

Adidas: “My Culture Is Not Your Costume”

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SYNOPSIS

Adidas’s Oaxaca Slip-On quickly turned into a cultural controversy. The shoe’s woven design closely resembled traditional Zapotec huaraches, which many people viewed as part of Indigenous cultural heritage. When consumers noticed the similarities and learned that the shoes would be manufactured in China without any involvement from Zapotec artisans, accusations of cultural appropriation spread across social media and news outlets. What Adidas expected to be a trendy product launch instead raised a larger question about where the line falls between cultural appreciation and appropriation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

In analyzing this case, students should be able to:

1. Evaluate the differences between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation.
2. Identify factors that affect consumer brand perceptions.
3. Analyze how brand perceptions affect global brands.
4. Evaluate the potential for consumers to choose brand avoidance toward a brand.
5. Recommend a brand strategy after a controversial incident.

APPLICATION

This case is well suited for graduate and undergraduate courses in Principles of Marketing, Consumer Behavior, and Marketing Strategy.

KEY WORDS

Cultural Appropriation, Cultural Appreciation, Brand Avoidance, Subcultures

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