

Message Strategies, Informativeness and Value Appeals
in Chinese Television Advertising:
An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Based on the long-running debate on standardization versus adaptation in international advertising, the issue of differences in advertising content has been widely investigated. Results of many of these empirical studies have led their authors to suggest the appropriateness of a contingency approach to developing advertising content. However, previous studies have principally focused on advertising from Western countries. In addition to a relative lack of research on Chinese advertising, the extant studies on Chinese advertising that have been conducted invariably use analytical and conceptual frameworks that were originally developed in Western countries. This poses the question as to the validity and appropriateness of these frameworks in a non-Western context such as that of China. In order to address the relative lack of research on advertising in China, this dissertation examines in detail the characteristics of Chinese advertising in terms of three aspects of advertising content: message strategy, informativeness, and value appeals.

Based on systematically collected sample commercials from Chinese Central Television station (CCTV) and three carefully modified frameworks, I conducted three content-analytical studies on the above-mentioned three aspects of advertising content. I report the results of statistical analyses of data collected pertaining to message strategy, informativeness and value appeals, and discuss the theoretical and managerial implications of the findings.

Regarding advertising message strategy (Chapter 4), I first concentrate on the improvement of the extant typologies. Using the modified typology, this dissertation content analyzes message strategies manifest in Chinese TV commercials. Results show

that affective message strategy (82.3%) is the most frequently used, followed by cognitive message strategy (54.1%), and that conative strategy is the least frequently used (12%). Furthermore, around one third of commercials use both affective and cognitive strategies simultaneously. In regard to brand origin, commercials for foreign brands use more cognitive message strategies. Comparison between goods and services ads indicates that goods ads contain significantly more cognitive strategies whereas services ads contain more conative strategies. Product category is shown to be an important factor influencing the usage of advertising message strategy. Results of analyses using the FCB grid model indicate that ads for low-involvement products use more affective and conative strategies than those for high-involvement products, while ads for think products use more cognitive but less affective message strategies than those for feel products.

As far as information content is concerned (Chapter 5), I extensively review extant studies on this topic and formulate hypotheses. Using an expanded version of the framework developed by Resnik and Stern (1977), I conduct content analysis and report findings. In general, results show that the informative level in this study is significantly higher than that reported in Chan and Chan (2005). The current study finds that 76.3% of ads contain at least one information cue and that an average of 1.6 cues are used in Chinese TV advertising. The most frequently used information cues are performance, variety, and components/contents. In terms of brand origin, ads for foreign brands use more information cues than those for local brands. Furthermore, ads for goods use more information cues than ads for services. Hypotheses related to product involvement level and product durability are not supported since ads for high-involvement products do not use more information cues than those for low-involvement products. In addition, ads for

durable products do not use more information cues than ads for non-durable products. On the other hand, ads for think products contain more information content than those for feel products. In addition, results also indicate that product category influences the usage of information content.

With respects to the topic of value appeals (Chapter 6), I also supplemented the extant framework developed by Pollay (1983) by incorporating more Chinese traditional value appeals. Using this modified framework, I conducted a content analysis. Results show that the most frequently used value appeals are enjoyment/leisure, effectiveness, quality, and trustworthiness. Most probably as a result of the high-context communication and collectivism characteristics of Chinese culture, symbolic as well as Eastern value appeals are significantly used more frequently than utilitarian and Western value appeals respectively. Furthermore, ads for domestic brands use more Eastern appeals whereas ads for foreign brands use more Western appeals. Moreover, ads for high-involvement products contain more utilitarian and less symbolic appeals than those for low-involvement products while ads for think products contain more utilitarian appeals than those for feel products. In addition, ads for goods contain more utilitarian and Western appeals while ads for services contain more symbolic and Eastern appeals. Consistent with the above findings, results indicate that value appeals vary across product categories.

In conclusion, this study examines the influence of brand origin, product category, involvement level, and involvement type on advertising content in terms of the three main research topics of message strategies, informativeness, and value appeals. Findings tend to demonstrate consistency in respect to the influence of brand origin and product category. However, the two dimensions (involvement level and involvement

type) of the FCB grid model show inconsistent influence on the use of the three topics in Chinese television commercials. Furthermore, the characteristics of Chinese television commercials as well as their implications in terms of each of the three topics are discussed in detail in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Findings of this dissertation have implications for both practitioners and academics. While this study focuses on advertising in a single country, its findings nevertheless allow international advertising practitioners who are to develop their advertising strategy in the Chinese market, to compare the characteristics of Chinese television advertising with those of their home market or the global market. Therefore, I believe that the findings reported in this dissertation will assist practitioners in deciding whether to standardize advertising strategy or to adapt to the particularities of the Chinese market. The study also modifies the extant analytical frameworks on message strategies, informativeness, and value appeals and makes important contributions to an increased understanding of the nature of advertising in China, which I believe should be of interest to academic researchers.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

In the field of international marketing, the debate of standardization versus adaptation has been a key theme in both academic circles and business community for over five decades. To what extent international marketing strategy should be standardized has long been the focal questions raised by practitioners. The standardization of international marketing relates to two aspects: marketing program (marketing-mix) and marketing process (Jain, 1989; Sorenson and Wiechmann, 1975; Walters, 1986). A majority of researchers have focused on the standardization of the international marketing mix (Agrawal, 1995; Jain, 1989; Ryans et al., 2003). As far as marketing strategy standardization is concerned, it is defined as a common marketing program on a worldwide basis (Jain, 1989), or as a standardized pattern of resource allocation among marketing mix variables across national markets (Szymanski et al., 1993). Further, Zou and Cavusgil (2002, p. 42-43) conceptualize global marketing strategy as “the degree to which a firm globalizes its marketing behaviors in various countries through standardization of the marketing-mix variables, concentration and coordination of marketing activities, and integration of competitive moves across markets.” Proponents of standardization argue that because of the development of technology in the field of communication, transport and travel, and the homogenization of consumer wants for products with lower price and high quality, the emergence of global markets calls for standardized consumer products and therefore companies must learn to operate as if the world were one large market ignoring superficial regional and national differences (e.g., Levitt, 1983; Simon-Miller, 1986). Ohmae (1989, p. 161) argues for

thinking globally and states that “customer needs have globalized, and we must globalize to meet them.” Similarly, Werther (1996) stated that the growing uniformity of global youth culture and the expansion the freed trade had brought the world to competitive convergence. The logic why so many scholars argue for international marketing standardization is that international marketing standardization may offer a number of benefits, such as cost savings through economies of scale (Buzzell, 1968; Fatt, 1967; Levitt, 1983; Simon-Miller, 1986; Sorenson and Wiechmann, 1975), consistency in product and brand image with customers (Buzzell, 1968; Fatt, 1967; Levitt, 1983; Sorenson and Wiechmann, 1975), improved planning and control (Buzzell, 1968; Fatt, 1967), and exploiting good marketing ideas (Buzzell, 1968; Fatt, 1967). Although a number of researchers argue that globalization is accelerating and that there is a trend toward a homogenization of the world’s wants (e.g., Fatt, 1967; Levitt, 1983), few empirical findings have lent support to this assertion (Douglas and Wind, 1987; Walters, 1986; Wind, 1986).

In contrast, proponents of adaptation argue that international marketing strategy should be adapted to meet local consumer needs and wants (Britt, 1974; Clark, 1990; De Mooij, 2000; Harvey, 1993; Kashani, 1989; Light, 1990; Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulos, 1997; Quelch and Hoff, 1986; Shao et al., 1992; Thrassou and Vrontis, 2006). This is because among countries significant differences exist, including –but not limited to– consumer needs and buying behavior (Britt, 1974; Clark, 1990; Kotler, 1986; Light, 1990), market needs and resources (Sheth, 1986; Light, 1990), culture (Britt, 1974; Buzzell, 1968; Clark, 1990; De Mooij, 2000; Mueller, 1992), stage of economic and industrial development (Buzzell, 1968; Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulos, 1997), stage of product life cycle (Buzzell, 1968; Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulos,

1997), competition (Buzzell, 1968; Kotler, 1986), advertising agencies and media availability (Buzzell, 1968; Light, 1990; Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulos, 1997), and legal restrictions (Buzzell, 1968; Kotler, 1986; Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulos, 1997).

Instead of pure standardization or total differentiation, many researchers argue for a contingency approach and suggest mixed marketing strategies taking both standardization and adaptation into account (Buzzell, 1968; Douglas and Wind, 1987; James and Hill, 1991; Kotler, 1986; Porter, 1986; Sheth, 1986; Sorenson and Wiechmann, 1975; Walters, 1986; Wind, 1986; Yip, 1989). Walters (1986) argues that the attractiveness of standardization strategies is very situation-specific. Wind (1986, p. 26) suggests a useful guideline for practitioners called “think globally, act locally,” i.e., “overall design follows worldwide perspective but every detail of the marketing strategy takes into account the idiosyncratic country characteristics and cultural differences.” Based on an integrative analysis of 36 empirical studies on strategy standardization/adaptation, Theodosiou and Leonidou (2003) conclude that the decision whether to standardize or adapt international marketing strategy largely depends on the unique set of circumstances that the company is confronted by within a particular overseas market.

As far as individual elements of the marketing-mix are concerned, a large segment of literature on this debate has concentrated on advertising (Cheon et al., 2007; Elinder, 1965; Fatt, 1967; Harris, 1994; Laroche et al., 2001; Melewar et al., 2009; Miracle, 1968; Okazaki et al., 2006; Onkvisit and Shaw, 1999; Theodosiou and Leonidou, 2003; Walters, 1986). The issue of advertising standardization in foreign markets was first discussed in the 1960s. Elinder (1965, p. 8) strongly argues that advertising should be

“going all-European” to be “synchronized to fit the all-European media, and must take advantage of border-crossing tourists, readers, and viewer.” Fatt (1967) believes that an international advertising campaign with a truly universal appeal can be effective in any market. On the one extreme, those proponents of the standardization approach to international advertising argue that buyers everywhere in the world share the same or very similar wants and needs, and therefore a single advertising message with only minor modifications, or even advertisements with proper translations, can be used in all countries to reach consumers (Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulos, 1997). On the other extreme, proponents of adaptation approach argue that separate messages should be used to reach buyers in different markets by fitting the message to each particular country or even region due to insurmountable differences in culture, economy, legal issues, media and product dissimilarities (Papavassiliou and Stathakopoulos, 1997). Light (1990, p. 32) suggests that the world will not evolve into an undifferentiated sea of homogenization and that advertisers should move from global standardization to global marketing, i.e., “the maximization of global efficiency while simultaneously optimizing local selling effectiveness.” He also argues that it is more effective to customize and individualize international marketing. Furthermore, Kanso and Nelson (2002) suggest that the key to effective international advertising is adaptation to uncontrollable environmental differences in each country (i.e., market infrastructure, cultural, economic, and legal forces, etc.). Rather than an absolute standardization or adaptation approach, some scholars suggest that it is desirable to standardize certain aspects of the advertising campaign in particular situation while at the same time to adapt other aspects to different market conditions, consumer characteristics and environmental factors (Ducan and Ramaprasad, 1995; Kanso, 1992; Jain, 1989;

McCarty et al., 2007; Peebles et al., 1977; Quelch and Hoff, 1986; Shao and Waller, 1993; Sheth, 1978; Taylor and Johnson, 2002; Waller et al., 2010). Sriram and Gopalakrishna (1991) clustered 40 countries into six groups based on their similarity economically, culturally, and in their media availability and usage, and propose standardization of international advertising within each of these clusters. Shao and Waller (1993) contend that in general, agencies were neither standardizing nor customizing their sales platforms or creative contexts; instead, they tended to utilize the adaptation approach. Similarly, Harris (1994) points out that standardization is a flexible and adaptive policy that can take many forms and that many advertising campaigns are neither totally adapted, nor totally standardized. Kanso (1992, p. 13) argues that communication is largely determined by cultural conditions and that advertising practitioners should consider each foreign business opportunity as a unique challenge, pursuing “global commitment to local vision.” In a review of academic versus practitioner oriented papers on advertising standardization from the 1950s to the 1980s, Agrawal (1995) found that while practitioners alternated between adaptation and standardization, academics tended to favor either a contingency or an adaptation approach to advertising. Birnik and Bowman (2007) reviewed more than 100 high-quality studies on the debate of standardization versus adaptation of international marketing and reported that advertising exhibited a medium level of standardization. Their findings illustrates that multinationals are facing very complex decisions regarding advertising standardization in terms of possible types and degrees rather than a simple choice between advertising standardization and adaptation.

Based on this long-lasting debate in international advertising, the issue of differences in advertising content has been widely investigated (Okazaki, 2004) and results of

studies have usually led their authors to suggest the appropriateness of a contingency approach (Karande et al., 2006). Some of the main themes studied in international advertising content analysis research include creative (message) strategy and execution (e.g., Farrall and Whitelock, 2001; Karande et al., 2006; Wei and Jiang, 2005; Zandpour et al., 1992), information content (i.e., level of informativeness) (e.g., Choi et al, 2006; Resnik and Stern, 1977; Zandpour et al, 1994), and cultural value appeals (e.g., Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Hoeken et al, 2007; Shavitt et al, 2006; Tse et al., 1989). The following chapters of this dissertation comprehensively review the previous studies on these themes in depth.

One way to classify previous studies on advertising creative strategy (message strategy), information content (level of informativeness), and cultural value appeals is by the geographic scope of the countries studied. The first group of studies are comparisons of advertising content between Eastern countries/culture and Western countries/culture (e.g., Abernethy and Franke, 1996; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Cho et al., 1999; Hong et al., 1987; Keown et al., 1992; Lin, 1993; Madden et al., 1986; Mueller, 1987; Mueller, 1991; Okazaki, 2004; Okazaki and Mueller, 2008; Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992; Taylor et al., 1997; Wei and Jiang, 2005; Zandpour et al., 1994; etc.). A second group of studies are comparisons of advertising content between countries that share a similar culture (Chan and Cheng, 2002; Frazer et al., 2002; Karande et al., 2006; Moon and Chan, 2005; Nevett, 1992; Weinberger and Spotts, 1989). A third group of studies focus on advertising content in one single country (Aaker and Norris, 1982; Abernethy, 1992; Benedetto et al, 1992; Chan, 1999; Farrall and Whitelock, 2001; Mueller, 1992; Pollay, 1983; Resnik and Stern, 1977; Taylor et al,

1996; Wang and Praet, 2013a, 2014a, 2014b¹).

In addition to geographic scope, some studies add an additional analytical angle by focusing on particular product categories and examining the influence of product category on advertising messages (Caillat and Mueller, 1996; Cheong et al., 2010; Tansey et al., 1990; Wang and Praet, 2012, 2013b, 2013c). Irrespective of whether studies compare advertising from multi-countries or focus on advertising from one single country, there is a strong concentration of studies focusing on advertising in Western countries with many studies involving advertising from the United States. Among Eastern countries, Japan and South Korea have long been popular targets among advertising researchers, not in the least because of the relatively high proportion of students from these countries pursuing research degrees in the United States. In recent years international advertising researchers and practitioners have increasingly shifted their attention to the world's largest developing market, China. Taylor (2005, p. 7) reports that Asia has been the region examined most frequently with respect to international advertising by research publications in the *Journal of Advertising* from 1995 to 2004 and "the especially fast growth of the world's most populous country, China" partially explains this trend. In 2010 China surpassed Japan to become the second largest economy in the world, trailing only the United States. In addition, to date the majority of studies on Chinese advertising content are comparative in nature (Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Emery and Tian, 2010; Lin, 2001; Chan and Cheng, 2002), and relatively few studies have concentrated particularly on Chinese advertising content with respect to message strategy (Chen and Taylor, 2012) and information content (Chan and Chan, 2005). Even though some studies have examined cultural values and appeals in Chinese advertisements (Cheng, 1997; Zhang and Harwood, 2004), these

¹ These three studies are partially incorporated into Chapter 4, 5, and 6 respectively.

studies have inherent limitations in that their analytical schemes originated from Western culture. In order to address these gaps in the literature, this dissertation will examine in detail the characteristics of Chinese advertising content in terms of message strategy, information content, and value appeals.

As far as advertising media is concerned, television has been the most important advertising medium in China since 1995 (Cheng and Chan, 2009). According to China Advertising Yearbook (2010), Chinese consumers on average watch television for 175 minutes every day, which is much more than the time they spend interacting with any other mass medium. In 2007, television accounted for 25.4% of total advertising billings, attracting 350 million households to watch TV for an average of three hours per day (Cheng and Chan, 2009). Because of the importance of television as an advertising medium in China, I decided to focus on Chinese television advertising as the object of investigation for this dissertation.

This dissertation intends to make contributions in relation to the standardization versus adaptation debate in international advertising, reviewed above. Contributions are useful for both practitioners and academics. As a study that focuses on advertising in a single country its results do not allow straight comparisons with advertising in other nations. While this clearly is a limitation of the current study, its findings will nevertheless allow international advertising practitioners who are to develop their advertising strategy in Chinese market, to compare the characteristics of Chinese television advertising with the characteristics of advertising in their respective home markets or in the global market. Therefore, this dissertation is believed to assist practitioners in deciding whether to standardize advertising strategy or to adapt to the particularities of the Chinese market. The study also makes important contributions to

an increased understanding of the nature of advertising in China and thus is also of interest to academic researchers.

1.2 Research Framework

In order to communicate with target consumers, advertisers have two basic types of messages at their disposal: informational and emotional advertising. Aaker and Norris (1982, p. 61) have suggested that all advertising is either “image, emotional, and feeling” or “informative, rational, and cognitive.” Informational advertising communicates rational, logical facts about the product or brand, whereas emotional advertising tries to establish a favorable feeling between the consumer and the product or brand (Puto and Wells, 1984; Laskey et al., 1989; Crask and Laskey, 1990; Chan and Chan, 2005). The goal of informational or rational advertising is to focus directly on the features or benefits of the product; in contrast, transformational advertising emphasize the experience that consumption of goods or services will provide to the consumer (Puto and Wells, 1984; Okazaki, Mueller and Taylor, 2010).

This study employs the cognition-based and emotion-based advertising scheme as the fundamental research framework. Based on the framework, this dissertation extensively examines the Chinese advertising content in terms of message strategy, information content, and cultural value appeals, which are the most frequently researched and the most important research subjects in international advertising (Okazaki, 2004). First, formulation of an appropriate advertising creative (or message) strategy² is crucial for any successful advertising campaign (Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992) to the extent that some researchers have called it ‘perhaps’ the most important marketing decision for

² Definition of and relation between creative strategy and message strategy would be illustrated in Chapter 4.1.

many consumer goods marketers (Frazer, 1983). Traditionally message strategy has been classified into 2 categories: informational and transformational strategies (Laskey et al., 1989; Puto and Wells, 1984). Clow et al. (2002) later added a third category of ‘conative strategy’ to their message strategy scheme. Based on a thorough review of prior frameworks, message strategy in this dissertation incorporates three components: cognitive, affective, and conative strategies. Cognitive and affective strategies correspond to the cognition-based and emotion-based scheme respectively. Second, in relation to cognition-based advertising content, informativeness refers to the extent to which advertising contains useful product-related information. The inclusion of information in advertising is deemed important to help consumers make informed purchasing decisions (Aaker and Norris, 1982). Third, cultural influence has long been a key factor that affects international advertising standardization due to the fact that advertising tends to reflect the prevalent values of the culture in which it originates, and cultural values, norms, and characteristics are embedded in advertising appeals (Mueller, 1987). Cultural value appeals in general are classified into two categories: utilitarian and symbolic, and these correspond with the cognition-based and emotion-based scheme respectively. Figure 1.1 illustrates the framework of this dissertation.

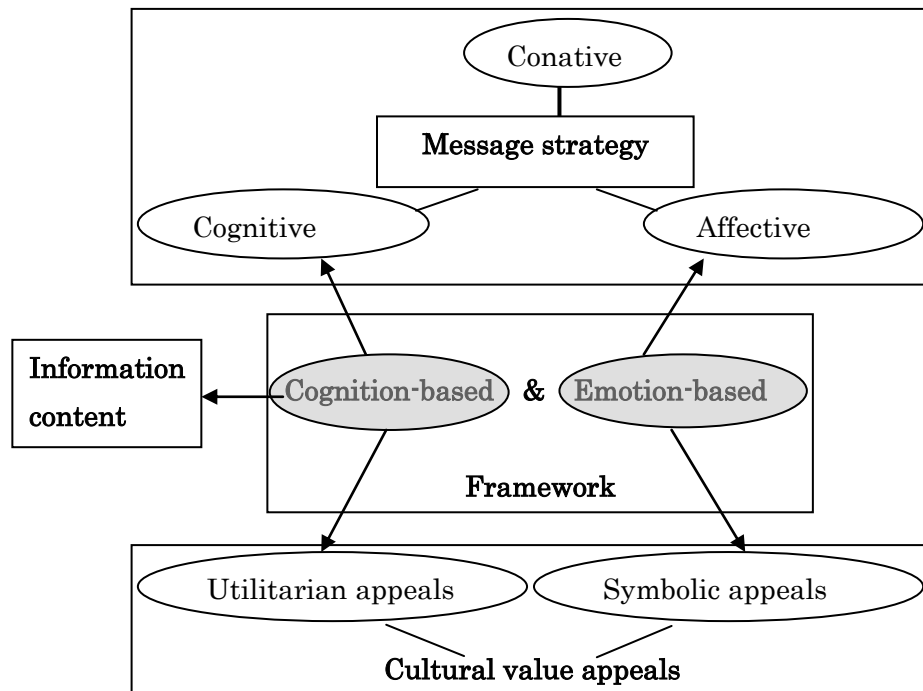


Figure 1.1 Research framework of this dissertation

1.3 Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 reviews the debate of international advertising standardization versus adaptation and introduces the main topics addressed in this dissertation: message strategy, informativeness, and value appeals in Chinese television advertising. It also provides the rationale for choosing Chinese television advertising as the object of the dissertation. Finally, it presents the research framework that forms the basis for this dissertation and shows how the basic constructs of the framework are interrelated.

Chapter 2 introduces two theoretical models for cultural analysis and one advertising classification scheme used in this dissertation. An explanation of these models and the classification scheme is included as it is necessary for understanding the contents of the following chapters. I review two fundamental models used for investigating cultural differences among countries: Hofstede's cultural dimensions model and Hall's high/low

context communication model in addition to the FCB grid model used for delineating advertising planning strategy.

In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology of content analysis utilized in the current study. This chapter also describes the method of sample collection and the sample profile.

Chapter 4 first concentrates on the modification of an integrated typology of message strategy. The chapter then reviews previous studies on advertising message strategies, and formulates research questions and hypotheses. Next, using the modified typology of message strategy described earlier in the chapter, this chapter describes the coding procedures. Finally, findings of a content analysis are reported and discussed.

In Chapter 5, I report results of a content analysis of the informativeness of Chinese television commercials. I first review extant studies on the topic and formulate hypotheses. Then I discuss how I supplemented Resnik and Stern's (1977) framework for measuring informativeness, and describe coding procedures. Finally, I report and discuss the empirical results.

Chapter 6 focuses on cultural value appeals. Following the same process, I first review previous studies and formulate hypotheses. Because of the inherent Western bias and consequent inability to adequately capture aspects of Chinese culture of the existing frameworks, I include some more Eastern value appeals that are derived from Confucian philosophy in the framework. Subsequently, I report content analysis results after describing coding procedures. Finally, results are discussed. From Chapter 4 to Chapter 6, in addition to a general analysis of the dependent variables, I also examine the influence of brand origin, product category, involvement level, and involvement type on the results.

In Chapter 7, I summarize the main findings of the three content analysis studies reported in Chapter 4-6 and address the limitations of the current study as well as possible venues for future research.

Chapter 2 Key Constructs and Model

This chapter introduces two theoretical models for cultural analysis and one advertising classification scheme used in this dissertation. An explanation of these models and the classification scheme is included as it is necessary for understanding the contents of the following chapters. In this chapter I review two models used for investigating cultural differences among countries: Hofstede's culture dimension model and Hall's high/low context communication model. This chapter also explains where China is positioned based on these two cultural classification schemes and also briefly reviews how these schemes have been used in international advertising research. Finally, I also introduce the FCB grid model, which is an often-used model for advertising planning.

2.1 Culture and Advertising

Culture is defined as “patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values” (Kluckhohn, 1951, p. 86). In line with this, Hofstede (2011, p. 3) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.” He also argues that culture is not a characteristic of individuals but encompasses a number of people who were conditioned by the same education and life experience. De Mooij (2005, p. 36) argues that individuals are products of their culture, i.e., “Our ideas, our values, our acts, and our emotions are

cultural products. We are individuals under the guidance of cultural patterns, historically created systems of meaning.” In this perspective, “advertising reflects these wider systems of meaning,” that is, “all manifestations of culture, at different levels, are reflected in advertising (p. 36).”

