains the importance and attractions of this dynamic market, highlights the cultural transformations Chinese Youths are going through, and offers suggestions on how to best market to these culturally-transformed Chinese consumers.