Summary Report

International Symposium of Consumer Culture Theory in Thailand

October 18, 2012 at Walailak University, Nakhon Si Thammarat

Walailak University organized International Symposium of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) to share and exchange the knowledge about Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) among academia and students.

1st Session

Topic: From Chinese Brand Culture to Global Brand

Speakers:
1. Professor Jonathan E. Schroeder, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA
2. Professor Janet Borgerson, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA

Consumer culture theory (CCT) is the approach that study consumers, consumption and behavior from social and cultural point of view. CCT refers to “a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings”\(^1\).

The speakers discussed the Case Study of Beijing 2008 Olympic Opening Ceremony. The study explores how the Beijing Olympic Opening Ceremony in 2008 communicates the global branding of China through theatrical performance and costly production. The study creates a better understanding on how cultural events contribute to global branding process. The research methodology is extended case method, interviews and media analysis. China aims to constructs its identity in international arena by blending modern and historical cultural identity. The findings show that respondents feel that the ceremony has helped

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China resolves the country identity anxiety and establish desired identity because the ceremony demonstrates China’s identity of sincerity, romance, friendliness and innovation. Moreover, the respondents state that the opening ceremony make them aware of the cultural and historical perspectives of China and help persuade them to buy Chinese products.

2nd Session

**Topic:** Materiality, Agency and Intersubjective Co-creation of Consuming Subjects  
**Speaker:** Professor Janet Borgerson, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA

The second session was presented by Professor Janet Borgerson of Rochester Institute of Technology who explored the subject on Materiality, Agency and Intersubjective Co-creation of Consuming Subjects. This session presented a constitutionally philosophical view on how material objects interact with and transform consuming subjects, who are practically known as the consumers. Professor Borgerson mentioned that consumers’ choices, and experiences as well as the products and objects they procure are said to express, create, emancipate or transform their concept of self, help define their relationships and communicate their statuses to others. Although commonly confused with the concept of materialism, materiality as proposed by theorist Danny Miller (1987) is the process through which human beings materialize or objectify values and meanings through the products they buy and use. In simple terms, the acquisition and consumption of goods do not merely serve its basic function to the consumers instead it creates and maintains identities and provides meanings in the face of this postmodern meaninglessness.

The concept of agency on one hand expounds the role of material goods in the life of the consumer. Philosophically speaking, material objects have its bounded relationships to
humans as they are used in accordance to their purpose. Given the opportunity of making an un-coerced decision making process, humans usually choose among alternatives the one that best serve them, and their current circumstance. This leads now to the intersubjectivity of co-creating the meaning of the product and the identity that they want to create to and for themselves.

3rd Session
Roundtable Discussion
Keynote speakers:
Professor Jonathan E. Schroeder, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA
Professor Janet Borgerson, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA
Assistant Professor Dr. Siwarit Pongsakornrunsilp, Walailak University, Thailand
Associate Professor Dr. Kritsadarat Wattanasuwan, Thammasat University
Dr. Theeranuch Pusaksrish, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Thailand

The roundtable discussion was convened to discuss the theme ‘Doing Consumer Culture Theory Research in Asian Context’. The roundtable offered to open up, shared ideas, empirical insights, and forecloses wider issues on the concept of Consumer Culture Theory especially in Thai context.
Among issues, the roundtable addressed topics on the co-constituting relationships among consumers, consumption practices, cultural meaning systems, socio-cultural (e.g., religion, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, myth, ritual, etc.), the shaping forces that economic and cultural globalization exert on consumption and marketplace practices, and consumer identity undertaken through consumption.

At the end of the roundtable, the Panel Chair: Professor Jonathan Schroeder encouraged all participants to submit their qualitative research papers on Consumer Culture Theory at Consumption Market & Culture (CMC).

Reported by
A. Tipa Sriyabhand
A. Henzel Embalzado
Dr. Arpavadee Visetbhakdi
Department of Marketing
Martin de Tours School of Management and Economics