Culture differs across countries. The most frequently cited and arguably most useful work on the cultural diversity among countries is the dimensions of culture framework proposed by Geert Hofstede (Cateora and Graham, 2002; De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). Studying over 90,000 people in 66 countries, Hofstede initially published his framework in 1980 and showed that national cultures differed along four primary dimensions: individualism versus collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity versus femininity. In a subsequent study, he added a fifth dimension: long-term versus short-term orientation. Recently in 2010, another dimension was incorporated into his model.

Hofstede (2011, p. 8) describes the six cultural dimensions as follows:

1. Power Distance, related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality;
2. Uncertainty Avoidance, related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future;
3. Individualism versus Collectivism, related to the integration of individuals into primary groups;
4. Masculinity versus Femininity, related to the division of emotional roles between women and men;
5. Long Term versus Short Term Orientation, related to the choice of focus for people’s efforts: the future or the present and past.
6. Indulgence versus Restraint, related to the gratification versus control of basic human desires related to enjoying life.

Power distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power be distributed unequally (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). For instance, in small power distance cultures, older people are neither respected nor feared and subordinates expect

to be consulted whereas in large distance culture, older people are both respected and feared and subordinates expect to be told what to do (Hofstede, 2011). Chinese culture tends to feature large power distance (with a Hofstede country score of 80).³ That is to say, Chinese believe that inequalities among people are acceptable; the subordinate-superior relationship tends to be polarized and there is less defense against power abuse by superiors; individuals are influenced by formal authority and are in general optimistic about people's capacity for leadership and initiative.

Uncertainty Avoidance deals with a society's tolerance for ambiguity. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations, which are novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). For instance, in weak uncertainty avoidance culture, people are comfortable with ambiguity and lack of structure and show more tolerance of deviant persons and ideas whereas in strong uncertainty avoidance culture, people need for clarity and structure and show less tolerance of deviant persons and ideas (Hofstede, 2011). Chinese culture has a low score (30) on uncertainty avoidance. That is, adherence to laws and rules in China may be flexible to suit the actual situation; Chinese are comfortable with ambiguity as the Chinese language is full of ambiguous meanings that can be difficult for Western people to follow.

Individualism, versus its opposite Collectivism, is the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups (Hofstede, 2011). On the individualist side cultures in which the ties between individuals are loose; everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family; "I" consciousness is more important and personal opinion is expected. On the collectivist side cultures in which people are

³ The explanations of the six dimensions related to China and the Hofstede country scores of China are based on "The Hofstede Centre" retrieved from the website below: <http://geert-hofstede.com/china.html>

integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents); “We” consciousness is more important and opinions are predetermined by in-groups (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). China is a highly collectivist culture (with a score of 20) where people act in the interests of the group and not necessarily of themselves. Personal relationships prevail over task and company.

Masculinity, versus its opposite Femininity, refers to the distribution of values between the genders (Hofstede, 2011). A masculine society tends to be driven by competition, achievement and success whereas in a feminine society the dominant values are caring for others and quality of life (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010; Hofstede, 2011). With a score of 66, China tends to be a masculine society oriented and driven by success. The need to ensure success can be exemplified by the fact that many Chinese sacrifice family and leisure priorities to work.

Long-term orientation is the extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic future-orientated perspective rather than a conventional historic or short-term point of view. Values included in long-term orientation are perseverance, ordering relationships by status, thrift, and having a sense of shame. The opposite is short-term orientation, which includes personal steadiness and stability, and respect for tradition (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). Chinese culture (with score of 87) tends to be long-term oriented and very pragmatic. Chinese believe that truth depends very much on situation, context and time and they adapt traditions easily to changed conditions.

Indulgence versus restraint dimension is defined as the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised. Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives

related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms (Hofstede, 2011). China is a restrained society (with score of 24), that is, Chinese society does not put much emphasis on leisure time and control the gratification of their desires. People with this orientation have the perception that their actions are restrained by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong.

In order to have an apparent understanding of Hofstede's six dimensions, Table 2.1 shows the country scores of China, Japan and United States.

Table 2.1 Hofstede country scores of China, Japan and United States

	Power distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty avoidance	Long-term orientation	Indulgence
China	80	20	66	30	87	24
Japan	54	46	95	92	88	42
U.S.	40	91	62	46	26	68

Source: data from Hofstede's official website:

<http://www.geerthofstede.com/dimension-data-matrix>

Based on Hofstede cultural dimensions, a number of researchers have investigated the differences in advertising content across countries and cultures. For instance, Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) examined the correlation between advertising appeals in business advertising magazines from 11 countries and Hofstede's original four dimensions and results indicated that a part of value appeals (10 out of 30) were significantly related to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, i.e., the ornamental, vain, dear, and status appeals positively related while the cheap appeal negatively related to power distance dimension; the untamed, magic, and youth appeals negatively related to uncertainty avoidance; the convenience appeal positively related while the modest appeal negatively related to masculinity dimension. Albers-Miller and Stafford (1999)

examined the differences in using advertising appeals across experiential and utilitarian services for 11 culturally diverse countries and confirmed the significance of cultural influences on the use of appeals. Moon and Chan (2005) studied the differences in value appeals in terms of two of Hofstede's cultural dimensions: masculinity versus femininity and uncertainty avoidance between Hong Kong and Korea. Results show that femininity is an important variable for explaining differences in advertising between the two countries.

2.2 High- versus Low-Context Communication

Another scheme that distinguishes cultural differences across countries was developed by Edward T. Hall (1976), who proposed the concept of high- versus low-context types of communication style. A high-context culture is one in which people are deeply involved with each other. As a result of intimate relationships among people, a structure of social hierarchy exists, individual inner feelings are kept under strong self-control, and information is widely shared through simple messages with deep meaning. Based on this concept, most communication in high-context culture relies more on the physical context or is internalized in the person, and less information is contained in the verbal part of the message such as in words and sentences (Hall, 1976). In other words, since high-context culture values intuition, interpersonal relationships and contemplation, messages in high-context communication appear to be implicit and indirect and one needs to put the messages in the appropriate context in order to understand the right meanings conveyed in the messages. It is explicitly pointed out that most of the Eastern countries and regions (e.g., South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan) belong to high-context cultures (Hall, 1976; Hall and Hall, 1987). The

classification of China as a high-context culture is supported by a variety of studies (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010; Kim et al., 1998; Lin, 2001; So, 2004; Zhou et al., 2005). On the other hand, a low-context culture is one in which people are highly individualized, somewhat alienated, and fragmented, and there is relatively little involvement with others. Accordingly, communication or information in low-context cultures is vested in the explicit code, that is, in the words, sentences, and grammar (Hall, 1976). In other words, as low-context culture values facts and directness, low-context messages tend to be more logical, factual, and linear rather than intuitional or contemplative, and people prefer to rely on the literal and precise meaning of the words they use through communication. The U.S. is a typical representative of low-context culture.

2.3 The FCB Grid Model

Vaughn (1980, 1986) introduced the FCB Grid, an advertising planning model that he and his colleagues had developed at advertising agency Foote, Cone & Belding. They developed the FCB grid model based on traditional response theory of the hierarchy of effects and its variants. In addition to the dimension of involvement level, the dimension of think versus feel involvement type is added in the FCB grid. Involvement dimension relates to the importance and required thought of making purchasing decision and potential loss or risk in case of wrong decision (Vaughn, 1986; Ratchford, 1987). High-involvement products have been described as relevant, unusual, difficult to understand, risky, or otherwise worthy of a consumer's attention while low-involvement products are described to be commonplace, easy to use, or involve minimal risk or consideration, which suggests different advertising strategy for products in different level of involvement (Choi et al., 2012). The dimension of think versus feel is

theoretically based on brain specialization. The right/left brain theory suggests that the left side of the brain is more capable of rational, cognitive thinking and primarily responsible for verbal information, sequential analysis and the ability to be conscious while the right side deals with more visual, pictorial, emotional and nonverbal information and engages more in the affective functions (Belch and Belch, 2009; Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2010). Think-oriented purchasing decision thus usually tends to be logical and objective, and mainly based on functional product attributes while feel-oriented purchasing decision derives from image, feelings and sensory effects (Vaughn, 1986; Ratchford, 1987). By these two dimensions of high/low involvement level and think/feel involvement type, the FCB grid classifies consumer decision-making for products and services into four types (quadrants): high-involvement/think, high-involvement/feel, low-involvement/think, and low-involvement/feel. Accordingly, these four types of consumer decision-making delineate four primary types of advertising planning strategies: informative, affective, habit formation, and self-satisfaction. As shown in Figure 2.1, Vaughn (1986) suggests that the informative strategy is appropriate for highly involving products and services where rational thinking and economic considerations prevail and the standard learning hierarchy 'learn-feel-do' is the typical response model or the sequence in which consumers process advertising messages. Examples of this type of products are cars, appliances and insurance. The affective strategy is for highly involving and emotionally motivated purchases of products that fulfill the need for self-esteem, or for which purchase decisions are driven by subconscious and ego-related impulses. Accordingly, the hierarchy of advertising processing for this type of products e.g., cosmetics, jewelry and fashion clothing typically follows the feel-learn-do sequence. The habit formation

new product categories, researchers (Weinberger and Spotts, 1989; Choi et al., 2006) incorporated more types of products into each quadrant without depicting specific positions on the grid.

For this dissertation I categorized products according to the updated FCB grid. The first quadrant (high-involvement/think products) includes home appliance, battery razors, buses, car insurance, computers, electric-bicycles, electronics, family cars, life insurance, powder milk, securities, tires, and trucks. The second quadrant (high-involvement/feel products) includes Chinese alcohol, cosmetics, expensive watch, face soap, fashion clothes, floor, furniture, house decoration, house maintenance, jewelry, lighting, luxury cars, paint, sports cars, SUV cars, tile, wallpaper, wig, and wine for a party. The third quadrant (low-involvement/think products) includes baby napkins, banks, battery, body soap, communication service, credit cards, detergent, food, insect repellant, milk, motor oil, oil, OTC drug, paper towels, razors, sanitary napkins, shampoo, suntan lotion, tea, and toothpaste. The fourth quadrant (low-involvement/feel products) includes beer, candy, fast food, and soft drinks.

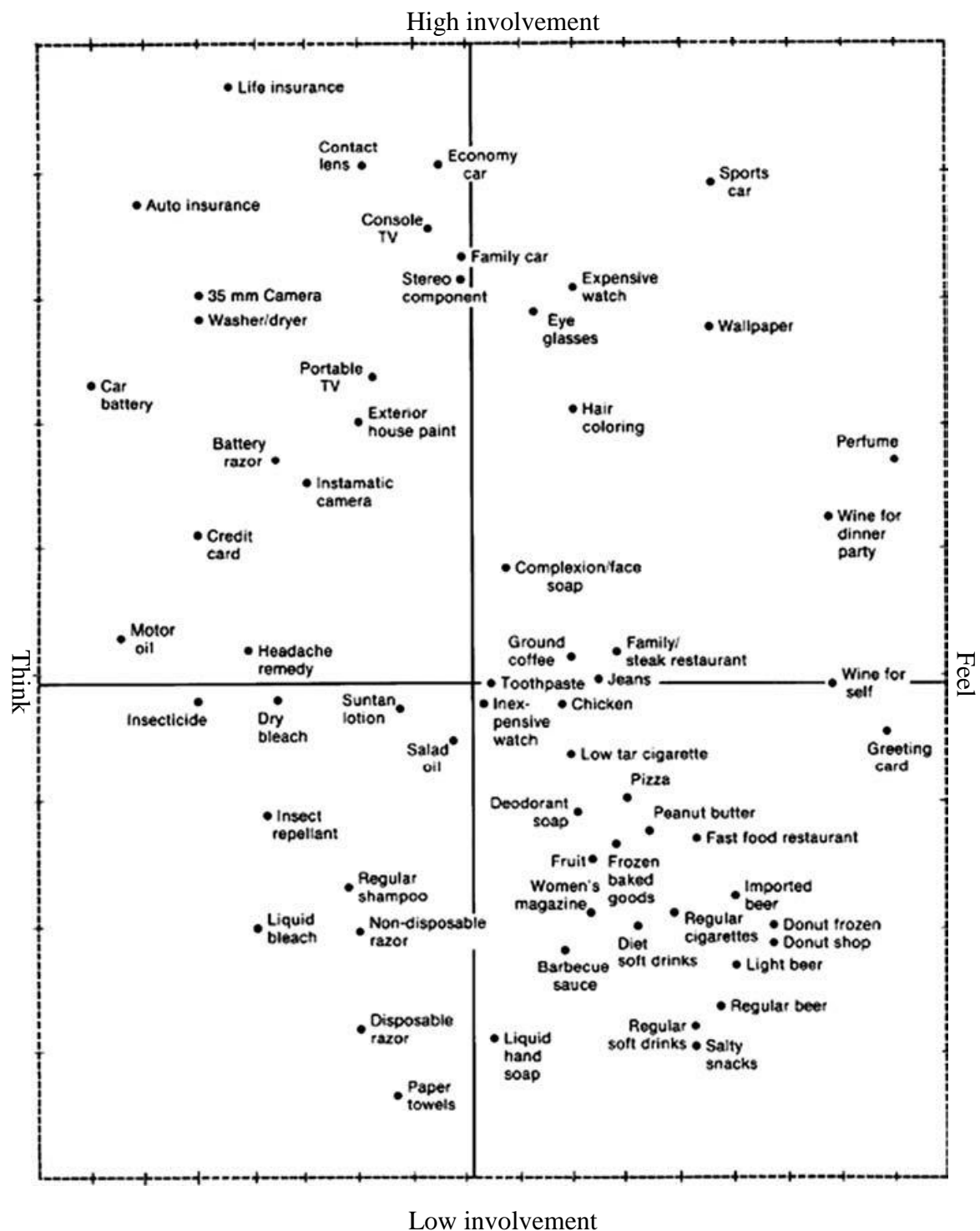


Figure 2.2 Ratchford's (1987) categorization of 60 common products on the FCB grid

Chapter 3 Methodology and Sample

3.1 Content Analysis

With respect to research methodology, researchers studying advertising content have utilized both conceptual and empirical approaches. As far as empirical approaches are concerned, some researchers conduct surveys or experiments from the perspective of consumers while other researchers use content analysis. In this dissertation I use the method of content analysis to explore the characteristics of Chinese television commercials in terms of message strategy, information content, and cultural value appeals, and provide both academics and practitioners with knowledge about how each of these topics manifest themselves in Chinese television advertising.

Content analysis has been a vital and popular technique as a reputable research method to social researchers (Cutler and Javalgi, 1992) and has long been the frequently used research method for studying advertising (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1997; Mulvey and Stern, 2004; Okazaki and Mueller, 2007; Taylor, 2005). According to Berelson (1952, p. 15), content analysis is defined as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.” Leiss, Kline and Jhally (1997) made further explanations to this definition as below. Objectivity means that the analysis is pursued on the basis of explicit rules, which enable different researchers to obtain the same results from the same messages. Systematic description means that the same set of criteria should be applied to all the data under examination and that the data set is a preselected sample chosen by recognized random procedures. Furthermore, description by content analysis can be tied to specific quantitative procedures that permit a degree of precision in measurement. In

addition, Leiss, Kline and Jhally also assert that content analysis needs to deliberately restrict itself to measuring the manifest or surface content of the message, so that coders can reach acceptable levels of agreement.

Prasad (2008, p. 181) summarized the procedure of conducting content analysis as the following six steps:

1. Formulation of the research question or objectives;
2. Selection of communication content and sample;
3. Developing content categories;
4. Finalizing units of analysis;
5. Preparing a coding schedule, pilot testing and checking inter coder reliabilities;
6. Analyzing the collected data.

For this dissertation I conducted three independent content analyses of message strategy, information content, and cultural value appeals respectively. The results of each of these analyses are reported in Chapter 4 through Chapter 6. Each of these content analyses was conducted according to the steps as described by Prasad (2008). The objective of this dissertation in general is stated in Chapter 1. Specific objectives, the formulation of research questions and hypotheses, the development of coding frameworks and operationalizations as well as coding process related to each topic are described respectively in Chapters 4 through 6. In the current chapter I explain the method of collecting the sample commercials and also describe the sample profile.

3.2 Sample Collection

A sample of commercials was systematically collected during the entire year of 2010. I recorded once a week in an interval of 8 days, i.e. January 1st (Friday), January 9th (Saturday), January 17th (Sunday), and so forth. I selected Channel 1 and Channel 2 of China Central Television (CCTV), the largest national television broadcaster with coverage of over 97% of the PRC's population. In order to cover the time slots with the

highest audience concentration I recorded all programming during the six hours from 18:00 to 24:00. In order not to bias the sample towards high GRP advertisers and following Stern and Resnik (1991) the unit of analysis was each unique (non-duplicated) Chinese TV commercial. Public service ads and ads for TV programs were excluded from the sample. The final sample consists of 1439 commercials.

3.3 Sample Profile

Sample commercials (n=1439) could be classified into a variety of categories based on different categorization schemes. Based on brand origin, sample commercials are categorized into 2 groups: ads for domestic brands (n=1140) and ads for foreign brands (n=299). In terms of product category, commercials are generally categorized into ads for products (n=1202) and ads for services (n=228), and are furthermore classified into

Table 3.1 Distribution of commercials across product categories

Product category	No.	%
Alcohol	120	8.3
Automobiles and accessories	206	14.3
Detergents	30	2.1
Events	18	1.3
Fashion	86	6.0
Financial and insurances	118	8.2
Food and drink	233	16.2
Health care	91	6.3
Home durable appliances	182	12.6
Housing and decorating	72	5.0
Institutional	37	2.6
IT, telecom and electronics	82	5.7
Media	5	0.3
Personal care	100	6.9
Retailing	23	1.6
Other services	27	1.9
Miscellaneous	9	0.6
Total	1439	100.0

16 categories as well as ‘miscellaneous’ based on product industry. Table 3.1 shows the distribution of commercials across various product categories.

Based on the FCB grid model, sample commercials are classified into 4 categories: ads for high-involvement/think products, ads for high-involvement/feel products, ads for low-involvement/think products, and ads for low-involvement/feel products (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Distribution of commercials in terms of FCB grid

	Thinking		Feel		Subtotal	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
High involvement	467	35.3	335	25.3	802	60.6
Low involvement	405	30.6	115	8.7	520	39.3
Subtotal	872	65.9	450	34.0	1322 ^a	99.9 ^b

^a: Among the total commercials (n=1439), 108 commercials are difficult to allocate into any quadrant based on previous research and thus are not included in analysis related to the FCB grid.

^b: the percentage is less than 100% because of rounding.

H/T (high-involvement/think) products: home appliance, battery razors, buses, car insurance, computers, electric-bicycles, electronics, family cars, life insurance, powder milk, securities, tires, trucks;

H/F (high-involvement/feel) products: Chinese alcohol, cosmetics, expensive watch, face soap, fashion clothes, floor, furniture, house decoration, house maintenance, jewelry, lighting, luxury cars, paint, sports cars, SUV cars, tile, wallpaper, wig, wine for party;

L/T (low-involvement/think) products: baby napkins, banks, battery, body soap, communication service, credit cards, detergent, food, insect repellent, milk, motor oil, oil, OTC drug, paper towels, razors, sanitary napkins, shampoo, suntan lotion, tea, toothpaste;

L/F (low-involvement/feel) products: beer, candy, fast-food, soft drinks.

Chapter 4 Message Strategy⁴

4.1 Introduction

Formulation of an appropriate advertising creative strategy is crucial for any successful advertising campaign (Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992) to the extent that some researchers have called it ‘perhaps’ the most important marketing decision for many consumer goods marketers (Frazer, 1983) and one of the most important decisions for advertising creatives (Belch and Belch, 1990; Clow et al., 2002). Frazer (1983) defines creative strategy as ‘a policy or guiding principle which specifies the general nature and character of messages to be designed’ (p.36). Some authors distinguish between creative (or message) ‘strategy’ (what the message will communicate) and creative ‘tactics’ (how the message strategy will be executed), (e.g., Frazer, 1983; Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992; Taylor, 1999; Belch and Belch, 2009). Others contend that creative strategy incorporates both message strategy and execution format (e.g., Ray, 1982; Laskey et al., 1989; Arens et al., 2008). While it is necessary to conceptually and theoretically distinguish between message strategy and tactics, it is of course important for advertising practitioners and researchers to consider both the strategy and tactics of ad campaigns. In order to assist planning, development, and analysis of creative (or message) strategy and tactics, researchers have developed a number of classification typologies.⁵ However, because typologies that include both message strategy and tactics would become unwieldy and be of little practical value, most creative strategy typologies focus on messages rather than on executional tactics

⁴ Chapter 4 is partly based on the following publication: Wang, Liyong and Praet, Carolus L. C. (2014a), “A Review and Integration of Message Strategy Typologies,” Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on Research in Advertising (ICORIA), s.l., Amsterdam, Netherlands.

⁵ In this chapter the terms ‘typology’, ‘scheme’, and ‘framework’ will be used as synonyms.

(Laskey et al., 1989). Accordingly, in this chapter discussion is limited to the message strategy aspects of creative strategy.

Laskey et al. (1989) argue that an acceptable classification of message strategy should be useful for advertising practitioners, researchers and educators. However, the generally prescriptive and pragmatic needs of practitioners looking for detailed how-to manuals on creating effective advertising messages often contrast with the generally descriptive, theoretical and explanatory needs of academic researchers. Academic researchers are interested in the answers to questions about the nature (the what) of advertising message strategy and its effects, and in the underlying theories (the why) that link advertising with consumer behavior. Advertising educators need to cover both theoretical/descriptive and practical/prescriptive aspects of advertising in their teaching. These differences in orientation often make a one-size-fits-all approach to typologies impractical. In this chapter, I primarily focus on developing a message strategy typology for academic research purposes. I do this by first conducting a review of the main extant prescriptive typologies on message strategy developed either for (or by) practitioners on the one hand, and descriptive frameworks developed for academic research purposes on the other. I then revisit the hierarchy-of-effects theory that underlies the practitioner-based FCB Grid model and propose to incorporate the behavioral (conative) element into the academic models of message strategy, which generally only focus on the cognitive and affective aspects of advertising message strategy. Next, I synthesize elements from academic typologies and propose a modified typology based on the two-stage typology developed by Laskey et al. (1989) and extend it to include conative strategies. Finally, to test this typology and simultaneously validate its applicability in a non-Western context, I use it to content analyze Chinese

television ads.

4.2 Prior Typologies of Message Strategy

Advertising researchers and practitioners have developed various typologies and frameworks to plan, develop or analyze advertising message strategies. I will first review the frameworks developed either by practitioners or mainly with advertising managers in mind. The first type of practitioner-oriented frameworks use the “grid” format and are popular among practitioners due to their ease of application (Rossiter et al., 1991). Vaughn (1980, 1986) introduced the FCB Grid, an advertising planning model that he had developed at advertising agency Foote, Cone & Belding. It classifies consumer decision-making for products and services according to two dimensions: low/high involvement level and think/feel involvement type. Accordingly, advertising strategies can be classified to match four types of consumer decision-making: high-involvement/think, high-involvement/feel, low-involvement/think, and low-involvement/feel. Different types of products are positioned in each quadrant and advertisers can use the grid to develop corresponding message strategies for each type of product. While the FCB Grid has greatly contributed to simplifying and structuring advertising and media planning, it has been criticized for its mixed conceptualization of consumer involvement (Rossiter et al., 1991) and the fact that the grid is unable to capture and account for influence of social factors in the buying process (Ratchford, 1987) somewhat limit its usefulness.

The Rossiter-Percy Grid (Rossiter and Percy, 1987; Rossiter et al., 1991) takes the FCB Grid one step further by including brand awareness to the model and by limiting the operationalization of involvement to perceived risk. Similarly to the FCB Grid, it

includes two dimensions: involvement level (high versus low) and type of motivation (informational versus transformational), the latter corresponding to the think/feel dichotomy of the FCB Grid. It helps advertising creatives concentrate on target consumers' involvement with purchasing decision and the motivation that drives their behavior. Both "grid" frameworks were primarily designed as managerial tools for advertising planning and development. Unlike the FCB Grid, the Rossiter-Percy Grid also includes recommendations on executional tactics and thus combines advertising strategy and tactics.

Frazer (1983) developed a typology of creative strategy for advertising managers consisting of seven creative strategic alternatives and a description of the conditions under which they are most suitable. The strategies are ranked according to their level of evolutionary sophistication based on the evolution of the consumer goods field: generic, preemptive, unique selling proposition (USP), brand image, positioning, resonance, and affective. While Frazer does not explicitly link these strategies to the implicitly underlying think/feel dichotomy, the generic, preemptive, USP, and positioning strategies can be considered to represent 'think' strategies, whereas the brand image, resonance and affective strategies can be considered to represent 'feel' strategies (cf. Taylor, 1999, Frazer et al., 2002). While the typology was originally developed for use in advertising planning, Frazer et al. (2002) used it to compare creative strategies in U.S. and Australian television commercials. However, as a typology for academic research it also has several drawbacks such as ambiguity of operational definitions and low intercoder reliability when used for content analysis (Laskey et al., 1989), as well as lack of exhaustiveness of the categories (Clow et al., 2002).

