

Marketers are creating an imaginary, cross-cultural, Asian world

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Despite vast cultural differences among Asian nations, marketers are mixing a number of cultural influences to create an imaginary Asian world, according to new research in the *Journal of Consumer Research*.

Authors Julien Cayla (University of New South Wales) and Giana M. Eckhardt (Suffolk University) examine how marketers of Asian brands are creating an imaginary Asia that is not identifiable by country or region. "Cultural referents from cities of influence such as Tokyo, Shanghai, and Seoul are combined together to produce brand images that are clearly Asian, but not from a particular nation," write the authors.

The researchers analyzed marketing strategies and advertising campaigns of Asian brands such as Tiger Beer and Zuji, a travel website. They found that images in the print, ad, and online advertising represent an Asia that is "global, urban, and multicultural."

In the case of the travel website Zuji, the researchers found that the consortium of major airlines "has no home country, is designed to be clearly Asian and modern, uses a Hong Kong-born globally popular actor as the brand's model, uses green and blue for the logo to appeal to the Thai, its name is derived from Mandarin, follows the spatial practices of feng shui, uses an East Asian style of calligraphy, and uses the tagline "Your Travel Guru," which is most readily associated with India."

Such cultural mixing, according to the authors, demonstrates that Asian corporations are redefining globalization. "Whereas Western Marketers

still sell Asian brands through the idea of an exotic, feminine Asia, Asian marketers create campaigns with a more contemporary, modern, and urban vision of Asia," write the authors.

Source: University of Chicago

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