Taylor (1999) proposed a comprehensive typology of message strategies for

advertising planning and development presented as a 'strategy wheel' consisting of six segments representing different types of consumer motivations. The right half of the wheel represents the what he calls 'Ritual View' which corresponds with 'feel' or affective strategies consist of three segments: Ego, Social and Sensory while the left half is called the 'Transmission View' which corresponds with 'think' or rational strategies and which also consists of three segments: Routine, Acute need and Ration. This model suggests advertising managers and creative focus on buying situations and the influence of social factors in the buying process. However, the lack of operational definitions of the strategies suitable for each segment makes this typology less useful as a tool for content analysis. In fact, Taylor uses Frazer's (1983) typology to show which of the creative strategies would fit which segment. Thus, in the context of academic content analysis –rather than replacing Frazer's typology– Taylor's strategy wheel segments can be used as a complementary framework for explaining the types of consumer motivations advertisers are targeting by linking them to Frazer's strategies.

The second type of research on advertising message strategy that I will review below consists of studies developing frameworks primarily designed for use in academic analysis. Aaker and Norris (1982) distinguish two basic types of message strategy: image/emotional/feeling versus informational/rational/cognitive. Puto and Wells (1984) adopted this basic dichotomy between cognition-based and affect-based advertising strategy and named the respective types informational and transformational advertising. Informational advertising focuses on important factual information to potential consumers whereas transformational advertising connects the experience of using the advertised product to a set of psychological characteristics. The main difference between emotional and transformational advertising is that an emotional ad only

becomes transformational if consumers explicitly relate the affective elements to the experience of using the brand, which is not necessarily the case. According to Puto and Wells (1984) for an ad to be considered transformational consumers need to explicitly relate affective elements in the ad to the experience of owning or consuming the brand. They thus use the term transformational from the perspective of consumer interpretation and perception. However, this makes the concept less useful from the perspective of academic research where it is crucial to document the content of advertising objectively rather than subjectively. In addition, one limitation of both typologies is that they do not offer more detailed sub-strategies.

Simon (1971) proposed a typology consisting of 10 creative strategies: information, argument, motivation with psychological appeals, repeated assertion, command, brand familiarization, symbolic association, imitation, obligation, and habit starting. This typology is the first elaborate classification and is frequently used as a coding framework in content-analytical studies (e.g., Reid et al., 1985; Martenson, 1987; Zandpour et al., 1992; Okazaki and Alonso, 2003; Wei and Jiang, 2005). However, Simon's typology has been criticized for mixing elements of message strategy and creative execution (Laskey et al., 1989; Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992). In addition, the typology lacks an underlying theoretical structure like the cognitive-affective dichotomy found in the typologies proposed by Aaker and Norris (1982) and Puto and Wells (1984) and thus lacks the simple but intuitive structure of these frameworks.

To improve on the low intercoder reliability when using Frazer's (1983) framework Laskey et al. (1989) developed a two-stage typology in which an advertisement is first categorized into either informational or transformational strategy based on the overall thrust of the message and then into a specific sub-strategy. Informational sub-strategies

are hyperbole, preemptive, USP, comparative or generic-informational strategy whereas transformational categories are brand image, user image, use occasion or generic-transformational. Several studies have used this typology (e.g., Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992; Tai, 2004).

Clow et al. (2002) developed a two-stage classification scheme based on the Frazer (1983) and Laskey et al. (1989) typologies. This scheme addresses one of the shortcomings of most academic frameworks reviewed above by adding a conative strategy category to the cognitive and affective categories of the extant frameworks. Conative strategies include action-inducing and promotional strategies and are used to persuade customers to engage in a specific behavior or to support other sales-promotional activities. Inclusion of the conative strategy borrows from consumer behavior theories and incorporates the conative or behavioral aspect of the traditional advertising functions (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961) and hierarchy-of-effects models (cf. Vaughn, 1980; 1986) also found in some of the practitioner-originated planning models such as the FCB grid discussed above. Clow et al. (2002) however, do not provide any theoretical rationale for including the conative strategy but include it in a rather matter-of-fact fashion. In addition, they include brand strategies as a fourth type of strategy, which I believe would be better included as part of affective strategies as originally suggested by both Frazer (1983) and Laskey et al. (1989). Moreover, their treatment of brand strategy as a separate strategy also departs from the hierarchy-of-effects logic of the other strategies included in their framework.

Regarding the mutual exclusiveness of the informational and transformational strategies, Laskey et al. (1989) found that coders had difficulty allocating only one strategy alternative to some advertisements. This is because ads may utilize a

combination of informational and transformational (or affective) elements (Puto and Wells, 1984; Rossiter, Percy and Donovan, 1991), in addition to conative elements. Normally, a television commercial or print advertisement contains both verbal copy and visual elements. Thus, it is preferable to allow coders to select multiple strategic elements if these are present, rather than to instruct them to only select the dominant strategy. This allows researchers to more precisely capture the complex nature of message strategy.

4.3 A Modified Typology of Message Strategies

As a result of the above review, I feel that none of the extant typologies perfectly meets the need to capture the entire conceptual range of possible message strategies used by advertisers. While the typology developed by Laskey et al. (1989) comes reasonably close, it lacks some elements described by other typologies. I thus use this typology as the basis and supplement it with elements of other typologies on message strategy (i.e., Simon, 1971; Aaker and Norris, 1982; Frazer, 1983; Puto and Wells, 1984; Clow et al., 2002) to create a modified two-stage typology.

As the theoretical background of this typology, the hierarchy of effects model explains the formulation of cognitive, affective and conative message strategies. The hierarchy of effects model holds that consumers respond to marketing messages in a structured way, based on how they think and feel and on what they do. This step-wise process plays a fundamental role in how advertisers develop effective marketing communications through the route of cognition (think), affection (feel), and conation (do). Lavidge and Steiner (1961) originally argued that consumers first learn information and attributes of a product from advertising, then form feelings about the

product, and finally take action in the form of inquiring about the product or purchasing it. As I described in Chapter 2, this sequence is usually referred to as the ‘learn-feel-do’ sequence and is labeled as the ‘informative’ hierarchy of advertising effects in the FCB grid (Vaughn, 1986). Based on this original hierarchy of effects, researchers have subsequently proposed a number of alternative sequence models, as delineated in the FCB grid, i.e., a ‘feel-learn-do’ (affective), ‘do-learn-feel’ (habit forming), and ‘do-feel-learn’ (self satisfaction) (Vaughn, 1980, 1986). Irrespective of the exact sequence, the hierarchy of effects model indicates that basically three types of advertising strategies are available to advertisers to either directly or ultimately trigger consumer behavior: cognitive, affective, and conative strategies.

As discussed above, I believe that for the purpose of content analysis the term affective as a contrasting concept to informative is preferable to the term transformational, which is associated with consumer subjective perception and interpretation of and ad’s successful linking of feelings with use of the brand, and thus I propose to use the term affective instead. I will now describe the main elements of this typology and their definitions.

Table 4.1 also lists the main strategies and sub-strategies and provides brief definitions for each of them. The first stage of the typology consists of the following three main strategies: Cognitive, affective, and conative. The second stage consists of the respective sub-strategies.

Cognitive strategies focus on factual product claims and benefits and are usually verbal descriptions. Cognitive sub-strategies include generic, hyperbole, factual description, preemptive, comparative, and USP. Generic strategy presents facts or information that applies to an entire product class. It is usually used in combination with

other strategies. Hyperbole strategy focuses on factually based but exaggerated claims, assertions, or messages that are not objectively verifiable. A claim such as ‘the leading brand in the industry or product category’ that does not back this up with facts or data should be coded as ‘hyperbole’. Factual description strategy presents unadorned facts without detailed description of product features, ingredients or benefits. It also does not claim superiority and offers merely ‘news about’ the product in question. Preemptive strategy focuses on the objectively verifiable nature of product attributes or benefits-in-use without any claim of uniqueness or comparisons with competing brands. The only problem with this strategy is that it is difficult for coders to judge whether the advertiser’s claim is preemptive or not as coders would need to know, whether other brands claim to offer similar benefits. Similarly, comparative strategy also focuses on the verifiable nature of product attributes or benefits-in-use without any claim of uniqueness. However, it always includes a comparison: direct comparisons with competing brands in the category, or indirect comparisons with previous versions of the same brand. USP strategy focuses on explicit claims of uniqueness involving an objectively verifiable product attribute or benefit-in-use. ‘The only’ are the key words that differentiate USP from preemptive or comparative strategies. Nevertheless, USP could be considered a type of implicit comparison: if a product has a unique characteristic it means other products do not have it.

Affective strategies associate the advertised brand or the corporation with a feeling, mood, emotion, or image. Both verbal (spoken and written words) and nonverbal (music, songs and pictures) message elements may be used in affective strategy. Affective sub-strategies include generic, emotional, brand users, brand image, use occasion/resonance, and corporate image. Generic strategy uses affective or emotional

messages focusing on the product class. 'People can't live without coffee' would be a typical example. Emotional strategy uses ambiguity, humor, or appeals to a range of feelings (e.g., joy, sadness, fear, peace of mind, pride, nostalgia, anger, endearment). A brand user strategy focuses on brand users and their lifestyles. The main thrust of the ad is on people who use the brand, rather than on the brand itself, conveying the notion that a certain type of people will choose the brand in question. In this strategy, people (ordinary people or celebrities) are always shown and focused on. A brand image strategy focuses on the image of the brand itself and tries to develop a brand personality for the product such as being of high quality, prestigious, hip, outgoing, fashionable, adventuresome, sportive etc. The product is the focus and is always displayed. For instance, a SUV is shown driving on a rough mountain road transmitting an adventuresome personality. People may or may not be shown, but are not focused on. A use occasion/resonance strategy focuses on the experience of using the brand or on those situations or circumstances where use of the brand is the most appropriate. The ad tries to associate the product with a particular experience or previous experience to create a bond between the consumer and the brand. People may or may not be shown using the product, but are not the focus of the advertisement. Corporate image strategy focuses on building a positive corporate image in consumers' minds. Normally the ad does not concentrate on a particular product. 'We are protecting the environment' and 'we are leading innovation' would be typical examples.

Table 4.1 A modified typology of message strategies

Message strategy	Operational definition
Cognitive ^{a b}	Focuses on verifiable factual product claims and benefits. Cognitive messages are usually verbal descriptions.
Generic ^{d e}	Facts or informational message focusing on product class.
Hyperbole ^e	Factually based but exaggerated claims, assertions, or messages that are not objectively verifiable.
Factual description ^c	Presents unadorned facts without detailed description of product features, ingredients or benefits or any assertion of superiority, and offers merely 'news about' the product.
Preemptive ^{d e}	Objectively verifiable product attribute or benefit-in-use without any claim of uniqueness or comparisons with competing brands.
Comparative ^{d e}	Uses either direct comparisons to named or unnamed (brand X, other brands) competing brands in the category, or indirect comparisons to previous versions of the same brand.
USP ^{d e}	Focuses on explicit claims of uniqueness involving an objectively verifiable product attribute or benefit-in-use.
Affective ^{a b}	Associates the advertised brand or corporation with a feeling, mood, emotion, or image.
Generic ^{d e}	Affective or emotional messages focusing on the product class
Emotional ^{b d}	Uses ambiguity, humor, or appeals to a range of feelings (e.g., joy, sadness, fear, peace of mind, pride, nostalgia, anger, endearment).
Brand users ^{b e}	Focuses on brand users and their lifestyles. The main thrust of the ad is on people who use the brand, rather than on the brand itself, conveying the notion that a certain type of person will choose the brand.
Brand image ^{b d e}	Focuses on the image of the brand itself in developing a brand personality such as quality, status, and prestige. The product is the focus and is always displayed. People may not be shown or are not the focus.
Use occasion/ resonance ^{b d e}	Focuses on the experience of using the brand or on those situations or circumstances where use of the brand is the most appropriate. The ad tries to associate the product with a particular experience or previous experience to create a bond between the consumer and the brand.
Corporate image ^b	Focuses on building a positive corporate image in consumers' minds. Normally the ad does not concentrate on a particular product.
Conative ^b	Tries to persuade consumer to engage in a specific behavior or to support other promotional activities.
Action-inducing ^{b c}	Tries to persuade consumers to engage in a specific action, e.g., call a toll-free number, visit a Web site, consult a physician, or make a purchase.
Sales promotional ^{b c}	Provides support for other promotional activities, such as special offers, contests, sweepstakes, or coupons.

a: adapted from Puto and Wells (1984); b: Clow et al. (2002); c: Simon (1971); d: Frazer (1983); e: Laskey et al. (1989).

Conative strategies try to persuade consumers to engage in a specific behavior or to support other promotional activities. Conative sub-strategies are action-inducing and sales promotional strategies. An action-inducing strategy tries to persuade consumers to engage in a specific action, such as calling a toll-free number, visiting a Web site, consulting a physician, or making a purchase. A sales promotional strategy provides support for other promotional activities, such as special offers, contests, sweepstakes, coupons, etc. to encourage consumers to try, repeat purchase, or buy more of the advertised brand. 'Buy this product and win discount coupons,' 'Buy one and have the chance to get one more for free,' 'Get two for the price of one' are examples of this strategy.

4.4 Empirical Examination of Message Strategies

4.4.1 Formulation of research questions and hypotheses

Researchers have used the typologies reviewed above to content analyze message strategies of advertisements in countries such as the U.S. (Clow et al., 2002; Laskey et al., 1995), the U.K. (Farrall and Whitelock, 2001; Nevett, 1992), Australia (Frazer et al., 2002), Japan (Lin, 1993; Okazaki and Alonso, 2002; Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992), and Hong Kong (Tai, 2004). Ramaprasad and Hasegawa (1992) compared American and Japanese commercials and found that there were no significant associations between country and overall message strategy (informational or transformational) and that in both countries used significantly more transformational than informational message strategies. Lin (1993) examined the difference in message strategies between American and Japanese television commercials and found that American commercials contained more informational messages than Japanese commercials did. Laskey et al.

(1995) explored the relationship between message strategy and commercial effectiveness and argued that message strategy did affect ad effectiveness but the effectiveness of informational or transformational message strategy differed across various product categories. Frazer et al. (2002) found different patterns in the use of message strategy between U. S. and Australia: U.S. ads use more informational message strategy while Australian ads use more transformational strategy.

Examination of extant studies reveals a research gap concerning the geographic coverage of message strategy studies, i.e., in particular the relative lack of studies involving China (PRC). In order to fill this gap, I believe that it is necessary to shed light on the patterns in the use of message strategies in Chinese television commercials and on the underlying factors that may explain these patterns. Thus I propose the following research questions and hypotheses:

RQ1: What are the patterns in the use of message strategies in Chinese television commercials?

Cultural influence on message strategies

Edward T. Hall (1976) proposed the concept of high- versus low-context as a way of understanding different cultural orientations. A high-context culture is one in which people are deeply involved with each other. As a result of intimate relationships among people, a structure of social hierarchy exists, individual inner feelings are kept under strong self-control, and information is widely shared through simple messages with deep meaning. Based on this concept, most communication in high-context culture relies more on the physical context or is internalized in the person, and less information

is contained in the verbal part of the message such as in words and sentences (Hall, 1976). In other words, since high-context culture values intuition, interpersonal relationships and contemplation, messages in high-context communication tend to be implicit and indirect and one needs to put the messages in the appropriate context in order to understand them. Hall (1976) and Hall and Hall (1987) explicitly describe most of the Eastern countries and regions (e.g., South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan) as high-context cultures. The classification of China as a high-context culture is supported by a variety of studies (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010; Kim et al., 1998; Lin, 2001; So, 2004; Zhou et al., 2005). On the other hand, a low-context culture is one in which people are highly individualized, somewhat alienated, and fragmented, and there is relatively little involvement with others. Accordingly, communication or information in low-context cultures is vested in the explicit code, that is, in the words, sentences, and grammar (Hall, 1976). In other words, as low-context culture values facts and directness, low-context messages tend to be more logical, factual, and linear rather than intuitional or contemplative, and people prefer to rely on the literal and precise meaning of the words they use in communication. The U.S. is a typical representative of low-context culture.

Extant studies have focused on the relationships between culture values and advertising message strategies (e.g., Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992; Lin, 1993; Zandpour et al., 1994; Farrall and Whitelock, 2001; Frazer et al., 2002; Tai, 2004; Wei and Jiang, 2005; Jin, 2010). A survey of leading brand advertisers across 15 countries revealed that creative approaches among these countries differed significantly as a result of culture. Hofstede's cultural dimensions have been shown to influence the type of message strategy favored in different cultures. Informational message strategies are

more likely associated with low power distance and high uncertainty avoidance (Synodinos et al., 1989). Advertisements from individualistic cultures (such as U.S.) try to persuade consumers by directly presenting information, facts and evidence related to product merits and purchase reasons; in contrast, advertisements from collectivistic cultures (such as many Asian countries) are more likely to use emotional message strategy (Zandpour and Harich, 1996). Zandpour et al. (1994) showed that advertisements in Eastern cultures use more emotional than rational appeals. Moreover, Taylor et al. (1997) reported that South Korean consumers demonstrated more interest in transformational advertisements. Tai (2004) examined the relationship of cultural values and message strategies in service advertising between Hong Kong and U.S. and found that Hong Kong advertising used more transformational messages that are positively associated with collectivistic culture and high-context communication while the U.S. advertising used more informational messages that are positively associated with individualistic culture and low-context communication. Thus in accordance with the fact that China is classified as a collectivistic and high context communication culture, I formulate the following hypothesis:

H1: Chinese television commercials use more affective message strategies than cognitive strategies.

Influences of brand origin

The origin of the brand is also expected to influence the extent of standardization or adaptation of advertising strategy. What this means is that global or international brands that use a standardized advertising strategy are more likely to use different message

strategies, appeals and styles as compared to the advertising strategy of local brands, while international or global brands that use adapted ads are more likely to use messages that are more similar with those of local brands. Local brands are expected to understand local culture and consumer purchasing behaviors better than outsiders and this will lead local brands to use different advertising approaches compared to foreign and especially global brands that use standardized advertising. However, the evidence from previous studies in this regard is mixed. Farrall and Whitelock (2001) compared advertising for national and global brands in terms of creative message strategy used in UK television advertising and found more similarities than differences in the use of message strategy. Cheng (1994, 1997) respectively compared Chinese magazine and television advertising in terms of cultural values among Chinese local, joint-venture and imported products and found differences in the degree of prevalence of specific cultural values across product origins but no differences in the kind of cultural values used. Wang and Praet (2013b) studied Chinese automobile commercials and found that commercials for U.S. and Japanese car brands used value appeals similar to those used by Chinese local car brands whereas commercials for European car brands exhibited more differences from those for Chinese local brands. Since joint-ventures are essentially business operations based on foreign brands, I categorize ads into 2 groups in this study: ads for domestic brands and ads for foreign brands, and examine the possible differences in using message strategies. Thus, I propose the following research question:

RQ2: Is there any difference in the use of message strategies in Chinese television commercials for local brands and for foreign brands?

Goods versus services

The distinct characteristics of services (i.e. intangibility, simultaneity, heterogeneity and perishability) suggest that advertising approaches for services may be different from those for goods. As a result, a number of scholars have focused on the fundamental differences between goods and services and have argued that advertising for services requires a different approach (Abernethy and Butler, 1992; Albers-Miller and Stafford, 1999; Cutler and Javalgi, 1993; Gauci and Hill, 2003; Mortimer and Grierson, 2010; Stafford, 1996, 2005; Zinkhan et al., 1992). George and Berry (1981) note that due to the intangible nature of services advertising should provide tangible clues in order to make these services more concrete and easier for consumers to understand. Furthermore, George and Berry (1981) proposed six guidelines⁶ for services advertising, whereas Berry and Clark (1986) presented four specific communication strategies⁷ for services advertising, which attempt to tangibilize aspects of a service or link a service with tangible cues in such a way that the service itself appears less intangible (Bang and Moon, 2002). Similarly, it has been pointed out that the intangible nature of service necessitates consumers to seek information about the advertised service in order to reduce uncertainty and risk in the process of making purchasing decisions (Clow and Kurtz., 1997). Several researchers have reported that service ads contain more informational and factual cues than advertising for goods (Grove, Pickett, and Laband, 1995). Clow et al. (2002) compared the usage of message strategies in goods and service advertisements and found that service advertisements rely more on cognitive message strategies than goods advertising does.

⁶ George and Berry's (1981) six guidelines for advertising: advertising to employees, capitalizing on word-of-mouth, providing tangible clues, making the service understood, advertising continuity, and promising what is possible.

⁷ Berry and Clark's (1986) four specific communication strategies: visualization, association, physical representation, and documentation.

On the other hand, some researchers have reported opposite findings that question the value of using more informational messages in service advertisements (Stafford, 1996). For instance, Zinkhan et al. (1992) concluded that services advertisements use more transformational than informational appeals. Abernethy and Butler (1992) found that compared to goods ads, services ads in newspapers contained less rational information cues. Further, Cutler and Javalgi (1993) also reported that services ads actually use fewer informational cues compared to goods ads. In line with those results, Clow et al. (2005) examined the visual elements of service advertisements and found that emotional visual strategies appear to be the most effective in terms of creating a positive attitude towards the visual and the brand. Due to these inconsistent results of previous studies, I propose the following research question:

RQ3: What are the differences –if any– in the use of message strategies between Chinese television commercials for services and goods?

Product categories

A number of empirical studies have examined the influence of product category on advertising messages and these studies consistently find that advertising messages vary across different product categories (Cutler et al., 2000; Laskey et al., 1995; Lin, 1993; Zandpour et al., 1992). Consequently, this leads to our second hypothesis:

H2: The use of message strategies in Chinese television commercials varies across product categories.

The FCB grid model

As I described in Chapter 2, Vaughn (1980, 1986) introduced the FCB Grid, an advertising planning model that he and his colleagues had developed at advertising agency Foote, Cone & Belding. It classifies consumer decision-making for products and services according to two dimensions: high/low level and think/feel type of involvement. Accordingly, advertisers may develop associated advertising strategies to match four types of consumer decision-making: high-involvement/think, high-involvement/feel, low-involvement/think, and low-involvement/feel. The involvement dimension refers to the level of importance of the purchase decision, the amount of thinking that consumers spend when making a purchasing decision, and the potential loss or risk in case of making a wrong decision (Vaughn, 1986; Ratchford, 1987). This suggests that products characterized by different levels of involvement require different advertising strategies (Choi et al., 2012). The think dimension (which is cognition-based) is closely related to the utilitarian function of products while the feel dimension (which is emotion-based) is related to the value-expressive function of products. This suggests that advertising strategy is likely to be different for ‘think’ and ‘feel’ products (Choi et al., 2012).

Thus it is logical to assume that, when consumers buy a product in the think category their purchase decision motive would be cognition-based, whereas the motive would be emotion-based in case of buying a product in the feel category.

Weinberger and Spotts (1989) report that ads for high-involvement products contain more information than ads for low-involvement products, and ads for rational products carry more information than ads for emotional products. Choi et al. (2006) expanded the product classification used by Weinberger and Spotts (1989) and found the same tendencies. Thus, it would appear that consumers require more cognitive information

for high-involvement/think products. I thus formulate the following hypotheses:

H3a: Cognitive message strategies are more frequently used in Chinese television advertising for high-involvement products than in advertising for low-involvement products.

H3b: Affective message strategies are more frequently used in Chinese television advertising for low-involvement products than in advertising for high-involvement products.

H4a: Cognitive message strategies are more frequently used in Chinese television advertising for think products than in advertising for feel products.

H4b: Affective message strategies are more frequently used in Chinese television advertising for feel products than in advertising for think products.

H5a: Chinese television advertising for high-involvement/think products uses more cognitive message strategies than advertising for low-involvement/feel products.

H5b: Chinese television advertising for high-involvement/think products uses less affective message strategies than advertising for low-involvement/feel products.

Products in the low-involvement/think quadrant of the FCB grid are associated with routinized consumer behavior, in which learning occurs most often after exploratory trial buying. The hierarchy of effects sequence for this type of products is therefore ‘do-think-feel.’ Further, self-satisfaction plays an important role in consumers’ purchasing decision-making process for products in the low-involvement/feel quadrant. Purchase experience is so necessary a part of the process that “do” is placed in the first

stage as do-feel-learn (Vaughn, 1986; Ratchford, 1987). I associate conative strategies in my typology with the habitual and satisfaction consumer behavior and propose the following hypothesis:

H6: Conative message strategies are more frequently used in Chinese television advertising for low-involvement products than in that for high-involvement product.

4.4.2 Method - Coding procedures

Using the modified message strategy typology as my coding framework, I conducted a content analysis of Chinese television commercials (n=1439). Three Chinese native speakers fluent in English coded the sample. The whole training process was conducted bilingually in both English and Chinese in order to minimize the potential misunderstanding of value variables and their operationalizations. Coders were trained with detailed bilingual instructions containing coding procedures, detailed definitions and explanations of all message strategies integrated in this study. Furthermore, since asking coders to code only one main message strategy prevents researchers from capturing multiple strategies that may be used in an ad, I allowed coders to code all message strategies used in each commercial. As part of the training, coders jointly coded 20 Chinese commercials that were not part of the sample. Disagreements and misunderstandings were resolved through discussion and retraining. To establish the inter-coder reliability, which was determined as the percentage of agreement among the three coders, each of them then independently coded 70 commercials randomly selected from the sample. The actual proportion of agreement for each coding variable in this study was between 0.80 and 1.00. Based on the proportional reduction in loss (PRL)

approach suggested by Rust and Cooil (1994), and given the number of coders (3) and the number of categories (2), the PRL reliability measures for all coding variables were over 0.93. Therefore, coding reliability was deemed satisfactory. Each coder then coded a different part of the sample.

4.4.3 Empirical results

RQ1 is answered by the results shown in Table 4.2. Regarding main message strategies, 82.3% of Chinese television commercials use affective message strategy and 54.1% of commercials use cognitive strategy, while 12% of commercials use conative strategy. Furthermore, 37.9% of commercials employ a combination of cognitive and affective strategies while only 4% of commercials use all three types of message strategies. In addition, 13.2% of commercials employ only cognitive strategy and 40.8% of commercials employ only affective strategy while 1.2% of commercials use only conative strategy. In regard to specific message strategies, the 3 most frequently used strategies are use occasion/resonance (48.4%), preemptive (34.2%), and brand image (23.9%). The least frequently used strategies are both types of generic, emotional, USP, brand users, and sales promotional, each less than 5%. Through the sample of 1439 commercials, only 3 commercials (0.2%) could not be classified based on our typology, which by and large validates the applicability of the modified typology to Chinese television advertising.

The above results indicate that individual message strategy frequency distributions vary in Chinese commercials. Conative strategies in particular are seldom used independently, i.e., they are used to supplement other strategies, and are mostly used at the end of commercials. Cognitive and affective strategies are the dominant types of strategies in Chinese television advertising. Furthermore, the observed frequency of

affective message strategy is significantly higher than that of cognitive strategy, both in combination with other strategies (82.3% versus 54.1%; $t= 82.420$, $p<0.001$, $df=1$), and as standalone strategies (40.8% versus 13.2%; $X^2=202.8$, $p<0.001$, $df=1$). Thus, H1 is supported.

Table 4.2 Frequencies of message strategies

Strategy	Frequency (n=1439)	%^a
Cognitive	779	54.1
Generic	3	0.2
Hyperbole	103	7.2
Factual description	192	13.3
Preemptive	492	34.2
Comparative	113	7.9
USP	25	1.7
Affective	1185	82.3
Generic	1	0.1
Emotional	12	0.8
Brand users	49	3.4
Brand image	344	23.9
Use occasion/ resonance	697	48.4
Corporate image	116	8.1
Conative	172	12.0
Action-inducing	143	9.9
Sales promotional	50	3.5
Cognitive & Affective	545	37.9
Cognitive & Conative	102	7.1
Affective & Conative	111	7.7
Cognitive & Affective & Conative	58	4.0
Only Cognitive	190	13.2
Only Affective	587	40.8
Only Conative	17	1.2
None strategy	3	0.2

^a: The sum is over 100% due to the fact that sometimes multiple message strategies are in the same commercial.

In order to examine the influence of brand origin on the use of message strategies (RQ2), I categorized the sample into 2 groups: commercials for local brands (n=1140)

and those for foreign brands (n=299). Results shown in Table 4.3 indicate that commercials for foreign brands employ significantly more cognitive message strategies than those for local brands (61.5% versus 52.2%, $X^2=8.642$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) whereas no significant differences are found in the use of affective or conative strategy. Regarding sub-strategies, preemptive and comparative strategies are significantly more often used in commercials for foreign brands whereas corporate image strategy is significantly more often used in commercials for local brands.

In order to answer RQ3, I classified the sample into 2 groups based on product tangibility: commercials for goods (n=1202) and commercials for services (n=228). Results (Table 4.3) indicate that commercials for goods use significantly more cognitive strategy than those for services (58.6% versus 31.1%, $X^2=58.082$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$). The same tendency can be observed in all the sub-strategies of this category, of which hyperbole, preemptive and comparative strategies are significantly more often used in goods commercials. While affective strategy on the whole is used at similar frequencies for goods and services (82.7% versus 79.8%), differences can be observed at the sub-strategy level: Brand image and corporate image strategies are significantly more often used in service ads whereas use occasion/resonance strategy is significantly more often used in goods ads. On the other hand, conative strategy is significantly more often used in commercials for services than in those for goods (16.7% versus 11.1%, $X^2=5.516$, $p<0.05$, $df=1$), and a similar tendency can be observed for action-inducing (15.4% versus 9.0%, $X^2=8.629$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) and sales promotion (7.5% versus 2.7%, $X^2=12.604$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) sub-strategies, where ads for services use these strategies significantly more often than ads for goods do.

Table 4.3 Differences of using message strategies in brand origin and product tangibility

Strategy	Local brand (n=1132) %	Foreign brand (n=298) %	X ² (df=1)	Goods (n=1202) %	Service (n=228) %	X ² (df=1)
Cognitive	52.2	61.5	8.642**	58.6	31.1	58.082**
Generic	0.3	0.0	N/A	0.2	0.0	N/A
Hyperbole	7.5	6.0	0.761	8.0	3.1	6.931**
Factual description	12.9	15.1	1.165	13.6	11.4	0.778
Preemptive	32.5	40.8	7.121**	37.9	16.2	39.714**
Comparative	6.0	15.1	27.551**	9.0	1.8	13.880**
USP	1.8	1.3	0.361	1.8	1.3	N/A
Affective	82.1	83.3	0.249	82.7	79.8	1.081
Generic	0.0	0.3	N/A	0.1	0.0	N/A
Emotional	0.6	1.7	N/A	1.0	0.0	N/A
Brand users	3.3	3.7	0.194	3.1	4.4	1.031
Brand image	24.2	22.7	0.190	22.3	31.6	9.112**
Use occasion/ resonance	47.6	51.5	-1.426	53.4	23.2	69.810**
Corporate image	8.9	5.0	5.692*	5.7	20.6	57.973**
Conative	11.3	14.4	2.052	11.1	16.7	5.516*
Action-inducing	9.5	11.7	1.274	9.0	15.4	8.629**
Sales promotional	3.1	5.0	2.636	2.7	7.5	12.604**

*: p<0.05; **: p<0.01.

To examine the usage of message strategies across product categories (H2), the sample was classified into a total of 16 categories according to their product industries. Nine commercials could not be classified into any category and were excluded from analysis. Table 4.4 exhibits the distributions of message strategies used in each product category. Results show that all 3 types of message strategies are used in different frequencies across 16 product categories.⁸ Results of X² tests in SPSS indicate that the use of message strategies –cognitive (Cramer's V=0.375, p<0.000), affective (Cramer's

⁸ Significant differences are difficult to be endorsed by Pearson's Chi-Square Tests due to small sample size of several product categories like 'Media,' 'Event,' which result in that several cells have expected count less than 5 in Chi-Square Tests. Nevertheless, significant differences in the use of message strategies across product categories are confirmed after removing these small size product categories.

V=0.373, $p<0.000$), and conative (Cramer's V=0.276, $p<0.000$)– significantly differs by product category. Cognitive message strategy is most frequently used in ads for 'Personal care,' 'Detergents,' and 'Home durable appliances;' Affective message strategy is most frequently used in ads for 'Fashion,' 'Food and drinks,' and 'Alcohol;' Conative strategy is most frequently used in ads for 'Retailing,' 'Media,' and 'Services.' Thus H2 is supported.

Table 4.4 Differences of message strategies in product category

product category (n)	Cognitive (%)	Affective (%)	Conative (%)
Alcohol (120)	38.3	95.8	5.0
Automobiles and accessories (206)	52.9	80.1	11.2
Detergents (30)	80.0	80.0	10.0
Events (18)	66.7	44.4	0.0
Fashion (86)	37.2	98.8	3.5
Financial and insurances (118)	24.6	86.4	7.6
Food and drinks (233)	57.1	98.7	9.0
Health care products (91)	56.0	79.1	27.5
Home durable appliances (182)	74.2	55.5	11.5
Housing and decorating (72)	33.3	88.9	5.6
Institutional (37)	27.0	86.5	10.8
IT, telecom and electronics (82)	73.2	74.4	11.0
Media (5)	20.0	60.0	40.0
Personal care (100)	90.0	77.0	19.0
Retailing (23)	52.2	65.2	56.5
Services (27)	25.9	81.5	37.0
Cramer's V	0.375**	0.373**	0.276**

** $p<0.01$.

Furthermore, I categorized commercials based on the two dimensions of high/low involvement level and think/feel involvement type according to the FCB grid model. As a result, 1331 commercials are allocated to the four quadrants of the FCB grid based on previous research (Vaughn, 1986; Ratchford, 1987; Weinberger and Spotts, 1989; Choi et al., 2006). Details of the classification are shown in the footnotes of Table 4.6. I first examine the general influence of each dimension on the usage of message strategies.

Results (Table 4.5) indicate that cognitive strategy is used in highly similar frequencies in commercials for high-involvement and low-involvement products (55.2% vs. 56.2%), indicating that H3a is not supported. However, results of cognitive sub-strategies show that hyperbole ($X^2=13.720$, $p<0.001$, $df=1$) and factual description ($X^2=11.202$, $p<0.001$, $df=1$) strategies are used significantly more in ads for high-involvement products than in ads for low-involvement products while USP strategy ($X^2=11.395$, $p<0.001$, $df=1$) is significantly more used in ads for low-involvement products. Even though 2 cognitive sub-strategies support H3a, the frequency of cognitive strategy in general does not provide any support to H3a. On the other hand, affective strategy is significantly more often used in ads for low-involvement products than in those for high-involvement products ($X^2=20.448$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$). Regarding affective sub-strategies, only use occasion/resonance strategy ($X^2=45.493$, $p<0.001$, $df=1$) is in line with this tendency and is used significantly more frequently in ads for low-involvement products. Nevertheless, the usages of affective strategy in ads for high and low-involvement products support H3b. Consequently, H3a is rejected whereas H3b is supported.

With regard to the think/feel dimension (Table 4.5), cognitive strategy is significantly more frequently used in ads for think products than in ads for feel products ($X^2=47.811$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$). In line with this tendency, preemptive ($X^2=70.443$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) and USP ($X^2=5.513$, $p<0.05$, $df=1$) sub-strategies are used significantly more often in ads for think products. Thus H4a is supported. On the other hand, affective strategy is significantly more used in ads for feel products than in those for think products ($X^2=57.501$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$). Of all the affective sub-strategies, only use occasion/resonance ($X^2=56.216$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) is used significantly more often in ads for feel products while the other affective sub-strategies are used at similar frequencies

in ads for think and feel products. Thus H4b is supported. Consequently, H4 is fully supported.

With regard to the usage of conative strategy, results (Table 4.5) show that this strategy is used significantly more often in ads for low-involvement products than in those for high-involvement products ($X^2=12.701$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$). Among conative sub-strategies, Action-inducing strategy reveals the same tendency and differences are significant ($X^2=15.503$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$). These results support H6. In addition, results also indicate that conative strategy is significantly more often used in ads for think products than in those for feel products ($X^2=6.926$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$).

Table 4.5 Difference of message strategies in the FCB grid (1)

Strategy	High involvement (n=802) %	Low involvement (n=520) %	X^2 (df=1)	Think (n=872) %	Feel (n=450) %	X^2 (df=1)
Cognitive	55.2	56.2	0.107	62.4	42.4	47.811**
Generic	0.1	0.4	N/A	0.2	0.2	N/A
Hyperbole	9.5	4.0	13.720**	6.9	8.2	0.786
Factual description	15.6	9.2	11.202**	12.5	14.2	0.774
Preemptive	35.4	36.5	0.174	43.8	20.4	70.443**
Comparative	7.9	9.2	0.776	9.3	6.7	2.654
USP	0.9	3.5	11.395**	2.5	0.7	5.513*
Affective	79.1	88.7	20.448**	77.2	93.8	57.501**
Generic	0.0	0.2	N/A	0.0	0.2	N/A
Emotional	1.2	0.4	N/A	0.7	1.3	N/A
Brand users	3.4	2.5	0.807	3.0	3.1	0.017
Brand image	27.7	16.5	21.917**	24.0	22.0	0.643
Use occasion/ resonance	43.5	62.5	45.493**	43.6	65.3	56.216**
Corporate image	6.1	8.7	3.091	7.5	6.4	0.458
Conative	8.2	14.4	12.701**	12.3	7.6	6.926**
Action-inducing	6.1	12.3	15.503**	9.5	6.7	3.088
Sales promotional	3.1	2.3	0.760	3.6	1.3	5.386*

*: $p<0.05$; **: $p<0.01$.

To more specifically examine the influence of the FCB grid on the usage of message strategies, I present the usage of message strategies in each quadrant and examine the differences across the four quadrants by means of conducting 2*4 Chi-Square Tests⁹ (Table 4.6). Results show that usage frequencies for all three types of message strategies as well as for most of their respective subcategories are significantly different across ads for the four types of products. To further investigate the influence of product involvement level on the use of cognitive message strategy (H3a), I also compared the frequencies of cognitive message strategy in ads for high-involvement/think products and in those for low-involvement/think products and results show that there is not a significant difference (63.6% versus 61.0%). Thus this additional analysis also confirms the lack of support for H3a.

In regard to H5, results indicate that ads in quadrant I use cognitive message strategy most frequently but affective strategy least frequently while ads in quadrant IV use affective strategy most frequently but cognitive strategy least frequently. Chi-Square Tests between quadrants I (H/T) and IV (L/F) reveal significant differences in the usage frequencies of cognitive and affective strategies. Thus ads for high-involvement/think products (quadrant I) use (H5a) significantly more cognitive strategy ($X^2=22.796$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) and (H5b) significantly less affective strategy ($X^2=34.390$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) than those for low-involvement/feel products (quadrant IV). Consequently, H5 is supported.

⁹ Due to the nominal scale nature of the data in this chapter, t-tests or ANOVA are not appropriate and therefore Chi-Square Tests are conducted through this chapter.

Table 4.6 Difference of message strategies in the FCB grid (2)

Strategy	H/T (n=467) %	H/F (n=335) %	L/T (n=405) %	L/F (n=115) %	X² (df=3)	X² H/T vs. L/F (df=1)
Cognitive	63.6	43.6	61.0	39.1	49.096**	22.796**
Generic	0.0	0.3	0.5	0.0	N/A	N/A
Hyperbole	9.9	9.0	3.5	6.1	14.861**	1.579
Factual description	15.6	15.5	8.9	10.4	11.393*	1.998
Preemptive	45.8	20.9	41.5	19.1	72.338**	27.276**
Comparative	9.6	5.4	8.9	10.4	5.663	0.067
USP	0.9	0.9	4.4	0.0	20.932**	N/A
Affective	69.0	93.1	86.7	95.7	105.747**	34.390**
Generic	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	N/A	N/A
Emotional	0.9	1.8	0.5	0.0	N/A	N/A
Brand users	2.8	4.2	3.2	0.0	5.247	N/A
Brand image	27.4	28.1	20.0	4.3	34.242**	27.836**
Use occasion/ resonance	34.0	56.7	54.6	90.4	131.713**	118.457**
Corporate image	5.1	7.5	10.1	3.5	10.674*	0.556
Conative	10.3	5.4	14.6	13.9	17.667**	1.246
Action-inducing	6.9	5.1	12.6	11.3	16.481**	2.564
Sales promotional	4.9	0.6	2.0	3.5	14.935**	0.437

H/T (High-involvement/Think products): home appliance, battery razors, buses, car insurance, computers, electric-bicycles, electronics, family cars, life insurance, powder milk, securities, tires, trucks;

H/F (High-involvement/Feel products): Chinese alcohol, cosmetics, expensive watch, face soap, fashion clothes, floor, furniture, house decoration, house maintenance, jewelry, lighting, luxury cars, paint, sports cars, SUV cars, tile, wallpaper, wig, wine for party;

L/T (Low-involvement/Think products): baby napkins, banks, battery, body soap, communication service, credit cards, detergent, food, insect repellent, milk, motor oil, oil, OTC drug, paper towels, razors, sanitary napkins, shampoo, suntan lotion, tea, toothpaste;

L/F (Low-involvement/Feel products): beer, candy, fast food, soft drinks.

*: $p < 0.05$; **: $p < 0.01$.

4.4.4 Discussion, implications, limitations and future research

The modified typology and its implications

As Laskey et al. (1989) stated, there is no one best approach to the classification of message strategies. Frazer (1983) also argues that message strategy alternatives are no doubt evolving and future research should yield new strategic options adapted to changing market conditions. In this chapter I conducted a review of extant typologies on

message strategy and suggested a modified classification scheme by incorporating the state-of-the-art typologies of message strategy. Moreover, while Laskey et al. (1989) stated that a good typology should be exclusive, exhaustive and operational, I have provided detailed definition as well as relevant examples for each strategy alternative. Furthermore, coding results additionally substantiate the operationalization and exhaustiveness of the modified typology. However, I do not agree with the need for exclusiveness of a typology that Laskey et al. (1989) advocate. While Laskey and colleagues instructed coders to select only one strategy –either informational or transformational– I believe that exclusiveness does not allow researchers to precisely capture the combination of strategies that advertisers have at their disposal and which they may in fact use. This also reflects the fact that information is holistically perceived and processed by the left and right hemispheres of the human brain. This proposition is further supported by the results of the current study that over one third of the sample commercials employ both cognitive and affective strategies. Consumer purchase decisions are often made on the basis of both rational and emotional motives, and attention must be given to both elements in developing effective advertising (Belch and Belch, 2009). Therefore, in many situations the decision facing creative specialists is not whether to choose cognitive or affective message strategies but rather to determine how to combine the two approaches effectively.

This scheme is mainly to be used as an analytical framework in academic research, though it will also be useful for advertising practitioners and advertising educators and researchers for the same reasons that the typologies on which it is based have been useful. For management this modified typology allows a better understanding and discussion of advertising strategy alternatives at a conceptual level. An understanding of

the typology and specific message strategy alternatives will allow marketers and advertisers to communicate with their advertising agencies more smoothly and efficiently and will allow them to critically examine draft proposals in light of the theoretical constructs on which the framework is based. Furthermore, the typology will assist marketing and advertising managers in recognizing and analyzing the underlying communication strategies and purposes of their competitors. This will give them the tools to make deeper strategic analyses as opposed to analyses based on more superficial tactical (i.e., executional) similarities and differences.

Differences between ads for local and foreign brands

Based on the modified message strategy typology, this chapter investigates general patterns of message strategies used in Chinese television advertising. Results indicate that Chinese television advertising uses affective message strategies more frequently than cognitive strategies. This finding is consistent with previous research that advertisers in high context cultures tend to use more affective, emotional or transformational advertising messages (Zandpour and Harich, 1996; Taylor et al., 1997; Tai, 2004). In regard to brand origin, ads for foreign brands employ more cognitive strategies than those for local brands. One possible explanation may be that most of the foreign brands are from Western countries and thus advertising and brand managers for those brands are more used to the use of the low context communication typical for individualistic cultures, in which rational cognition is favored. For instance, the fact that ‘preemptive’ and ‘comparative’ strategies are more frequently used in ads for foreign brands illustrates this tendency because both strategies focus on the verifiable nature of product attributes or benefits-in-use. In addition, local brand advertisers compare more frequently with other unnamed brands of the industry or focus on statements like “we

are the leader or the top within the product category” even though consumers may or may not believe their statements. On the other hand, foreign brand advertisers compare more to previous versions of the same brand and focus on the new improvement on technology, quality or performance. This is a logical thing to do for these foreign brands, as they usually possess competitive advantages in the form of superior technological and R&D capabilities, in addition to superior human resources and management skill. Furthermore, those ads for foreign brands may contain a proportion of globally standardized ads or ads that were originally designed for the home markets of these brands, which in many cases originate from Western individualistic low context cultures where effective, persuasive communication is generally believed to be better served by the use of cognitive message strategies. Nevertheless, it is imprudent to make any judgment without deeper examination of these ads in particular. Future research should conduct comparative analysis of ads for those foreign or global brands across multiple countries and investigate the nature and patterns of message strategies. Only then can we draw more definitive conclusions about what factors influence the design of advertising for global and foreign brands and to what extent these brands use a standardized message strategy across markets.

Differences between ads for goods and services

In regard to the differences in ads for goods and services, researchers have argued that advertisers should communicate tangible and concrete benefits in services advertising to their potential customers because of the intangible nature of services (George and Berry, 1981; Berry and Clark, 1986; Abernethy and Butler, 1992). In fact several empirical studies have shown support for this point of view (Grove et al., 1995; Clow et al., 2002). However, findings of the current study show that this characteristic

of services advertising is not applicable to services advertising in China. The study I reported on in this chapter finds that ads for goods contain more cognitive message strategies, which in fact is consistent with findings reported by Zinkhan et al. (1992) and Cutler and Javalgi (1993). It is important to note that theoretically informational elements and practical utilitarian benefits may help consumers understand and familiarize themselves more easily with the advertised services. However, in practice advertisers probably are often faced with difficulties of working out effective utilitarian benefits of services precisely due to this very nature of services (Zinkhan et al., 1992). Furthermore, using more informational utilitarian appeals and cognitive messages to reduce consumers' purchase uncertainty is based on the assumption that advertising viewers would take time to view and process these messages through the elaboration likelihood model of information processing (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Clow et al. (2002) have argued that such assumptions may be based more on desire than reality since consumers are exposed to hundreds of advertisements everyday and thus are not likely to pause and cognitively process these messages. This may be true in particular for services advertising because of their abstract, intangible nature. Thus, rather than using cognitive messages, advertisers could perhaps more effectively use affective messages to build a positive brand or corporate image. Previous research (e.g., Clow et al., 2005; Zinkhan et al., 1992) has also argued that transformational or affective strategy appeared to be the most effective in creating a positive attitude towards the advertised brand.

Conative strategies are more frequently used in ads for services than in those for goods. Three factors may account for this finding. One factor is the difference in ease of accessibility to goods and services. Usually it is easier for consumers to access goods

and to compare quality, performance, or components of different brands in terms of one particular kind of good in supermarkets or department stores. However, consumers usually cannot easily evaluate the quality or performance of a service until they have purchased or consumed it. The reason for this is the simultaneity of production and consumption and the heterogeneity that characterizes services. Thus in addition to focusing on affective message strategies to build positive brand image, providing sales promotional messages in services advertising would more effectively increase the possibility that consumers directly access the particular brand of service. Another explanation is related to the intangibility of services. Since services are often abstract and intangible, advertisers may face difficulties when they try to explain specific, concrete utilitarian benefits or attributes of their services (Abernethy and Butler, 1992) particularly in television commercials, which tend to be very short. Therefore, it is logical for services advertisers to incorporate more redirected information such as telephone numbers, websites, and keyword search, where consumers can find more detailed information, and encourage consumers to access these types of information actively (Abernethy and Butler, 1992). A final factor relates to the nature of specific service product categories. Most of the ads for retailers aim at short-term sales and contain more sales promotions and action-inducing messages.

Influence of the FCB grid model on message strategies

Findings show that the two dimensions of the FCB grid model as well as product category influence the usage of message strategy. In regard to cognitive strategies, ads for think products use significantly more cognitive strategies than those for feel products while involvement level is not likely to affect the usage of cognitive message strategies in Chinese television commercials. As far as affective strategies are concerned,

though both involvement level and think versus feel involvement type in general significantly influence the use of this type of message strategy, specifically involvement level has no effect within ads for feel products. In other words, advertising creatives in China appear to either consciously or unconsciously decide on the type of message strategies from the perspective of type of involvement rather than in terms of level of involvement. This may be highly influenced by Chinese collectivism and high context communication culture. Chinese consumers are more familiar with and accommodate more readily to emotional or transformational messages and appeals rather than rational (cognitive) arguments when making purchase decisions even for high-involvement products, which is supported by results that affective strategies are used more frequently than cognitive strategies in ads for any category of the FCB grid.

On the other hand, advertisers and researchers need to be aware of the fact that findings of the current study are not always consistent with the prescriptions of the FCB grid model for designing advertising strategies. This is potentially due to the fact that the FCB grid model was developed in the U.S. and thus follows communication patterns appropriate for Western cultures. Researchers have examined the influence of culture on advertising messages and found that cognitive messages and appeals are more effective for consumers in individualistic and low context communication cultures whereas affective messages are more effective for consumers in collectivistic and high context communication cultures. Thus, it may be somewhat problematic to analyze Chinese advertising message strategies on basis of the FCB grid model as well as its foundation – the hierarchy of effects model. At least it is necessary to comprehensively consider integrated effects of a number of determinants influencing the selection of advertising message strategies and the sequences of hierarchy of effects in Chinese culture. For

instance, Miracle et al. (1992) have suggested that the hierarchy of advertising effects has a different order in Japan (i.e., feel-do-learn), which has no equivalent in the FCB grid from the United States. Miracle suggests that the sequence in Japan seems to start with affective but not with cognitive processing of advertisements. Both Chinese and Japanese cultures are collectivistic and feature high context communication, so the hierarchy sequence of Chinese consumers may be similar to that of Japanese. On the other hand, as a result of the unique economic and social environment as well as the different stage of advertising industry development in China, other hierarchy sequences may also exist. Consequently advertisers and agencies in China should be prudent when designing advertising message strategies based on the Western FCB grid and hierarchy of effects models. Consumer-based research is needed to examine the nature of the hierarchy of effects in China and other Asian cultures and to verify whether the Western models are valid.

Implications, limitations and future research

Findings in this chapter have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this chapter is an exploratory study on message strategies in Chinese television commercials, expanding previous research and filling the research gap on Chinese advertising message strategies. It uncovers general patterns of using message strategies in Chinese television commercials and analyzes strategies across brand origins, involvement level, and involvement type independently based on different categorization schemes. In addition, this chapter also sheds light on the relationships between product categories and message strategies. Findings suggest that a specific message strategy may be more appropriate for a certain product category. For instance, cognitive strategies for personal care products (excluding cosmetics), affective

strategies for fashion, food and drinks, and alcohol products, conative strategies for retailing and services. However, the nominal nature of the data precludes me from further investigating the combined influences (i.e., interaction effects) of brand origin, involvement level, and involvement type on the usages of message strategies. Future research should examine and illuminate interaction effects comprehensively among multiple determinants.

For practical implications, findings in this chapter provide fundamental knowledge and a guide to international marketers who are eager to communicate with Chinese consumers. Keeping in mind that message strategies vary across product categories, those marketers and advertisers should be careful with their choices of strategies, in particular with the balance of both cognitive and affective strategies in light of the finding that one third of Chinese television commercials contain both types of message strategies. Furthermore, Western advertising practitioners who are trying to appeal to Chinese customers may find that what appears to be intuitive in Western culture may not be true in Chinese culture. For example, a cognitive informational approach would be considered most appropriate for pharmaceutical products in Western advertising, which in fact, is not the case in Chinese advertising. Nevertheless, whether commercials in this sample are effective to Chinese consumers is still unknown. As a result, practical suggestions on basis of this study are somewhat problematic as they are based on an examination of current practices and not necessarily on what works best. Future research should test on consumers the effectiveness of ads for different types of product categories that feature a variety of message strategy combinations. Alternatively, future studies could compare in a content analysis the differences in message strategies for a sample of ads that have been consumer-tested or market-tested for effectiveness or

ineffectiveness.

As stated above, another limitation may lie in the effectiveness of the FCB grid model in evaluating advertising message strategies and its validity for Chinese advertising. Thus future research should further investigate its effectiveness in and applicability to Chinese advertising through studies on other media and cross-cultural studies between Eastern and Western cultures.

Chapter 5 Information Content¹⁰

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has examined the nature of advertising message strategy and clarified that advertisers have three basic types of message strategy at their disposal in order to communicate with target consumers. Chapter 4 has revealed that cognitive and affective message strategies are dominantly used whereas conative strategy often performs a supplemental role to the other two message strategies. This chapter concentrates on the cognitive nature of advertising content by exploring advertising informativeness.

Informativeness is defined as the extent to which advertisements focus on consumers' practical, functional or utilitarian needs for the product (Resnik and Stern, 1977; Mueller, 1991). Informational advertising communicates rational, logical facts about the product or brand (Puto and Wells, 1984; Laskey et al., 1989; Crask and Laskey, 1990; Chan and Chan, 2005). Even though informative advertising has been criticized to be dull and unattractive, proponents of informative advertising argue that informational or rational advertising may help reduce purchasing uncertainties (Abernethy and Franke, 1996; Golden and Johnson, 1983). Resnik and Stern (1977) developed a scheme of 14 information cues, which has become the de facto standard for examining advertising information content and/or informativeness. Many follow-up studies have applied this framework (e.g., Dowling, 1980; Harmon et al., 1983; Tom et al., 1984; Madden et al.,

¹⁰ Chapter 5 is based on the following publications: Wang, Liyong and Praet, Carolus L. C. (2013a), "Informativeness of Chinese Television Advertising: A Content Analysis," Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Research in Advertising (ICORIA), s.l., Zagreb, Croatia. Wang, Liyong and Praet, Carolus L. C. (2015), "How Informative Are Chinese Television Commercials?" in: I. B. Banks, P. De Pelsmacker, S. Okazaki, (Eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research* (Vol. V), Springer, Berlin, Germany, 115-128.

1986; Hong et al., 1987; Rice and Lou, 1988; Mueller, 1991, Biswas et al., 1992; Keown et al., 1992; Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992; Graham et al., 1993; Chan, 1995; Abernety and Franke, 1996; Taylor et al., 1997; Tai and Chan, 2001; Sar and Doyle, 2003; Chan and Chan, 2005; Choi et al., 2006; Akan, 2007).

Since the start of the 21st century, the geographic focus of studies on advertising informativeness has been increasingly shifting from industrialized nations to emerging markets. The emerging market that has received the most attention from advertising researchers is China. While studies on advertising in China have contributed to our knowledge on Chinese advertising, the advertising characteristics reported in these studies have been inconsistent. The inconsistencies in results are probably due to a) sampling issues and b) the fast-paced growth of China's economy and increasing sophistication of consumers and advertising know-how. This suggests that Chinese advertising is a dynamic target that requires constant monitoring by researchers. This chapter seeks to update our knowledge on the nature of informativeness in Chinese television advertising. I also expand the Resnik and Stern coding scheme to capture more aspects of information content.

5.2 Literature, Hypotheses and Research Questions

5.2.1 Advertising informativeness

In the pioneering study on advertising informativeness Resnik and Stern (1977) defined that a commercial could be evaluated as informative if it contains at least one of 14 objective information cues. They concluded that by this criterion half of U.S. commercials were informative. In a follow-up study of magazine advertisements Stern, Krugman, and Resnik (1981) found that 86% of U.S. magazine advertisements were

informative, leading them to conclude that magazine advertising is more informative than television advertising.

Many cross-national and single-country studies have reported the level of informativeness and the patterns of using information cues in advertisements. In a study of magazine advertisements 75% of U.S. and 85% of Japanese ads were judged informative and the most frequently used information cues in both countries were components, availability, performance, special offers, and price (Madden et al., 1986). Biswas et al. (1992) reported that 97.8% of U.S. and 84.6% of French magazine advertisements were informative. In a study across four countries Keown et al. (1992) found that 92% of Chinese and 100% of U.S., Japanese and South Korean television commercials were informative and that availability is one of the top three used information cues across the four countries. So (2004) investigated information content in women' magazine advertisements in Hong Kong and Australia and reported that 100% of Hong Kong magazine ads and 99.3% of Australian ads were informative. Akan (2007) found that 92.0% of magazine ads in Turkey were informative and that the top three cues were availability, components and performance.

Another important criterion for evaluating the level of advertising informativeness is the average number of cues per ad, which has been reported in a variety of studies of U.S. magazine ads: 1.7 information cues (Stern, Krugman, and Resnik, 1981), 1.4 cues (Madden et al., 1986), and 3.59 cues (Biswas et al., 1992). For U.S. television commercials the average number of information cues ranges from 1.95 cues (Choi et al., 2006) to 2.68 cues (Keown et al., 1992). The average number of cues for Japanese advertising has been reported as 1.8 cues for magazine ads (Madden et al., 1986) and 2.14 cues for television ads (Keown et al., 1992). Moreover, Hong Kong magazine ads

contain an average of 3.30 cues whereas Australian magazine ads include an average of 3.65 cues (So, 2004).

Several empirical studies have investigated the informativeness of Chinese advertising. Rice and Lou (1988) reported that 100% of Chinese magazine ads were informative with an average of 2.26 cues per ad and that the top five cues were availability, performance, quality, price, and independent research. Keown et al. (1992) reported that 100% of Chinese magazine advertising was informative, whereas 92% of Chinese TV commercials were informative and contained an average of 1.9 cues per commercial. Chan (1995) reported that 58.3% of Chinese commercials were informative with an average of 1.5 cues per informative commercial. In a follow-up study, Chan and Chan (2005) reported that 55.2% of Chinese commercials were informative with an average of 1.3 cues per informative commercial. In both studies, performance, components, and quality constituted the top three information cues (Chan 1995; Chan and Chan 2005).

Based on the extant research, I first formulate the following two general research questions:

RQ1: To what extent are Chinese television commercials informative?

RQ2: What are the most frequently used information cues in Chinese television commercials?

Chan and Chan (2005), through a comparison with results reported in Chan (1995), suggest that the level of informativeness of Chinese television advertising is declining and attribute this decline to the development of the Chinese advertising industry, the

increasing sophistication of Chinese consumers, and the tightening of advertising regulation. They argue that the increasing affluence and sophistication of consumers in particular is responsible for advertising content's change from a product-centered theme (emphasizing product characteristics) to an audience-centered theme (emphasizing personalization and lifestyle). Leiss et al. (1997) studied the development of advertising and the advertising industry in the U.S. and divided advertising development into four stages: product information, product image, personalization, and lifestyle. Some researchers have argued that after several decades of rapid development since its resumption from the late of 1970s, Chinese advertising has obviously stepped beyond the product information phase and that it has moved to the product image phase of Leiss et al.'s model (Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Chan and Chan, 2005). Based on the previous findings and predictions, I formulate the following hypothesis:

H1: The level of informativeness of Chinese television commercials in 2010 is lower than the level reported by Chan and Chan (2005).

5.2.2 Factors affecting advertising informativeness

Previous studies report variability in levels of informativeness of advertising across countries, within countries over time, and across media. Many prior studies have identified product category as an important explanatory factor for explaining differences in levels of informativeness (e.g. Resnik and Stern, 1977; Stern, Krugman, and Resnik, 1981; Weinberger and Spotts, 1989; Abernethy and Franke, 1996; Choi et al., 2006; Akan, 2007). Alternative explanations identified are government control (e.g. Dowling, 1980; Zandpour et al., 1994; Akan, 2007), advertising medium (e.g. Stern, Krugman,

and Resnik, 1981; Keown et al., 1992; Abernethy and Franke, 1996; Choi et al., 2006), national culture (e.g. Biswas et al., 1992; Keown et al., 1992; Zandpour et al., 1994; Taylor et al., 1997), advertiser execution strategy (e.g. Mueller, 1991), level of development of the advertising industry in a country (e.g., Zandpour et al., 1994; Chan and Chan, 2005), product life cycle (e.g. Stern and Resnik, 1991), differences between market and transition economies (Herpen et al., 2000), and research design and method effects (Abernethy and Franke, 1996). In this study I focus on the relationship between product category and advertising informativeness as well as the influence of national culture.

5.2.3 Influence of national culture

In Chapter 2 of this paper, I have examined the differences between high context and low context culture. The U.S. and most European countries represent low context culture, in which people communicate in a more direct and explicit way using more facts, words, and information. On the other hand, most Asian countries including China are typical representatives of high context culture, in which people establish much more complicated and internalized interpersonal relationships and communicate in a more implicit way using more highly meaningful messages and symbols (Hall, 1976; Hall and Hall, 1987). Research on advertising value appeals¹¹ as well indicates that Western advertising uses more utilitarian appeals, which are usually considered to contain a variety of information cues while Eastern advertising uses more abstract symbolic appeals. Prior studies from the above have indicated that the informativeness and usage of information cues differ across a variety of countries. However, these findings did not show a consistent underlying trend across countries. While most of the previous studies focused on information content across product categories, they did not focus on one

¹¹ Chapter 6 examines advertising value appeals in detail.

specific product category. As an example of study on one single product category, Wang and Praet (2013c) investigated the usage of information content in Chinese automobile advertising. They classified commercials into three categories in terms of the country of origin of the car manufacturing in combination with the origin of the brand: domestic, joint-venture, and imported. Their results indicate that the more foreign the car is, the higher the level of informativeness tends to be: while 69.51% of commercials for domestic cars contain at least one information cue, 84.54% for joint-venture and 91.67% for foreign cars contain at least one cue; they also report that the average number of cues per ad exhibits the same tendency. Since joint-ventures are essentially business operations based on foreign brands, I categorize ads into 2 groups in this study: ads for domestic brands and ads for foreign brands, and therefore formulate the following hypothesis:

H2a: The percentage of informative Chinese television commercials for foreign brands is higher than that for local brands.

H2b: The average number of information cues per ad in Chinese television commercials for foreign brands is higher than that for local brands.

5.2.4 Influence of product category on informativeness

In the previous chapter the FCB grid model has been employed to examine the differences in the use of advertising message strategies across various product categorization schemes. As stated in Chapters 2 and 4, products are classified into four quadrants based on 2 dimensions: high/low level and think/feel type of involvement. I reported that ads for think products contain significantly more cognitive message

strategies which most likely implies that they contain more information whereas ads for feel products contain less cognitive message strategies which most likely implies that they contain less information content.

A number of researchers have also examined the influence of the FCB grid on the level of advertising informativeness. Weinberger and Spotts (1989) report that ads for high-involvement products contain more information than ads for low-involvement products, and ads for rational products carry more information than ads for emotional products. Choi et al. (2006) expanded product classification used by Weinberger and Spotts (1989) and found the same tendencies. They also conducted a two-way ANOVA and reported no interaction effect between the two dimensions of involvement level and involvement type. Based on the theoretical constructs underlying the FCB grid model and findings from previous studies, I developed the following hypotheses.

H3a: The percentage of informative Chinese television commercials for high-involvement products is higher than that for low-involvement products.

H3b: The average number of information cues per ad in Chinese television commercials for high-involvement products is higher than that for low-involvement products.

H4a: The percentage of informative Chinese television commercials for think products is higher than that for feel products.

H4b: The average number of information cues per ad in Chinese television commercials for think products is higher than that for feel products.

To clarify advertising informativeness, another product classification scheme

distinguishing between durable and non-durable goods is used in studies such as Keown et al. (1992), Abernethy and Franke (1996), Chan and Chan (2005), and Choi et al. (2006). Results of these studies suggest that ads for durable goods provide more information than ads for non-durable goods, which is attributed to the fact that consumers tend to search for more information for durable goods than for non-durable goods. Durable goods tend to be high-involvement goods whereas non-durable goods are usually low-involvement goods (Abernethy and Franke, 1996). As a result, advertisers tend to offer more information to assist consumer decision-making for durable goods (Choi et al., 2006). I thus formulate the following hypotheses:

H5a: The percentage of informative Chinese television commercials for durable goods is higher than that for non-durable goods.

H5b: Chinese television commercials for durable goods on average contain more information cues than those for non-durable goods.

Although prior studies have employed a variety of criteria for categorizing products (Abernethy and Franke, 1996), one widely accepted categorization scheme for analyzing advertising informativeness is based on industry type (e.g., Resnik and Stern, 1977; Stern, Krugman, and Resnik, 1981; Aaker, 1984; Tom et al., 1984; Madden et al., 1986; Abernethy and Franke, 1996; Chan and Chan, 2005; Choi et al., 2006; Akan, 2007). These studies confirmed the influence of product type on information content and levels of informativeness. In order to maintain comparability with previous research, this study also adopts the same product categorization scheme based on product industry as specified in Chapter 3. I thus formulate the following hypotheses:

H6a: The percentage of informative Chinese television commercials differs across product categories.

H6b: The average number of information cues per ad in Chinese television commercial differs across product categories.

5.2.5 Goods versus services

As addressed in Chapter 4, advertising for services exhibits different characteristics from advertising for goods (Abernethy and Butler, 1992; Albers-Miller and Stafford, 1999; Cutler and Javalgi, 1993; Mortimer and Grierson, 2010; Stafford, 1996, 2005; Zinkhan et al., 1992). A number of researchers argue that because services are less tangible than products, advertising for services should provide tangible clues which make the services seem more concrete and tangible (George and Berry, 1981; Berry and Clark, 1986; Bang and Moon, 2002). A consumer perspective indicates that the intangible nature of service necessitates consumers to seek information about advertised service in order to reduce uncertainty and risk in the process of making purchasing decisions (Clow and Kurtz., 1997). Consistent with these arguments, Grove et al. (1995) found that service ads contained more informational and factual cues.

However, some researchers have reported opposite findings that question the value of using more informational messages in service advertisements (Stafford, 1996). For instance, Zinkhan et al. (1992) concluded that services advertisements use more transformational than informational appeals. Abernethy and Butler (1992) found that compared to goods ads, services ads in newspapers contained less rational information cues. Further, Cutler and Javalgi (1993) also reported that services ads actually use

fewer informational cues compared to goods ads. In line with those results, Clow et al. (2005) examined the visual elements of service advertisements and found that emotional visual strategies appear to be the most effective in terms of creating a positive attitude towards the visual and the brand. Due to the inconsistent prior results, I propose the following research question:

RQ3: Are there differences in the level of informativeness in Chinese television commercials for services and goods?

5.3 Method

5.3.1 Coding framework

Resnik and Stern's (1977) information content framework, described in detail in Stern, Krugman, and Resnik (1981), forms the basis for this study. However, several studies have suggested that this framework is not exhaustive and fails to capture certain types of information that advertising commonly contains (e.g., Abernethy and Franke, 1996; Taylor et al., 1997). In response to this limitation, researchers have incorporated additional cues to measure types of information commonly used in specific markets, or to reflect recent developments in society, the advertising industry and media technology. Concrete examples are Taylor et al., (1997) who expanded the original framework to 30 cues for use in South Korea, Herpen et al. (2000) who included 'contest', 'address', 'telephone number', and 'country of origin' cues to measure information content in transition economies, Harmon, Razzouk, and Stern (1983) who added 'energy consumption,' Choi et al. (2006) who incorporated 'toll-free number,' 'web address,' 'brand name/advertiser,' and 'disclaimer,' and Akan (2007) who included a 'variety of

size, shape, color and taste' cue to the original scheme. Based on a pre-test of the additional cues used in more recent studies on a sample of Chinese ads not included in this study, I decided to include the 'variety,' 'telephone number,' 'homepage/keyword search,' and 'country of origin' cues. The 18 information cues and their operational definitions are listed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Information cues and operational definitions

Information cue	Operational definition
Price-value ^a	What does the product cost? What is its value-retention capability? What is the need-satisfaction capability/dollars?
Quality ^a	What are the product's characteristics that distinguish it from competing products based on an objective evaluation of workmanship, engineering, durability, excellence of materials, structural superiority, superiority of personnel, attention to detail, or special services?
Performance ^a	What does the product do and how well does it do what it is designed to do in comparison to alternative purchases?
Components or contents ^a	What is the product composed of? What ingredients does it contain? What ancillary items are included with the product?
Availability ^a	Where can the product be purchased? When will the product be available for purchase?
Special offers ^a	What limited-time non-price deals are available with a particular purchase?
Taste ^a	Is evidence presented that the taste of a particular product is perceived as superior in taste by a sample of potential customers? (The opinion of the advertiser is inadequate).
Nutrition ^a	Are specific data given concerning the nutritional content of a particular product, or is a direct specific comparison made with other products?
Packaging shape ^a or	What package is the product available in which makes it more desirable than alternatives? What special shapes is the product available in?
Guarantees and warranties ^a	What post-purchase assurances accompany the product?
Safety ^a	What safety features are available on a particular product compared to alternative choices?
Independent research ^a	Are results of research gathered by an "independent" research firm presented?

(Continued on next page)

(Table 5.1 continued)

Information cue	Operational definition
Company research ^a	Are data gathered by a company to compare its product with a competitor's presented?
New ideas ^a	Is a totally new concept introduced during the commercial? Are its advantages presented?
Variety ^b	Is the product available in different colors, sizes, shapes, flavors, tastes, etc.?
Country of origin ^c	In what country was the product manufactured, assembled, or designed? From what country were product ingredients or parts sourced?
Telephone number ^d	Does the ad show a telephone number (toll-free or otherwise)?
Homepage/keyword search ^d	Does the ad redirect consumers to the brand or company homepage, or does it encourage consumers to perform an Internet search using a product related keyword?

a: Stern et al. (1981); b: Akan (2007); c: Herpen et al. (2000); d: Choi et al. (2006).

5.3.2 Coding procedure

Two bilingual Chinese native speakers coded the sample. Coders were trained with detailed written instructions in English and by coding 20 commercials that were not part of the sample. Coders judged information cues in any part of the visual (e.g., on-screen descriptions, captions, characters' body language, background settings, visual symbols) and audial aspects (e.g. speech by on-screen characters, voice-over, musical lyrics) of the advertisements. To check intercoder reliability, coders independently coded 104 commercials (about 7%) randomly selected from the sample. Based on the proportional reduction in loss (PRL) approach suggested by Rust and Cooil (1994), the PRL reliability measures for all the coding variables were above 0.92. Therefore, coding reliability was deemed satisfactory. After discussing and resolving all discrepancies, coders each coded a different half of the sample.

5.4 Results

Since most of previous studies employ Resnik and Stern's (1977) 14 information cues as their framework of analysis, in this chapter I report results based on the following two frameworks: an expanded framework containing 18 information cues and the original framework with 14 information cues. Retainment of the original framework makes comparison with prior studies possible.

Table 5.2 presents the overall level of informativeness of Chinese television commercials as measured by the expanded analytical framework. 76.3% of the sample contained at least one information cue, 47.0% of the sample contained two or more information cues and 24.8% contained at least three cues. I found a total of 2344 cues in 1439 television commercials, indicating an average of 1.6 cues per commercial. Based on the original framework,¹² I found that 68.0% of the sample contained at least one information cue, 33.3% of the sample contained two or more information cues and 12.6% contained at least three cues. A total of 1703 cues are identified based on the original framework and the average number of information cues per commercial is 1.2. In order to compare findings of this study with those of Chan and Chan (2005) who calculated the average number of cues as a ratio of those commercials containing at least one cue, we used the same calculation resulting in an average number of cues of 1.7. This number is higher than the 1.3 of the study by Chan and Chan (2005). Compared to Chan and Chan's (2005) study, all the indexes of percentages of informative ads in the current study are significantly higher, i.e. differences based on the one-cue criterion ($X^2=21.627$, $P<0.001$, $df=1$), differences based on the two-cue criterion ($X^2=48.965$, $P<0.001$, $df=1$), and differences based on the three-cue criterion

¹² When handling calculations based on original framework, 'Telephone No.' and 'Homepage/keyword search' are included in 'Availability' and they are counted as one information cue.

($X^2=31.343$, $P<0.001$, $df=1$). Consequently, results indicate that the informativeness level in this study is significantly higher than that in Chan and Chan's (2005) study. Consequently, H1 is not supported.

Table 5.2 Information level of Chinese television commercials

	18 information cues		Original 14 information cues		Chan and Chan (2005)	
Cues per ad (n)	ads (n)	% (n=1439)	ads (n)	% (n=1439)	ads (n)	% (n=386)
No cue	341	23.7	460	32.0	173	44.8
At least 1 cue	1098	76.3	979	68.0	213	55.2
2 cues or more	675	47.0	479	33.3	58	15
3 cues or more	357	24.8	181	12.6	10	2.6
4 cues or more	147	10.2	49	3.4	1	0.3
5 cues or more	46	3.2	13	0.9	0	0

Regarding RQ2, Table 5.3 presents the extent to which each of the 18 information cues are used in Chinese television commercials. 'Performance' (39.1%), 'Variety' (27.0%), and 'Components/contents' (19.3%) constitute the three most frequently used information cues. Each of the top 8 information cues can be found in more than 5% of the ads.

With regard to the differences of level of informativeness in ads between local brands and foreign brands, results based on Resnik and Stern's (1977) framework demonstrate that 83.9% of ads for foreign brands contain at least one information cue while 64.0% of ads for local brands contain at least one cue, and this difference is significant ($X^2=42.250$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$). Similar results based on the expanded framework are also identified: 89.3% versus 73.1%, and also this difference is significant ($X^2=33.498$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$). Thus, H2a is supported. With regard to the average cues per ad, results (Table 5.3) based on original framework demonstrate that ads for foreign brands (1.6 cues per ad) use significantly ($t=7.814$, $p<0.01$, $df=439.852$) more information cues than

those for local brands (1.1 cues per ad). Furthermore, results based on the expanded framework present the same tendency (2.2 versus 1.5 cues per ad). This difference is significant ($t=8.487$, $p<0.01$, $df=1428$) and H2b is thus supported. Therefore, H2 is supported. In addition, results (Table 5.3) indicate that differences in the use of 7 information cues –Performance, Variety, Components/contents, Availability, Country of origin, New ideas, and Company research– are significant, with all of these cues being used more frequently in ads for foreign brands. This lends further support to H2.

Table 5.3 Information cues in Chinese television commercials

Information cue	Total (n=1439) %	Local (n=1132) %	Foreign (n=298) %	X² (df=1)
Performance	39.1	34.9	55.7	42.854**
Variety	27.0	25.4	33.9	8.700**
Components/contents	19.3	17.8	25.8	9.841**
Quality	14.5	14.7	14.1	0.062
Availability	12.2	9.3	22.8	40.687**
Homepage/keyword search	10.5	10.1	12.4	1.374
Telephone No.	9.5	9.1	10.4	0.472
Country of origin	8.5	7.4	12.4	7.601**
Special offers	4.7	4.7	5.0	0.064
New ideas	4.2	1.6	14.1	91.752**
Safety	3.5	3.4	3.7	0.042
Nutrition	2.6	2.7	2.3	0.138
Price	2.5	2.1	4.0	3.495
Company research	1.8	1.3	3.7	7.399**
Packaging	1.1	1.1	1.3	N/A
Independent research	1.0	1.0	1.0	N/A
Guarantees/ warranties	0.7	0.9	0.0	N/A
Taste	0.3	0.4	0.0	N/A
Subtotal (Original 14 cues)	118.3	107.1	164.8	$t=-7.814^{**}$ ($df=439.852$)
Total (18 cues)	162.9	147.7	222.8	$t=-8.487^{**}$ ($df=1428$)

** $p<0.01$

Regarding the differences of information level in the FCB grid, results in Table 5.4

show that 72.2% commercials for high-involvement products contain at least one information cue whereas 84.4% commercials for low-involvement products contain at least one cue, and this difference is significant ($X^2=26.640$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$). Furthermore, ads for high-involvement products on average contain 1.5 cues while ads for low-involvement products contain an average of 2.0 cues, and this difference is also significant ($t=-6.326$, $p<0.01$, $df=1320$). Contrary to H3, results demonstrate a higher level of informativeness in ads for low-involvement products and therefore H3 is not supported. With regard to think versus feel products, 81.3% of ads for think products include one or more cues whereas 68.7% of ads for feel products include one or more cues, and this difference is significant ($X^2=26.784$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$). Thus H4a is supported. Moreover, an average of 1.8 cues used in ads for think products compares to 1.4 cues for feel products, and this difference is significant ($t=4.353$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) and supports H4b. Consequently, H4 is supported.

Table 5.4 Information level in terms of FCB grid (1)

	High-involvement products (n=802)	Low-involvement products (n=520)	
Informative (%)	72.2%	84.4%	$X^2=26.640^{a**}$
Cues/ad (No.)	1.5	2.0	$t=-6.326^{b**}$
	Think products (n=872)	Feel products (n=450)	
Informative (%)	81.3%	68.7%	$X^2=26.784^{a**}$
Cues/ad (No.)	1.8	1.4	$t=4.353^{b**}$

a: $df=1$; b: $df=1320$; **: $p<0.01$

Furthermore, Table 5.5 shows results on the information level across the four quadrants of the FCB grid. Ads for low-involvement products contain more information than those for high-involvement products irrespective of whether they are for think or

for feel products. However, regarding ads for high-involvement products, ads for think products contain more information than those for feel products. Increasingly, within ads for low-involvement products, results show an opposite pattern: ads for low-involvement/think products contain less information than ads for low-involvement/feel products.

Table 5.5 Information level in terms of FCB grid (2)

	H/T (n=467) %	H/F (n=335) %	L/T (n=405) %	L/F (n=115) %	
Informative (%)	79.7	61.8	83.2	88.7	$X^2=63.327^{a**}$
Cues/ad (No.)	1.7	1.1	1.9	2.3	$F=27.509^{b**}$

a: df=3; b: df=3; **: $p<0.01$

To examine the interaction effects of these two dimensions as well as the influence of brand origin on information level, I conducted a three-way ANOVA ($2*2*2$). Results (Table 5.6) indicate that brand origin ($F=50.562$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) and involvement level ($F=32.218$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) have significant main effects whereas involvement type (think/feel) has no significant main effect. Results hereby are consistent with what I have found above with regard to H2 and H3. However, since involvement type demonstrates no significant main effect, H4 is not supported. Moreover, the two-way interaction effects: Origin*Involvement level ($F=4.298$, $p<0.05$, $df=1$), and Involvement level*Involvement type ($F=7.399$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) are significant while Origin*Involvement type demonstrates no significant interaction effect. Furthermore, the three-way interaction effects (Origin*Involvement level*Involvement type) are confirmed to be significant ($F=10.532$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$).

To further illustrate differences of levels of informativeness across these three

variables, the simple main effects of each variable within each level combination of the other effects are demonstrated (Table 5.7). In terms of ‘Origin,’ within High involvement*Think, High involvement*Feel, and Low involvement*Think categories, informativeness in ads for foreign brands is significantly more than that for local brands; within Low involvement*Feel category, brand origin demonstrates no significant influence on informativeness. In terms of ‘Involvement level,’ within Local*Feel and Foreign*Think categories, informativeness in ads for low-involvement products is significantly more than that for high-involvement products; within Local*Think and Foreign*Feel categories, involvement level shows no significant influence. In terms of ‘Involvement type,’ within Local*High involvement category, informativeness in ads for think products is significantly more than that for feel products; within Local*Low involvement category, informativeness in ads for feel products is significantly more than that for think products; within Foreign*High involvement and Foreign*Low involvement categories, Involvement type demonstrates no significant influence.

Table 5.6 Test of between-subject effects in terms of cues per ad

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Origin	1	85.888	50.562	0.000
Involvement level	1	54.728	32.218	0.000
Involvement type	1	1.164	.685	0.408
Origin * Involvement level	1	7.300	4.298	0.038
Origin * Involvement type	1	.147	.087	0.769
Involvement level * Involvement type	1	12.568	7.399	0.007
Origin * Involvement level * Involvement type	1	17.890	10.532	0.001
Error	1314	1.699		

Table 5.7 Simple main effects of three-way ANOVA in terms of cues per ad

			Average cues	F
High involvement	Think	Local	1.548	17.053**
		Foreign	2.115	
	Feel	Local	0.836	58.045**
		Foreign	2.114	
Low involvement	Think	Local	1.727	21.447**
		Foreign	2.529	
	Feel	Local	2.213	0.520
		Foreign	2.423	
Local	Think	High involvement	1.548	3.222
		Low involvement	1.727	
	Feel	High involvement	0.836	73.776**
		Low involvement	2.213	
Foreign	Think	High involvement	2.115	4.420*
		Low involvement	2.529	
	Feel	High involvement	2.114	1.101
		Low involvement	2.423	
Local	High involvement	Think	1.548	43.843**
		Feel	0.836	
	Low involvement	Think	1.727	9.809**
		Feel	2.213	
Foreign	High involvement	Think	2.115	0.000
		Feel	2.114	
	Low involvement	Think	2.529	0.125
		Feel	2.423	

df=1; *: p<0.05; **: p<0.01

Next, instead of focusing on informativeness level, I also investigate the usages of information cues across various variables. Table 5.8 shows the usage of information cues in ads between high- and low-involvement products as well as between think and feel products. The top three of most frequently used cues in ads for all these categories are ‘Performance,’ ‘Variety,’ and ‘Components/contents,’ and this finding is consistent with the general pattern shown in Table 5.3. Among 6 cues that are used significantly differently between low- and high-involvement products, five cues (Performance, Variety, Components/contents, Nutrition, Special offers) are used significantly more in

ads for low-involvement products whereas only ‘New ideas’ is used significantly more frequently in ads for high-involvement products. Regarding the differences in terms of think versus feel products, four cues (Performance, Quality, Nutrition, Company research) are significantly more frequently used in ads for think products whereas only ‘Country of origin’ is significantly more frequently used in ads for feel products. In addition, Table 5.9 demonstrates that a total of 9 cues are used significantly differently across the four quadrants of the FCB grid model.

Table 5.8 Information cues across FCB grid (1)

Information cue	High involvement (n=802) %	Low involvement (n=520) %	X² (df=1)	Think (n=872) %	Feel (n=450) %	X² (df=1)
Price	2.2	1.9	0.157	2.1	2.2	0.036
Quality	15.1	15.4	0.022	16.6	12.4	4.030*
Performance	35.5	51.2	31.655**	49.7	26.2	67.056**
Components/ contents	15.8	29.0	33.114**	21.3	20.4	0.140
Availability	12.0	9.8	1.493	11.0	11.3	0.032
Special offers	3.2	5.6	4.314*	4.2	4.0	0.044
Taste	0.5	0.0	N/A	0.5	0.0	N/A
Nutrition	1.1	5.6	22.423**	3.6	1.6	4.251*
Packaging	0.7	1.9	3.642	0.9	1.8	1.838
Guarantees/ warranties	1.0	0.0	N/A	0.6	0.7	N/A
Safety	3.5	3.1	0.168	3.9	2.2	2.594
Independent research	1.1	0.8	0.404	1.1	0.7	N/A
Company research	1.4	2.9	3.746	2.5	0.9	4.111*
New ideas	5.9	2.1	10.547**	4.7	3.8	0.604
Country of origin	9.5	7.3	1.883	7.1	11.6	7.444**
Variety	21.6	40.4	54.261**	29.1	28.7	0.031
HP/keyword search	7.1	9.4	2.294	8.7	6.7	1.690
Telephone No.	9.0	8.7	0.041	9.6	7.3	1.946

*: p<0.05; **: p<0.01

Table 5.9 Information cues across FCB grid (2)

Information cue	H/T (n=467) %	H/F (n=335) %	L/T (n=405) %	L/F (n=115) %	X² (df=3)
Price	3.2	0.9	0.7	6.1	17.555**
Quality	16.9	12.5	16.3	12.2	4.104
Performance	44.3	23.3	55.8	34.8	83.467**
Components/ contents	19.5	10.7	23.5	48.7	76.443**
Availability	15.0	7.8	6.4	21.7	33.073**
Special offers	5.1	0.6	3.2	13.9	40.141**
Taste	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	N/A
Nutrition	1.9	0.0	5.4	6.1	25.156**
Packaging	0.6	0.9	1.2	4.3	N/A
Guarantees/ warranties	1.1	0.9	0.0	0.0	N/A
Safety	4.7	1.8	3.0	3.5	5.411
Independent research	1.5	0.6	0.7	0.9	N/A
Company research	2.1	0.3	3.0	2.6	7.240
New ideas	6.9	4.5	2.2	1.7	13.219**
Country of origin	6.4	13.7	7.9	5.2	15.921**
Variety	22.1	20.9	37.3	51.3	62.944**
HP/keyword search	8.1	5.7	9.4	9.6	3.906
Telephone No.	9.2	8.7	10.1	3.5	5.017

** : p<0.01

In order to examine H5, I classified a total of 1130 commercials into two categories, durable goods (470 ads) and non-durable goods (660 ads). Ads for services were not included in this analysis as they are not goods. The percentage of informative ads tends to be similar for durable goods (83.0%) and non-durable goods (82.3%). The difference is not statistically significant ($X^2=0.104$, $p=0.75$, $df=1$). Thus, H5a is not supported. On the other hand, ads for non-durable goods also tend to feature a similar average number of cues (1.84) as ads for durable goods (1.77). The difference is not significant ($t=0.826$, $p=0.409$, $df=1128$) and thus lends no support to H5b. Consequently, H5 is not supported.

Table 5.10 Information level by product category

Product category	ads (n)	% informative ^a	average cues ^b (n)
Media	5	100.0	1.4
Personal care	100	98.0	2.6
Detergents	30	96.7	2.2
Food and beverage	233	93.6	2.5
IT, telecom and electronics	82	91.5	2.0
Events	18	88.9	1.3
Automobiles and accessories	206	82.5	2.1
Health care products and services	91	82.4	1.4
Home durable appliances	182	80.2	1.3
Services	27	77.8	1.3
Retailing	23	73.9	2.3
Fashion	86	62.8	0.9
Alcohol	120	57.5	1.0
Others*	9	55.6	0.9
Institutional	37	48.6	0.9
Finance and insurance	118	45.8	0.8
Housing and decorating	72	38.9	0.6
Total	1439	76.3	1.6
Durable**	470	83.0 ^c	1.77 ^d
Non-durable	660	82.3 ^c	1.84 ^d

*Product category 'Others' is excluded from the analysis because of the diversity and the inconsistent characteristics of commercials in this product category.

**Durable goods: automobiles & accessories, IT, telecom & electronics, and home durable appliances categories. Non-durable goods: alcohol, detergents, fashion, food & drinks, health care, personal care categories.

a: Differences across 16 product categories are significant ($X^2=258.170$, $p<0.001$, $df=15$).

b: Differences across 16 product categories are significant ($F=27.448$, $p<0.001$, $df=15$).

c: Differences between durable and non-durable goods are not significant ($X^2=0.104$, $p=0.75$, $df=1$).

d: Differences between durable and non-durable goods are not significant ($t= -0.826$, $p=0.409$, $df=1128$).

To further investigate the usage of information content, I explored differences of information level across specific product categories as well. The percentage of informativeness ranges from 38.9% to 100% across 17 product categories and these differences (H6a) are significant ($X^2=259.3$, $p<0.001$, $df=16$). The average number of cues per commercial ranges from 0.8 to 2.6 and these differences (H6b) are also significant ($F=26.000$, $p<0.001$, $df=16$). Hence, H6 is supported. Product categories exhibiting high levels of informativeness –operationalized here as more than 80% of ads in the category containing at least 1 information cue, in combination with an average number of information cues per ad of 2 or more– can be found in the personal care (98.0%, 2.6), detergents (96.7%, 2.2), food and beverage (93.6%, 2.5), IT, telecom and electronics (91.5%, 2.0), and automobiles and accessories (82.5%, 2.1) categories. In contrast, five categories feature low informativeness –operationalized as less than 70% of ads in the category containing at least 1 information cue, in combination with an average number of information cues per ad of less than 1– i.e., the housing and decorating (38.9%, 0.6), financial and insurances (45.8%, 0.8), institutional (48.6%, 0.9), Others (55.6%, 0.9), and fashion (62.8%, 0.9) categories.

In addition, I further investigate the frequencies and distributions of information cues across different product categories (Table 5.11). The three most frequently used information cues in each product category are marked with a grey fill. The distributions of the top three cues indicate that even though informativeness and the frequencies of information cues differ significantly across product categories the dominant types of cues tend to be somewhat similar across product categories, namely quality, performance, components/contents, availability, variety, HP/keyword search and telephone No. However, notable differences exist in information cue distribution

patterns across product categories, reflecting characteristics specific to each category. Some product categories use a wider variety (5 or more) of frequently used (10% or more) cue types: automobiles and accessories (9); detergents (7); food and drinks (7); IT, telecom and electronics (6); personal care (5); retailing (7). In contrast, other categories use a narrower number (i.e., less than 5) of frequently used cue types: alcohol (2); appliances (4); events (3); fashion (2); financial and insurances (3); housing and decoration (1); institutional (3); medicine (3); media (3); services (4).

In regards to the information level between goods and services ads, Table 5.12 shows significant differences that 80.0% of goods ads contain at least one information cue whereas only 57.5% of services ads contain at least one cue. Furthermore, in terms of average number of cues per ad, goods ads contain significantly more information cues than services ads (1.7 versus 1.1). Thus in answer to RQ3, results show that services advertisers use less information than goods advertisers in China.

In addition, Table 5.13 demonstrates differences of specific information cues in goods and services ads. The four most frequently used information cues in goods ads are Performance, Variety, Components/contents, and Quality while the four most frequently used information cues in services ads are Homepage/keyword search, Telephone No., Performance, and Availability. Among 18 information cues, 10 cues are used significantly differently. Most of the information cues follow the above general pattern except 'Special offers,' 'Homepage/keyword search,' and 'Telephone No.' These 3 cues are more frequently used in ads for services.

Table 5.11 Percentages of information cues by product category

Information cue	Alc	Car	D	E	F	F & I	F & D	M	Ap	H & D	I	IT	Me	P	R	S
Price	0.8	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	1.6	2.8	0.0	6.1	0.0	2.0	26.1	7.4
Quality	23.3	17.5	10.0	0.0	7.0	0.8	29.2	7.7	18.1	6.9	10.8	12.2	20.0	3.0	4.3	7.4
Performance	5.8	31.1	86.7	0.0	14.0	22.9	40.8	64.8	50.0	19.4	18.9	74.4	20.0	94.0	4.3	7.4
Components/ contents	7.5	25.2	23.3	0.0	8.1	0.0	48.9	16.5	12.1	4.2	0.0	13.4	0.0	38.0	0.0	0.0
Availability	3.3	33.5	13.3	66.7	1.2	6.8	13.3	1.1	3.8	4.2	5.4	6.1	0.0	13.0	39.1	14.8
Special offers	4.2	8.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.1	7.7	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	4.9	0.0	2.0	43.5	7.4
Taste	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nutrition	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.2	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Packaging	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0
Guarantees/ warranties	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	4.2	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.0
Safety	1.7	11.2	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.2	2.2	1.6	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.4	3.7
Independent research	0.8	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.6	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Company research	0.0	3.9	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	0.5	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0
New ideas	0.8	20.4	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	3.0	4.3	3.7
Country of origin	26.7	5.3	6.7	0.0	5.8	0.0	14.6	3.3	6.6	4.2	8.1	1.2	0.0	11.0	0.0	14.8
Variety	9.2	19.4	50.0	0.0	43.0	9.3	48.1	19.8	20.9	4.2	5.4	36.6	0.0	66.0	21.7	0.0
HP/keyword search	5.8	10.2	0.0	33.3	5.8	15.3	5.6	5.5	4.9	4.2	24.3	19.5	100.0	9.0	52.2	48.1
Telephone No.	6.7	12.1	10.0	33.3	2.3	18.6	6.0	7.7	5.5	4.2	5.4	18.3	0.0	8.0	17.4	18.5

Alc: alcohol; Car: automobile, motorbike and parts; D: detergent; E: events; F: fashion; F&I: finance and insurance; F&D: food and drinks; M: medicine; Ap: appliances; H&D: housing and decoration; I: institutional; IT: IT, telecom and electronics; Me: media; P: personal care; R: retailing; S: services.

Table 5.12 Information level between goods and services ads

	Goods (n=1202) %	Services (n=228) %	
Informative (%)	80.0	57.5	$X^2=52.987^{***}$
Cues/ad (No.)	1.7	1.1	$t=7.139^b$

a: df=1; b: df=341.579; **: $p<0.01$

Table 5.13 Information cues between goods and services ads

Information cues	Goods (n=1202) %	Services (n=228) %	X² (df=1)
Price	2.3	3.5	1.086
Quality	16.6	3.9	24.511**
Performance	43.5	16.7	57.928**
Components/ contents	23.1	0.0	65.457**
Availability	11.5	15.4	2.699
Special offers	4.2	7.9	5.903*
Taste	0.3	0.0	0.761
Nutrition	3.2	0.0	7.405**
Packaging	1.3	0.0	3.069
Guarantees/ warranties	0.7	0.9	0.124
Safety	3.7	2.2	1.366
Independent research	1.1	0.4	0.817
Company research	2.1	0.4	2.892
New ideas	4.8	0.9	7.432**
Country of origin	9.5	3.1	10.1799**
Variety	30.8	7.9	50.777**
Homepage/keyword search	7.3	27.6	83.708**
Telephone No.	7.9	17.1	19.108**

*, $p<0.05$; **, $p<0.01$

5.5 Discussion

5.5.1 Update of the framework

This chapter expands Resnik and Stern's (1977) framework with four additional cues. The relatively frequent occurrences of these cues confirm the necessity of expanding the original framework. Even though Resnik and Stern's (1977) framework has long been the de-facto standard in this field, there is no one best analytical framework. As

advertising characteristics and the advertising industry have developed enormously in the past 30 years, there is a need to dynamically revise or supplement the analytical framework to incorporate new features. In the expanded framework, 'Variety' is the second most often used information cue, indicating the importance of multiple options for consumers when making purchasing decisions. 'Telephone No.' and 'Homepage/keyword search' are two types of cue that redirect consumers to sources of more detailed information. 'Country of origin' plays an important role in Chinese consumers' purchasing decision-making process as a symbol of trustworthiness and implicit assurance of product quality, especially for products made outside of China (Zhang, 1996).

5.5.2 Explanations for high informativeness

This chapter also updates the extant research on informativeness of Chinese advertising. I found that a higher proportion of ads were informative (i.e., the ad contains at least 1 information cue) than reported in Chan (1995) and Chan & Chan (2005). Furthermore, the average number of information cues per informative commercial has also moved in the opposite direction of Chan & Chan's (2005) prediction that informativeness of Chinese advertising would decline. Their prediction was based on the development stages of the advertising industry as described by Leiss et al. (1997). Leiss and colleagues studied the development of advertising in the U.S. and divided it into four stages each featuring a different focus: product information, product image, personalization, and life style. This suggests that the more the industry develops the less informative advertising will become. The advertising industry has indeed experienced rapid development in China since the 1980s and is possibly moving away from a focus on product information to a focus on image. However, based on the

findings from this chapter it appears premature to conclude that the development of the advertising industry is causing a decrease in informativeness of Chinese advertising.

The higher informativeness of Chinese television commercials in this chapter could be a result of multiple factors. One reason for this result is that I expanded the coding scheme with four additional information cues. Inclusion of these additional cues increases the average number of information cues to 1.6. However, the informativeness level is still higher than that in Chan and Chan's (2005) study, even when I limit the calculation to include only the original 14 information cues. Second, an uneven distribution of ads across product categories in the sample as compared to other studies may possibly explain this overall high level of informativeness. Product categories such as 'Personal care,' 'Food and beverage,' 'Automobiles and accessories,' and 'IT, telecom and electronics' which contain more information cues, contribute more to the average level of informativeness. Commercials from these four categories constitute 43% of the sample, but account for 60% of the total number of cues. Furthermore, there may be reasons universal to the product categories and reasons specific to China as to why these categories contain more information. Reasons of a general nature apply to the 'IT, telecom and electronics,' and 'automobiles and accessories' categories which are classified as high-involvement/think products under the FCB grid model and thus would logically be expected to contain more information cues. Moreover, these categories in China are in the growth stage of the product life cycle, in which advertisers tend to focus more on the product's benefits and features to differentiate their products from those of competitors (Anderson and Zeithaml, 1984; Day, 1981). In addition, the majority of Chinese car buyers are first-time users and need more information on the characteristics and performance of products. With respect to the food and beverage

category, in China a general trend toward heightened consumer health awareness in combination with the many recent food scandals has lead to an increased consumer need for information on product contents and safety. Pew Research Center (2012) reports that after a number of high-profile food safety scandals in recent years, concerns about the safety of food have more than tripled from 12% in 2008 to 41% in 2012. A recent trend in the high-involvement personal care and cosmetics category is that Chinese female consumers have been increasingly concerned about naturalness of product ingredients in addition to product performance (LabBrand, 2009; China Cosmetic Market Study, 2013). Thus, personal care and cosmetics advertising will need to focus on rational explanations of product, ingredients, and specific benefits (China Cosmetic Market Study, 2013). Findings of this study suggest that advertisers appear to be responding to the developments in these product categories.

5.5.3 Differences of information content by brand origin

Findings illustrate that brand origin does influence the usage of information content in advertising. Results based on a three-way ANOVA indicate that ads for foreign brands contain more information cues than those for local brands regardless of ‘involvement level’ or ‘think versus feel involvement type.’ What is more important and interesting is to explore the mechanism of this influence. The higher level of informativeness in ads for those foreign brands may be attributed to the low context communication nature of the home country culture where many of the headquarters of these corporations are located. Most of the foreign brands in this study are headquartered in the U.S. and European countries. Previous research has reported that Western marketers and advertiser are more likely to employ explicit utilitarian information in their advertising messages because of their low context cultural

background. The findings in Chapter 4 that ads for foreign brands use more ‘cognitive’ message strategies are also consistent with the findings reported in this chapter. Furthermore, foreign brand advertisers usually use global advertising agencies to create advertising campaigns. Those global agencies and their advertising creatives may develop ads in a more foreign style based on their education, practical experience and corporate culture. On the other hand, advertisers for local brands use less information content maybe because they are more used to implicit high context communication, which uses indirect ambiguous messages.

In regard to specific information cues, seven cues are significantly more often used in ads for foreign brands than in ads for local brands. In addition to cultural influence discussed above, the characteristics of foreign brands in terms of competitive advantages and resources may also influence their advertising practices. Compared to Chinese local brands, foreign brands usually possess more resources like advanced technology, research and developing capacity, and therefore, it is logical that foreign brands are able to concentrate on more utilitarian and functional features such as performance, variety, components, new ideas and company research. Due to the well-known brand image or favorable country-of-origin image of foreign brands, Chinese consumers exhibit more favorable attitudes toward foreign-sourced, standardized commercials (Tai and Pae, 2002). As a result, ‘Country of origin’ has long been a powerful weapon for foreign brands to enter and survive in the Chinese market. On the other hand, it is interesting that the ‘Quality’ cue is used as frequently in ads for local brands as it is in ads for foreign brands. This partially reflects the increased technological prowess of the Chinese manufacturing industry. After over 30 years of development under the ‘Opening’ policy, the quality of Chinese manufacturing has

relatively won acceptance among Chinese consumers and even overseas. One could say that the gap between local and foreign brands in terms of quality may be narrowing.

5.5.4 Differences of information content by product category

In this study I confirmed the influence of different product categories on the level of informativeness. Contrary to previous studies, I found that ads for low-involvement products use more information cues than those for high-involvement products. Results based on a three-way ANOVA also support this pattern. The explanation of this finding may be complex. In the U.S. and other Western countries, advertising plays a more important role in the consumer purchasing process especially for high-involvement products. Consumers would pay more attention to the information delivered by advertising. However, television advertising in China plays an important role in improving brand image, increasing brand or product familiarization, particularly for high-involvement products. Chinese consumers gather more word-of-mouth information by communicating with relatives, friends, colleagues in addition to word-of-mouth information available on the internet. Alternatively and in addition, they also collect product information from retail shops by talking to sales persons directly before making purchasing decisions. Therefore, the different role of advertising in the consumer decision-making process in China may be one of the reasons behind the low informativeness of ads for high-involvement products in China. The other explanation may be the nature of each specific product category contained in each quadrant of the FCB grid. Life insurance commercials belonging to the high-involvement/think quadrant are expected to contain a high level of informativeness. However, the pattern is different in Chinese television commercials where most ads in the finance and insurance category contain a relatively low level of information and focus more on brand or

corporate image, presumably to establish an image of trust among consumers. The reason for this may be that in China for financial and insurance products corporate trust is more important than specific product details and benefits and that these products may have a higher emotional component. Furthermore, cosmetic ads in the high-involvement/feel quadrant employ more 'Affective message strategy' as was shown in Chapter 4 and communicate more emotional appeals. On the other hand, what consumers are most concerned about regarding low-involvement products such as food, milk, drugs, detergents and personal care, are the utilitarian, functional features and components of the product. In responding to those concerns, it is logical that those commercials contain a higher level of information content.

Ads for think products are found to be generally significantly more informative than those for feel products, which is logical and consistent with previous studies. However, results based on the three-way ANOVA indicate that involvement type does not have main effects. Ads for think products contain significantly more information than those for feel products within the Local*High involvement category but significantly less within the Local*Low involvement category. The local*High involvement*Feel category consists of alcohol, cosmetics, fashion, housing and decorating products and consumers usually expect more emotional satisfaction instead of utilitarian satisfaction from these products. Thus it is logical that these ads incorporate less information. On the other hand, the Local*Low involvement*Feel category mainly consists of soft drink products which contain a high level of information content such as quality, performance, components/contents and variety while around one quarter of the products in the Local*Low involvement*Think category are financial products and services which bring down the average level of informativeness in this category. Moreover,

involvement type does not demonstrate a simple main effect in ads for foreign brands regardless of involvement level. The fundamental reason is that foreign ads generally contain a higher level of information content.

Moreover, results show that there are no significant differences in informativeness between commercials for durable goods and for non-durable goods. This contradicts results of prior studies that ads for non-durable goods contain less information cues (e.g., Stern et al., 1981; Choi et al., 2006; Akan, 2007). The above-mentioned socio-economic environment and Chinese consumer needs in the personal care and food and beverage categories may explain this finding. The level of informativeness of these two product categories contributes to the high informativeness of non-durable goods found in this study. Durable goods are usually high-involvement products, but non-durable goods are not necessarily low-involvement products, especially in the current Chinese context. Consumer purchasing involvement in a certain type of product may vary across national markets and may change over time. For instance, the food and beverages categories have usually been categorized as low-involvement products. However, the current situation in China where consumers cannot take food safety for granted, leads to a dramatic increase in consumer perceived risk of and involvement with these categories. As a result, advertisers use more information cues in ads for these products to respond to serious consumer concerns about and increasing involvement in these product categories.

In addition, this chapter for the first time empirically illuminates the differences of information cues between goods and services ads in China. Previous research has been contradictory, this is, more information in services ads (Grove et al., 1995) and less information in services ads (Cutler and Javalgi, 1993). However, few researchers have

examined this issue in regard to Chinese advertising. This chapter illustrates that information cues are less frequently used in services ads than in goods ads in China. This tendency is consistent with findings in Chapter 4 that cognitive strategies are less frequently used in services ads. Due to service intangibility and heterogeneity, Abernethy and Butler (1992) have argued that it is difficult to describe the components, performance, and quality of a service or even everything that the service advertisers can provide to consumers. This appears to be the fundamental reason why service ads include fewer information cues. Further, Chinese collectivist and high-context communication culture likely lowers the general information level in Chinese advertising and may have an even stronger impact on services due to their intangible nature. As stated in previous chapters, many non-retail services are not easily accessible for hands-on examination because they are usually not available in supermarkets and other retail stores. Moreover, consumption or use of services happens simultaneously with their production (the nature of inseparability). Thus contact information about where to obtain or access the service or more detailed information about the service seems very important to potential consumers (Abernethy and Butler, 1992) and this may explain the higher frequencies of Homepage/keyword search, Telephone No. and Availability in services ads. One more information cue that is more frequently used in services ads is Special offers, which also is consistent with findings in Chapter 4 that services ads contain more conative message strategies as well as sales promotions. Abernethy and Butler (1992) have suggested that sales promotions may be used as a means of overcoming demand fluctuation problems for service marketers and advertisers. However, results of their study did not support this argument and reasons for the lack of support of the argument were partially attributed to the service marketers'

perceived lack of experience in coordinating sales promotions with advertising, which in turn inhibited the use of special offers in services ads. In contrast and interestingly, results in this study support Abernethy and Butler's (1992) argument and indirectly indicate that service marketers in China currently may have enough experience and skill to coordinate sales promotion with advertising.

In summary, results show the patterns of the nature and level of informativeness and different information cue distributions for different product categories. These findings can assist practitioners in identifying those information strategies that are most commonly employed in their industry in addition to those strategies that may differentiate their products and services from those of competitors. One specific finding of this study is that, in spite of increased consumer needs for information on food safety, advertisers only sparingly used the safety cue (5.2%). This implies that companies that pursue high food safety standards should consider providing safety information claims in their ads. One more example that is worthy of highlighting is the financial and insurance industry. Products related to credit cards, banking and life insurance are usually categorized as think products under the FCB grid and thus advertisements for them would be expected to contain a high level of information content. However, the pattern is different in Chinese television commercials where most ads in the finance and insurance category contain a relatively low level of information and focus more on brand or corporate image, presumably to establish an image of trust among consumers. The reason for this may be that in China for financial and insurance products corporate trust is more important than specific product details and benefits and that these products may have a higher emotional component.

5.5.5 Limitations and future research

This chapter examined advertising information content based on Resnik and Stern's analytical framework and an expanded version of this instrument. Even though researchers employing this original framework have replicated a considerable amount of empirical research on advertising information, it is recognized that several studies (e.g., Choi et al., 2006; Akan, 2007) expanded this framework with more types of information in responding to the advanced technology, new trends and new media. Therefore, one limitation of this study lies in the fact that the framework may not cover all types of information utilized in advertisements even though this chapter supplemented the original framework with four additional information cues. I believe these additional cues are also applicable to advertising in other countries and other media. Nevertheless, researchers should not take the validity and exhaustiveness of the existing framework for granted. Future research should conduct a thorough cross-cultural reevaluation, validation and expansion of the framework.

Another limitation is that the framework explicitly measures types of cues rather than instances of information (Abernethy and Franke, 1996; Choi et al, 2006). Moreover, it does not incorporate the frequency or duration with which each type of information appears in an advertisement (Aaker and Norris, 1982) and thus prevents researchers from measuring the actual information level as perceived by consumers. For instance, repetition of the same information cues or the display of several cues of the same type will likely influence consumers' perception and utilization of the information (Choi et al., 2006). However, these same information cues are coded as one type of cue based on the current coding framework. Future research may examine advertising information content by counting the type, duration, and frequency of information used in advertising.

On a methodological note, caution is in order when comparing results of studies on advertising informativeness. Stern et al. (1981) and most follow-up studies (e.g., Madden et al., 1986; Rice and Lou, 1988; Keown et al., 1992; Abernety and Franke, 1996; Choi et al., 2006; Akan, 2007) use the total sample (both informative and non-informative ads) for calculating the informativeness ratio. However, the studies on Chinese advertising informativeness by Chan (1995), and Chan and Chan (2005) calculated the informativeness level as a ratio of informative commercials. In order to improve comparability across studies researchers need to adopt a uniform methodological standard for calculating informativeness in future research.

Chapter 6 Cultural Value Appeals¹³

6.1 Introduction

In the context of the ongoing debate regarding the respective pros and cons of standardization versus local adaptation of international advertising, a large body of research has examined cultural value appeals in the content of advertising messages. As discussed above, proponents of adaptation have found empirical proof in support of their point of view. Advertising tends to reflect the prevalent values of the culture in which it originates, and cultural values, norms, and characteristics are embedded in advertising appeals (Mueller, 1987). Advertising creators select from an array of possible values and corresponding appeals that typically endorse, glamorize, and reinforce existing cultural values (Pollay and Gallagher, 1990). Cultural value appeals conveyed through advertising messages are regarded as powerful forces shaping consumers' motivations, lifestyles, and purchasing choices (Tse et al., 1989). Since consumers tend to respond to advertising messages that contain values and norms congruent with those of the culture in which they were raised, advertising practitioners operating in foreign cultures need to understand similarities and differences between their own culture and that of the host countries. This chapter examines the patterns of value appeals manifest in Chinese television advertising, which should provide advertisers, in particular foreign advertisers operating business in China, with a better understanding of the impact of culture on advertising messages.

6.1.1 Values and appeals

¹³ Chapter 6 is based on the following publication: Wang, Liyong and Praet, Carolus L. C. (2014b), "Cultural Values in Chinese Television Advertising," Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on Research in Advertising (ICORIA), s.l., Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Kluckhohn (1951) defines culture as “patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values” (p. 86). Hofstede (1991) depicts values at the core of his ‘onion model of culture’ as the invisible manifestations of culture, whereas rituals, heroes and symbols are the visible manifestations or ‘expressions’ of culture. De Mooij and Hofstede (2010) apply this model to advertising by explaining that advertisers build rituals around their brands and use celebrities (heroes) and cultural symbols to differentiate products by linking them to the values of target consumers. Cultural values are at the core of advertising messages (Pollay and Gallagher, 1990), and thus constitute powerful forces that influence consumer purchasing decisions and life styles (e.g., Mueller, 1987; Tse et al., 1989; Watson et al., 2002). On the other hand, advertising appeal is any message designed to motivate the consumer to take a specific action (Mueller, 1987). Gelb, Hong and Zinkhan (1985) argue that an advertising appeal is a conscious attempt to motivate potential consumers toward some form of activity (such as gathering further information or purchasing) or to influence them to change their attitude or conception of the advertised product. Kotler and Armstrong (1991: p. 426) define an appeal as the basic idea that advertisers want to communicate to the audience – the basic reason why the audience should act. In regard to the relationship of values and appeals, both concepts express deeply rooted ideas and widely shared prototypes. However, while values are “there in the ad” because they are “there in the world,” appeals are carefully planted by the advertiser (Hetsroni, 2000). Although there is a conceptual difference between values and appeals –while advertising appeals are based

on values, they are strictly speaking not identical to them— many international advertising researchers alternatively and sometimes interchangeably use the terms ‘values’, ‘appeals’ and even ‘themes’, when discussing and measuring the manifestations of culture in advertising content (Wang and Praet, 2013b). For instance, while Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) discuss individualism and collectivism as ‘values’, Zhang and Gelb (1996) call them ‘appeals’. While previous studies did not make a clear distinction between values and appeals, Hetsroni (2000) initially discusses the relation between values and appeals, and argues that a value is naturally or intentionally ascribed more to the products than to the ad whereas the appeal is more clearly related to the ad, yet some values are correlated with certain appeals. Consequently, due to this lack of a unified terminology, I will henceforth use the term ‘value appeals’ to refer to verbal or pictographic advertising elements that are designed to represent and positively link the product to one or more of the supposed values of the target consumers in this chapter as well as in this study. However, I will also keep using other terms such as ‘cultural values’ and ‘theme’ when reviewing previous studies if these studies use these specific terms.

Advertising value appeals have been broadly classified into two types: utilitarian appeals and symbolic appeals. Utilitarian value appeals refer to messages that focus on functional features of a product whereas symbolic value appeals denote messages that emphasize the social meaning of products, and images of the general users of the advertised product. In other words, utilitarian value appeals are product-oriented concerning what the advertised product or service could functionally provide to consumers whereas symbolic value appeals are consumer-oriented concerning what the advertised product or service psychologically or socially mean to consumers. Similar to

this classification of utilitarian and symbolic value appeals, researchers have employed a variety of terminologies that are similar though strictly speaking not necessarily exactly conceptually equivalent to the terms ‘utilitarian’ and ‘symbolic’, such as thinking and feeling (Vaughn, 1980), informational/rational/cognitive and image/emotional/feeling (Aaker and Norris, 1982), informational and transformational (Putto and Wells, 1984), utilitarian and value-expressive (Johar and Sirgy, 1991), rational and emotional (Albers-Miller and Stafford, 1999), and hard-sell and soft-sell (Okazaki, Mueller and Taylor, 2010). Although these terms appear to overall dichotomously classify advertising value appeals, it should be noted that they focus on different aspects and may consist of different specific value appeals, e. g., Albers-Miller and Stafford (1999) classified ‘independence/individualism’ and ‘modernity’ into ‘rational’ group while Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) categorized them as ‘utilitarian’ value appeals.

6.1.2 Limitations of previous analytical frameworks

While many studies (e.g., Pollay, 1983; Mueller, 1987, 1992; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Lin, 2001) have explored the issue of cultural value appeals manifest in advertising, the frameworks they used for analyzing cultural value appeals have been inherently biased towards Western culture (cf. Cheng, 1997). The de-facto standard for measuring cultural values was developed by Pollay (1983) based on inventory lists of values deemed important in U.S. society. Many subsequent studies have employed or adapted Pollay’s framework. Cheng and Schweitzer (1996), in a comparison of cultural value appeals between Chinese and U.S. advertising, reduced the number of value categories of Pollay’s (1983) Western value scheme and added a limited number of Eastern values (i.e., collectivism, respect for the elderly, and tradition) identified by

Mueller (1987, 1992) into a framework of 32 values appeals. Many subsequent studies on cultural value appeals in Chinese advertising have referred to this framework. A potential problem with these studies is that the measurement tool is not capable of adequately capturing potentially important traditional Chinese or Eastern cultural values. Doubt therefore remains whether previous studies have sufficiently measured the value appeals used in advertisements from China or other East-Asian countries with strong Confucian- or Taoist-influenced cultures. Consequently, one of the objectives of this chapter is to review and incorporate traditional Chinese value appeals into an improved framework that will allow researchers of Eastern advertising to more accurately measure both Western and Eastern (i.e., Chinese) value appeals. I then content analyze Chinese television advertising through this expanded framework and report the main findings.

6.2 Literature, hypotheses and research questions

6.2.1 International advertising studies on value appeals

Numerous single-country and cross-cultural studies have examined the characteristics of cultural value appeals manifest in advertisements from a variety of countries and regions, e.g., Brazil (Tansey et al., 1990), Canada (Pollay, 1983), Hong Kong (Chan, 1999; Chan and Cheng, 2002; Moon and Chan, 2005; So, 2004; Tse, Belk and Zhou, 1989), India (Srikandath, 1991; Barthwal and Gupta, 2013), Japan (Belk and Pollay, 1985; Belk and Bryce, 1986; Lin, 1993; Mueller, 1987, 1992; Okazaki and Mueller, 2008), South Korea (Han and Shavitt, 1994; Cho et al., 1999; Moon and Chan, 2005), Taiwan (Shao, Raymond and Taylor, 1999; Tse, Belk and Zhou, 1989), the U.K. (Frith and Sengupta, 1991; Frith and Wesson, 1991; Katz and Lee, 1992), the U.S. (Cho et al.,

1999; Choi et al., 2012; Emery and Tian, 2010; Lin, 1993; Mueller, 1987; Tansey et al., 1990) and China (Chan and Cheng, 2002; Cheng, 1994, 1997; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Emery and Tian, 2010; Ji and McNeal, 2001; Lin, 2001; Zhang, 2010; Zhang and Shavitt, 2003; Zhang and Harwood, 2004, Zhou and Belk, 2004; Tse, Belk and Zhou, 1989; Wang and Praet, 2013b). Recent interest in advertising in China among international advertising researchers has been ascribed to the rapid growth of China's economy and its market in recent years (Wang and Praet, 2013b). Below, I will first conduct a review of studies on advertising value appeals in Western countries, and then will examine studies on the topic in Asian countries. Finally I will concentrate on studies on advertising value appeals in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China.

6.2.2 Prior research on Western countries

Pollay (1983) initially developed an operational framework for measuring cultural value appeals manifest in advertising messages and conducted a content analysis of print advertisements based on his scheme. Results indicate that this operational framework is valid for measuring advertising value appeals and could be applicable to all media. Under the debate of advertising standardization or cultural adaptation, Frith and Wesson (1991) compared cultural values manifest in the U.S. and U.K. advertising and found that American advertising used more individualistic appeals than U. K. advertising, whereas U.K. advertising concentrated more on social class differences than U.S. advertising. The authors interpreted these results in favor of cultural adaptation. Katz and Lee (1992) also analyzed cultural values in U.S. and U.K. prime-time television advertising and suggested that in addition to cultural differences, advertisers should pay more attention to product category differences. Tansey et al. (1990) investigated the differences in advertising themes in magazine advertisements of

the automobile industry between U.S. and Brazil. Results demonstrated that urban themes were used more frequently in Brazilian ads and leisure themes more frequently in U.S. ads while work themes appeared equally frequently in both countries. Choi et al. (2012), using the FCB grid model and functional matching effects as theoretical frameworks, investigated whether a functional match-up existed between product types (think and feel) and message appeals (utilitarian and value expressive) in U.S. prime-time TV commercials. Results revealed that utilitarian appeals were used more in commercials for think products while value expressive appeals were used more in those for feel products. Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996), in order to test whether differences in advertising content mirror differences across cultures, examined the correlation between value appeals identified by Pollay (1983) and Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimension model¹⁴ through a content analysis of business print advertisements from 11 countries¹⁵. Results indicate that advertising appeals do relate to cultural values and that advertisers may use Hofstede's cultural dimension theory to gain insight into salient values that might appeal to target audience. Contrary to these findings, Hoeken et al. (2007) raised the question whether it is necessary to adapt advertising appeals for national audiences in Western Europe¹⁶. Their experiment results demonstrated that participants preferred adventure and modesty appeals regardless of their nationalities, implying the possibility of standardized advertising appeals in Western Europe.

6.2.3 Prior research on Eastern countries

Concerning studies on value appeals in Asian advertising, Belk and Pollay (1985)

¹⁴ The four cultural dimensions examined in Albers-Miller and Gelb's (1996) study are individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity.

¹⁵ The 11 countries included in Albers-Miller and Gelb's (1996) study are Japan, Taiwan, India, South Africa, Israel, France, Finland, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and USA.

¹⁶ Western European countries in Hoeken et al. (2007) research include Belgium, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. The appeals used in their research include modesty, success, adventure, and safety.

examined the differences of advertising themes in Japanese and American advertising and results demonstrate that though materialistic and modern value themes are important in both Japanese and the U.S. advertisements, Japanese advertising emphasizes more on status whereas the U.S. advertising emphasizes more on personal efficacy. Belk and Bryce (1986) investigated the level of materialism manifest in U.S. and Japanese magazine and television advertisements and found findings consistent with those of Belk and Pollay (1985), namely that Japanese ads employed more status themes than U. S. ads did. Similarly, through a comparison of U.S. and Japanese magazine advertisements, Mueller (1987) reported that soft-sell, veneration of elderly/traditional, and status appeals were more frequently used in Japanese ads, while hard-sell, youth/modernity, and product merit appeals were more frequently used in U.S. ads. Accordingly, Mueller (1992) contended that the very Japanese soft-sell appeal tended to be significantly more common in Japanese advertising, indicating that Japanese advertising remain Eastern and traditional rather than becoming Westernized. Contrary to these previous findings related to Japanese advertising, Okazaki and Mueller (2008) reported that Japanese advertisers appear to have turned to a rather more direct and persuasive selling approach while nevertheless continuing to maintain a tradition of Japanese subtlety, i.e., Japanese advertising may have become somewhat more ‘American’ or Westernized. This shift of Japanese advertising appeals and styles is mainly attributed to the dramatic economic recession experienced during Japan’s ‘lost decade’ in the 1990s (Okazaki and Mueller, 2011).

Han and Shavitt (1994) studied the influences of the individualistic/collectivistic cultural dimension on advertising appeals through a content analysis and found that magazine ads in the United States, an individualistic culture, employed appeals to

individual benefits and preferences, personal success, and independence to a greater extent than did advertisements in Korea, a collectivistic culture. In contrast, Korean advertisements employed appeals emphasizing ingroup benefits, harmony, and family integrity to a greater extent than did U.S. ads. Furthermore, a controlled experiment the authors conducted demonstrated that advertisements emphasizing individualistic benefits were more persuasive in the U.S. whereas advertisements emphasizing family and ingroup benefits were more persuasive in Korea. Cho et al. (1999) compared South Korean and U.S. television commercials in terms of advertising themes and executions on basis of a variety of cultural dimensions¹⁷ and results indicated that contrary to their hypotheses, more similarities rather than significant differences were observed. Limited differences lie in that Korean commercials stressed oneness-with-nature slightly more than U.S. commercials while U.S. commercials showed more individualism and used more direct approaches. To examine cross-cultural differences in advertising appeals between Hong Kong and Korea, Moon and Chan (2005) applied Hofstede's cultural dimension model to value appeals and revealed that femininity was an important variable for explaining differences in advertising between Hong Kong and Korea.

6.2.4 Prior research related to Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China

Tse, Belk and Zhou (1989) initially examined the longitudinal changes in advertising themes in three Chinese societies: PRC, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Results reveal that PRC ads emphasize utilitarian appeals, promise a better life, and focus on states of being as a consumption theme; Hong Kong ads stress hedonistic values, promise easier and American lifestyles, and focus on doing; Taiwan ads fall between these two extremes, but are converging toward Hong Kong ads in consumption appeals over time.

¹⁷ The cultural dimensions involved in Cho et al. (1999) study are individualism/collectivism, time orientation (past, present, future), relationship with nature (manipulation of nature, oneness with nature, subjugation to nature), and contextuality (low context, high context).

Shao, Raymond and Taylor (1999) interviewed 61 managing directors of advertising agencies in Taiwan and concluded that the advertising appeals in Taiwan tended to be dominated more by Westernized cultural values than by Chinese traditional values. Based on Cheng and Schweitzer's (1996) framework of cultural values, Chan (1999) content analyzed 600 print advertisements in Hong Kong for the period 1946 to 1996 and identified 'quality,' 'economy,' 'modernity,' 'popularity,' 'social status' and 'convenience' as the six dominant cultural values, which appeared to be a combination of utilitarian and symbolic values which emphasize on Westernization. Chan and Cheng (2002) compared television commercials from China and Hong Kong and reported that the top five cultural values in Chinese advertising were 'modernity,' 'family,' 'tradition,' 'technology' and 'collectivism' whereas the top five in Hong Kong commercials were 'quality,' 'effectiveness,' 'economy,' 'enjoyment' and 'modernity.' These findings indicated that Hong Kong advertising tended to use more Western values while Chinese advertising tended to use more Eastern values; Hong Kong advertising tended to use more utilitarian values while Chinese advertising tended to use more symbolic values. So (2004) examined women's magazine advertisements from Hong Kong and Australia and reported that compared to Australian ads, Hong Kong ads contained less emotional appeals.

As the pioneer of studying value appeals¹⁸ in Chinese advertising, Cheng (1994) studied the cultural values in Chinese magazine advertisements from 1982 to 1992 and identified 'modernity,' 'technology' and 'quality' as three predominant cultural values manifest in Chinese advertising over this period. He also observed the value changes in Chinese advertising that 'utilitarian' and 'product quality' values were used less frequently while more symbolic values and those suggestive of human emotions were

¹⁸ In fact, Cheng used the term of 'cultural values' in all his studies on this research topic.

used more frequently in 1992 advertisements. In a follow-up study, Cheng (1997) examined cultural values manifest in Chinese television commercials and found that 'modernity,' 'technology' and 'youth' predominated in Chinese commercials in the 1990s. Furthermore, he also found that while the use of symbolic values had increased, the use of utilitarian values had decreased over time. In a further comparative study on the cultural values reflected in Chinese and U.S. commercials, Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) reported that the dominant values in Chinese commercials were 'family,' 'technology' and 'tradition,' while the dominant values in U.S. commercials were 'enjoyment,' 'individualism' and 'economy.' 'Modernity' and 'youth' were used in both countries. The results suggest that while U.S. commercials tend to use both symbolic and utilitarian values, Chinese commercials more often feature symbolic values. Lin (2001) examined cultural values reflected in U.S. and Chinese advertising and the findings indicated that the portrayal of traditional Chinese cultural values remained relatively stable whereas the youth/modernity appeal reflecting Westernization as well as modernization appeared to be as prominently displayed in Chinese commercials as in the U.S. commercials. Zhang and Shavitt (2003) investigated the differences of cultural values in television commercials aiming at the mass market and in magazine advertisements targeting China's X-generation, whose members are supposed to be more economically prosperous and highly educated and who possess a strong potential purchasing power. Findings revealed that individualism and modernity values were more prevalent in advertising to this Chinese X-Generation compared with advertising to mass audiences while collectivism and tradition values were more prevalent in advertising to mass audiences compared with advertising to the X-generation. Zhang and Harwood (2004), under the process of globalization, examined cultural value

themes in Chinese television commercials and reported that the most dominant value themes were product effectiveness, family, modernity, beauty/youth and pleasure, indicating the coexistence of utilitarian and symbolic, modern and traditional values in Chinese advertising. Instead of studying value appeals via content analysis of ads, Zhou and Belk (2004) investigated Chinese consumers' understandings of global and local advertising, and found two dialectic reactions: the desire for global cosmopolitanism and status –Westernization oriented–, and the desire to invoke Chinese local traditional values. Cheng and Patwardhan (2010) examine cultural values in Chinese and Indian Television commercials and report that the use of cultural values is influenced by culture differences, brand origin, and product category, which they found to be the most important factor. Emery and Tian (2010) examined the relationship between Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimension concept and value appeals (Pollay, 1983) in U.S. and Chinese advertising. Findings of this study suggested that value appeals might be moderated more by other factors than by cultural differences.

6.2.5 Formulation of hypotheses and research questions

Utilitarian versus symbolic value appeals

Advertising appeals have been broadly categorized into two types: utilitarian and symbolic appeals. As discussed above, previous studies (e.g., Chan and Cheng, 2002; Cheng, 1994, 1997; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Zhang and Harwood, 2004; Wang and Praet, 2013b) have revealed the differences in the use of utilitarian and symbolic value appeals across a variety of countries, which are mainly attributed to cultural differences. Theoretically, Hall (1976) proposed that communication in low-context cultures is characterized by explicit, direct, unambiguous verbal messages whereas communication

in high-context cultures relies more on the physical context or is internalized in the person. Hofstede stated that collectivism is correlated with high-context in cultures, i.e., in collectivistic cultures, information flows more easily between members of the group and there is less need for explicit communication than in individualistic cultures. Advertising in high-context cultures is characterized by symbolism or indirect expression (De Mooij, 2005). With regard to cultural value appeals, research findings indicate that advertising from high-context and collectivist cultures tends to use more symbolic value appeals whereas advertising from low-context and individualist cultures tends to use more utilitarian value appeals. De Mooij (2005) states that most Asian cultures are high-context and that this particularly applies to Chinese culture. In addition, previous studies have found that Chinese advertising uses more symbolic than utilitarian appeals (Cheng 1994, 1997; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Chan and Cheng, 2002). Consequently, I formulate the first hypothesis:

H1: Symbolic value appeals are more frequently used than utilitarian value appeals in Chinese television commercials.

Western versus Eastern value appeals

An understanding of the interplay between local and foreign cultural value appeals is essential in creating an affinity with Chinese consumers to achieve the desired communication effects (Hung, Tse and Cheng, 2012). Due to the fact that all transnational advertising agencies have already entered China's advertising market (Hung, Tse and Cheng, 2012), Chinese advertising is under a considerable influence of Western culture (Cheng, 1994, 1997; Cheng and Patwardhan, 2010; Cheng and

Schweitzer, 1996). These researchers have stated that both Eastern and Western value appeals are playing an important role in Chinese commercials, arguing that advertising in China is a ‘melting pot’ of value appeals. A number of studies have reported consistent findings and have further investigated whether Eastern or Western value appeals dominate in Chinese advertising. Results indicate that even though China is a typical Eastern country characterized by a high-context and collectivistic culture, Eastern value appeals were less frequently used than Western value appeals in Chinese advertising (Cheng, 1994, 1997; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Chan and Cheng, 2002; Cheng and Patwardhan, 2010; Zhang and Harwood, 2004; Zhang and Shavitt, 2003; Zhou and Belk, 2004). Thus these findings lead to the second hypothesis:

H2: Western value appeals¹⁹ are more frequently used than Eastern value appeals²⁰ in Chinese television commercials.

Influence of brand origin

Prior studies (Cheng, 1994, 1997; Cheng and Patwardhan, 2010; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Zhang and Harwood, 2004, Wang and Praet, 2013b) have also examined the influence of product origin on the use of value appeals in Chinese advertising. Cheng (1994) classified product origins of Chinese television commercials into three categories, i.e., domestic, joint-venture and imported, and reported that commercials for imported products were the pacesetters for Western cultural value appeals, followed by commercials for joint-venture products. Cheng and Schweitzer

¹⁹ Western value appeals in this study include Adventure, Beauty/Vanity, Competition, Distinctiveness, Enjoyment/Leisure, Freedom, Individualism, Modernity, Sexuality, and Youth.

²⁰ Eastern value appeals in this study include Affection, Collectivism, Courtesy, Family/Kinship, Filial piety, Long-term orientation, Oneness with nature, Patriotism, Popularity, Reciprocation of greetings, favors and gifts, Respect for the elderly, Sincerity, Tradition, Trustworthiness

(1996) report similar results. Cheng (1997) found that ads for domestic products used more Eastern value appeals than those for joint-venture and imported products. In more recent studies researchers have classified Chinese advertising into two brand origin categories (domestic versus imported) and found that traditional value appeals were used more in ads for domestic brands whereas ads for imported brands used more Western value appeals (Cheng and Patwardhan, 2010; Zhang and Harwood, 2004). I thus formulate the following hypothesis based on these previous findings:

H3: Brand origins influence the use of value appeals in Chinese television commercials.

H3a: Chinese television commercials for domestic brands contain more Eastern value appeals than Western value appeals.

H3b: Chinese television commercials for foreign brands contain more Western value appeals than Eastern value appeals.

Influences of the FCB grid dimensions

Apart from product categories based on industry, the Foote, Cone and Belding (FCB) grid developed by Vaughn (1980, 1986), has also been frequently used for examining advertising content. As reviewed in previous chapters, the involvement level dimension accounts for the level of involvement in purchasing decisions. High-involvement products have been described as relevant, unusual, difficult to understand, risky, or otherwise worthy of a consumer's attention while low-involvement products are described to be commonplace, easy to use, or involving minimal risk or consideration (Ratchford, 1987), suggesting that high-involvement products may be associated more with utilitarian, informational advertising appeals whereas low-involvement products

may be associated more with non-informational or transformational advertising appeals (Weinberger and Spotts, 1989; Choi et al., 2006; Choi et al., 2012). The think dimension (cognition-based) is considered to be closely related to the utilitarian function while the feel dimension (emotion-based) is assumed to be related to the value expressive function (Ratchford, 1987; Choi et al., 2006; Choi et al., 2012). Nevertheless, few studies have empirically examined the influence of high/low involvement level or think/feel involvement type on cultural value appeals used in advertising. Based on the above conceptualization, I formulate the following hypotheses:

H4a: Ads for high-involvement products use more utilitarian value appeals than those for low-involvement products.

H4b: Ads for low-involvement products use more symbolic value appeals than those for high-involvement products.

H5a: Ads for think products use more utilitarian value appeals than those for feel products.

H5b: Ads for feel products use more symbolic value appeals than those for think products.

Value appeals in ads for goods versus ads for services

Nearly all the studies reviewed above studied cultural value appeals manifest in advertising mainly for goods and have not considered the influence of product type, –i.e., goods versus services– on the usage of advertising appeals. As explained in previous chapters, due to the fundamental differences between goods and services –in

particular the intangible nature of services—advertisers and marketers for services are expected and advised to pursue different advertising strategies and employ diversified value appeals to communicate with consumers (George and Berry, 1981; Albers-Miller and Stafford, 1999; Bang et al., 2004; Cutler and Javalgi, 1993). George and Berry's (1981) six guidelines and Berry and Clark's (1986) four communication strategies for services advertisers call for more tangible cues embedded in services advertising. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the tangible cues based on these guidelines and communication strategies do not necessarily need to be rational, informational, cognitive or utilitarian, that is to say, these cues may also be image-based, emotional or transformational. Tripp (1997) reviewed studies on services advertising—including 11 content analysis studies—from 1980 to 1995 and concluded that informational and factual appeals were used with greater frequency than emotional and affective appeals.

However, Tripp (1997) also points out that content analyses of services advertising have yielded conflicting findings. Zinkhan et al. (1992) compared advertising appeals in goods and services advertisements and concluded that services advertisements were more likely to use transformational appeals than goods ads. Cutler and Javalgi (1993) compared the visual components of magazine ads for consumer services (e.g., banking services), consumer durable goods (e.g., appliances) and consumer non-durable goods (e.g., food). Results indicated that services ads appeared to contain more emotional appeals than ads for goods. Albers-Miller and Stafford (1999) empirically examined advertising appeals for services and goods across four different countries: Brazil, Taiwan, Mexico and the US. Results indicate that emotional appeals are more frequently used in ads for services than in ads for goods. They also concluded that the use of rational appeals and emotional appeals differ both in terms of product type and culture.

Consistently, Mortimer and Grierson (2010) investigated advertising appeals used in service advertising between the UK and France and reported that emotional value appeals were more heavily used than rational appeals in service ads from both countries even though the cultural dimension differences of these two countries moderate the use of value appeals. Due to the inconsistent findings reported in previous studies and the fact that no prior research has examined the differences of value appeals in Chinese advertising for goods and services no hypotheses could be formulated. Instead, I propose the following research question:

RQ1: Are there any differences in the use of value appeals in Chinese advertising for goods and services? Specifically, is there a difference between Chinese services commercials and goods commercials in the use of utilitarian value appeals and symbolic value appeals?

Influence of product category

Cheng (1994, 1997) found that product categories influence the usage patterns of value appeals in both Chinese print and television advertising. For instance, automobile advertising frequently used ‘modernity,’ ‘technology,’ and ‘leisure’ appeals while cosmetics and fashion advertising heavily used ‘beauty,’ ‘modernity,’ and ‘sex’ value appeals. Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) report that the portrayal of cultural values in ads from both the U.S. and China varies by product category, e.g., the tradition value was more frequently used for food and drink ads, and for medicine ads. Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) content analyzed value appeals manifest in print advertising across eleven countries and, while they did not test for product-specific differences in value appeals,

they implicitly acknowledge the possibility of differences across product categories. Zhang and Harwood (2004) report differences in frequency of cultural values used in Chinese advertising across 11 product categories and find that the beauty/youth value was most common in ads for cosmetics whereas the 'pleasure' value was most commonly used in ads for food and drink. Zhou and Belk (2004) analyzed Chinese consumers' understandings of global and local advertising appeals through a reader-response approach and results indicated that consumer responses to advertising appeals differed by product category. I thus follow the prior findings that product categories influence the use of cultural values and propose the following research question:

RQ2: To what extent are cultural value appeals used differently across product categories in Chinese television commercials?

As shown in the above discussion, both conceptual analysis and a substantial body of prior empirical research have indicated that value appeals may differ by brand origin, goods versus services, high- versus low-involvement level, think versus feel involvement type, as well as across product categories as defined by more fine-grained product category typologies. The above hypotheses and research questions have focused on the influence of one single variable. However, it is also necessary to investigate whether there are any interaction effects for these individual factors on the usage of value appeals. Consequently, I propose the following research question:

RQ3: Are there any interaction effects among brand origin, goods versus services,

involvement level, and involvement type on the use of advertising value appeals?

6.3 Method

6.3.1 Coding framework

As reviewed above in this chapter, previous studies on cultural value appeals in advertising have proposed and used a number of coding schemes, most notably the frameworks developed by Pollay (1983), Mueller (1987, 1992), and Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) which is an adaptation and combination of the first two instruments. Due to the inherent Western bias of these schemes and the focus of our study on Chinese television advertising, I set out to incorporate more Chinese traditional cultural value appeals into my coding framework. While Cheng (1997) reports to have consulted studies on Chinese values for the design of the coding instrument of the study, no additional Chinese values were included in the final instrument due to a reported absence of these values in a pre-test. This however, does not necessarily mean that Chinese traditional values are not used in advertising, especially as it has been argued that with increasing wealth and experience consumers tend to become more comfortable with their own cultural heritage and identity (De Mooij, 2011), a trend advertisers would be expected to respond to. I thus set out to consider additional Chinese cultural values for potential inclusion into my instrument. For this purpose, I used a study by Fan (2000) who expanded a list of 40 Chinese values compiled by the Chinese Culture Connection (1987) researchers to a total of 71 core values. In order to make the list more manageable and to limit the coding scheme to values that are in fact used in Chinese advertising, I and one additional Chinese native coder conducted a pre-test using the lists of values proposed by Pollay (1983), Cheng and Schweitzer (1996), and

Fan (2000) on a sample of 100 commercials randomly selected from the study's sample. I kept all value appeals that I encountered at least once in these 100 commercials for inclusion into the final instrument. Through a process of elimination of value appeals not encountered in the pre-test and incorporation of appeals found in more than one of the value appeal lists, the final coding framework contained a total of 47 value appeals. I further classified all appeals into utilitarian and symbolic categories and provided operational definitions (see Table 6.1). As there is no agreement in the literature regarding the proper classification of some of the symbolic value appeals as either inherently Eastern or Western (e.g., social status, wealth, magic), I decided to not *a priori* classify all symbolic value appeals dichotomously. Instead, I only categorized the symbolic value appeals that have been congruently classified in prior studies. Consequently, Western value appeals include Adventure, Beauty/Vanity, Competition, Distinctiveness, Enjoyment/Leisure, Freedom, Individualism, Modernity, Sexuality, and Youth whereas Eastern value appeals include Affection, Collectivism, Courtesy, Family/Kinship, Filial piety, Long-term orientation, Oneness with nature, Patriotism, Popularity, Reciprocation of greetings, favors and gifts, Respect for the elderly, Sincerity, Tradition, and Trustworthiness.

Table 6.1 Value appeals and operational definitions

Value appeals	Operational definitions
Utilitarian value appeals	
Convenience ^{a c}	The product is suggested to be handy, easy to use, and timesaving.
Decorativeness ^a	The ad stresses the beautiful, decorative, adorned, designed or styled aspects of the product.
Durability ^a	The ad conveys that the product is long lasting, rugged, enduring or tough.
Economy ^{a c g}	The inexpensive, affordable, and cost-saving nature of a product is emphasized.

(Continued on next page)

(Table 6.1 continued)

Value appeals	Operational definitions
Effectiveness ^{a c}	The product or service is suggested to be powerful, useful, functional, efficient, helpful, and capable of achieving certain ends.
Health ^{a c g h}	The ad claims that the product will enhance or improve the strength, vitality, soundness, or robustness of the body.
Naturalness ^{a g}	The ad emphasizes the organic, unadulterated, nutritious nature and purity of the product or service.
Neatness ^{a c}	The ad stresses that use of the product or service will make or keep things clean, tidy, and free from dirt or smells.
Quality ^c	The emphasis is on the excellence of a product in terms of ingredients or performance. This may be done by referring to the product being a winner of awards in contests or to the result of tests conducted by either third parties or by the company in-house.
Safety ^a	The safe, secure, or protective nature of a product or service is emphasized, e.g., “has side airbags for all passengers,” “excellent record in crash tests,” “contains no harmful ingredients.”
Technology ^{a c}	The advanced and sophisticated technical skills to engineer and manufacture a particular product or use of technology based on scientific research are emphasized.
Symbolic value appeals	
Adventure ^{a c}	The ad conveys an image of boldness, daringness, bravery, courage, excitement, or thrill. Typical examples are rock climbing, skydiving or bungee jumping.
Affection ^e	The ad shows people holding hands or embracing each other. There is however, no notion of sensuality or sexuality involved.
Beauty ^{c/Vanity} ^a	The ad shows physically attractive people or suggests that the use of a product or service will enhance the loveliness, attractiveness, elegance, or handsomeness of an individual.
Collectivism ^{b c f} ^{g h}	The emphasis of the ad is on the individual in relation to others typically in the reference group, a sense of belonging or affiliation. Individuals are depicted as parts of the group. If the group is a family, coders should code it as “family.”
Commitment ^f	The ad presents a pledge, promise, and assurance or that the advertiser is dedicated to providing a quality product or service.
Competition ^{b c}	The emphasis here is on distinguishing a product from its counterparts by (aggressive) comparisons. While explicit comparisons may mention the competitor’s name, implicit comparisons may use such words as “number one” or “leading brand.”
Courtesy ^{c f}	Politeness and friendship toward the consumer are shown through the use of polite, polished and friendly language and/or body language such as bowing and other forms of proper etiquette.
Distinctiveness ^a	The ad associates the advertised product with rare, unique, unusual, exclusive, elegant or hand-crafted nature. Typical examples use the word of “the only,” “unique,” or “the best,” etc. note the difference from “Individualism” which refers to people.

(Continued on next page)

(Table 6.1 continued)

Value appeals	Operational definitions
Enjoyment/ Leisure ^{a c g}	Use of the product will bring one relaxation (e.g., rest, vacations, holidays) or enjoyment (e.g., fun, happiness, celebration).
Environmental concern ^{d e}	The ad associates the product or service with environmental concern and protection such as fuel economy and low CO2 emission or focuses on the environment-friendly attribute(s) of the product.
Expensiveness ^a	The ad associates the advertised product with high price, valuableness, extravagance or luxury.
Family/Kinship ^{a c f d h}	The emphasis here is the plus of a product or service to family life and family members. The commercial stresses family scenes: getting married, companionship of siblings, kinship, being at home, and suggests that a certain product is good for the whole family.
Filial piety ^{d f g h}	The ad presents a positive model of old age and/or suggests that the product should be purchased for elders to show love and respect.
Freedom ^a	The ad associates product users or buyers with a feeling of freedom, liberty, or indulgence.
Individualism ^{b c}	The ad emphasizes the self-sufficiency and self-reliance of an individual or on the individual as being distinct and unlike others.
Long-term orientation ^f	The ad focuses on persuading people to take a long-range view of the product or service, or to attach importance to long lasting relationships.
Magic ^{a c}	The emphasis is on the miraculous, magic, mystery effect and nature of a product.
Modernity ^{a c}	The ad emphasizes on the notion of being new, contemporary, modern, up-to-date, or ahead of time.
Morality ^{a f}	The ad conveys that the company, product or brand is ethical, just and fair.
Nurturance ^{a c}	The ad stresses giving charity, help, protection, support, or sympathy to the weak, disabled, young, or elderly.
Oneness with nature ^{b c f}	The ad emphasizes spiritual harmony between man and nature or the goodness and beauty of nature in relationship to people.
Patriotism ^{c f g h}	The ad suggests the love of and loyalty to one's own nation inherent in the nature or in the use of a product or service.
Popularity ^{a c}	The focus is on the universal recognition and acceptance of a certain product by consumers, e.g., "Best seller," "Well-known nationwide or worldwide."
Productivity ^a	The use of a product or service makes the users feel in control of their lives, or enable them to achieve their goals, achievement, accomplishment, ambition, success, and self-development.
Reciprocation of greetings, favors and gifts ^f	The ad shows that people give back or exchange favors and gifts, or that the advertiser rewards customer patronage with gifts, discount coupons, etc.
Respect for the elderly ^{b c}	The ad displays respect for elder people by using older models or by asking older people for their opinions, recommendations or advice.

(Continued on next page)

(Table 6.1 continued)

Value appeals	Operational definitions
Sexuality ^{a c g}	The ad uses sensual models or focuses on naked part of body, sexy appearance, and attractive sensual beauty of model or sexual attractiveness for promoting a product.
Sincerity ^f	The ad conveys that the company, brand or product is honest, truthful and does not try to deceive.
Social status ^{a c}	The use of a product or service is claimed to be able to elevate the position or rank of the user in the eyes of others. The feeling of prestige, trendsetting, or pride in the use of a product is conveyed.
Succorance ^a	The ad shows that users of the product or service receive expressions of love, gratitude or deserve something, e.g., “you deserve a break today.”
Tradition ^{a c f g h}	The experience of the past, customs, and conventions are respected. The qualities of being historical, time-honored, antique, classic and legendary are venerated, e.g., “with eighty years of manufacturing experience,” “adapted from ancient Chinese prescriptions.”
Trustworthiness ^f	The ad conveys that the company, product or brand can be trusted and relied on to be good and dependable.
Wealth ^{c f}	The ad conveys the idea that being affluent, prosperous, and rich should be encouraged and suggests that a certain product or service will make the user well off.
Wisdom ^{a c d f g h}	The ad shows respect for knowledge, education, intelligence, expertise, or experience, e.g. “judge for yourself,” “experts agree---”
Work ^c /Industry ^f	The ad associates the product or service with respect for diligence and dedication of one’s labor and skills.
Youth ^{a c}	The worship of the younger generation is shown through the depiction of younger models. The rejuvenating benefits of the product are stressed, e.g., ‘Feel young again!’

Value appeals were based on or adapted from the following sources: a: Pollay (1983); b: Mueller (1987); c: Cheng and Schweitzer (1996); d: Zhang and Harwood (2004); e: Wang and Praet (2013b); f: Fan (2000); g: Sun (2013); h: Zhang et al (2008).

6.3.2 Coding procedure

Three Chinese native speakers fluent in English coded the sample. First, coders were trained with written instructions containing coding procedures, and detailed explanations and definitions of all variables used in the study. Value appeals coded were either part of the visuals (e.g., characters, character interaction, background setting, visual symbols), verbal aspects (e.g., on-screen writing and captions, lines spoken by on-screen characters or by a voice-over), or music used in the advertisements. As part of

the training, coders jointly coded 20 Chinese commercials that were not part of the sample. Disagreements and misunderstandings were resolved through discussion and retraining. Each of the three coders then independently coded 70 commercials randomly selected from the sample. The inter-coder reliability was determined as the percentage of agreement among the three coders. The actual proportion of agreement for each coding variable in this study was between 0.81 and 1.00. Based on the proportional reduction in loss (PRL) approach suggested by Rust and Cooil (1994), and given the number of coders (3) and the number of categories (2), the PRL reliability measures for all the coding variables were over 0.94. Therefore, coding reliability was deemed satisfactory. Each coder then was in charge of coding a different part of the sample.

6.4 Results

Table 6.2 presents the total frequency and frequencies by brand origin (domestic versus foreign) of each value appeal used in Chinese television advertising. There are 8 value appeals with total frequencies over 20%, i.e., enjoyment/leisure (48.6%), effectiveness (38.7%), quality (31.7%), trustworthiness (30.9%), beauty/vanity (23.1%), productivity (22.4%), family/kinship (21.3%), and popularity (20.8%). Among the top 8 value appeals, ‘trustworthiness’ is the only newly added appeal in this study. If the least often used value appeals are counted, 8 appeals are less than 2%, i.e., respect for the elderly (0.6%), morality (0.6%), neatness (1.0%), durability (1.3%), courtesy (1.4%), filial piety (1.5%), wealth (1.6%), and expensiveness (1.8%).

Table 6.2 Frequencies of value appeals in Chinese television commercials

Appeal	Total (n=1439) %	Domestic (n=1140) %	Foreign (n=299) %	X² (df=1)	
Enjoyment/Leisure	48.6	47.0	54.8	5.816	*
Effectiveness	38.7	34.4	55.2	43.187	**
Quality	31.7	33.2	26.1	5.471	*
Trustworthiness	30.9	33.9	19.4	23.220	**
Beauty/Vanity	23.1	22.8	24.4	0.344	
Productivity	22.4	21.6	25.8	2.370	
Family/kinship	21.3	21.9	18.7	1.449	
Popularity	20.8	22.1	15.7	5.869	*
Sincerity	18.5	20.4	11.0	13.896	**
Modernity	17.0	11.7	37.5	111.537	**
Collectivism	17.0	17.9	13.4	3.432	*
Decorativeness	16.7	15.4	21.7	6.744	**
Oneness with nature	13.6	12.3	18.4	7.558	**
Technology	12.8	10.4	21.7	27.125	**
Magic	9.9	10.3	8.7	0.650	
Youth	9.2	8.3	12.4	4.643	*
Commitment	7.0	7.7	4.3	4.126	*
Health	6.8	7.6	3.7	5.831	*
Convenience	6.4	6.8	4.7	1.846	
Naturalness	6.3	6.9	4.0	3.401	
Competition	6.3	5.9	8.0	1.848	
Affection	6.3	6.6	5.0	0.986	
Long-term orientation	6.3	6.6	5.0	0.986	
Tradition	5.7	6.9	1.0	15.482	**
Economy	5.4	4.5	9.0	9.592	**
Wisdom	5.0	4.4	7.4	4.402	*
Sexuality	3.9	3.2	6.4	6.121	*
Distinctiveness	3.3	3.6	2.3	1.158	
Safety	3.3	2.8	5.0	3.661	*
Nurturance	3.3	3.5	2.3	1.022	
Environmental concern	3.2	3.2	3.3	0.027	
Patriotism	3.1	3.9	0.3	9.717	**
Individualism	2.8	1.8	6.7	21.343	**
Freedom	2.6	2.2	4.0	3.133	
Reciprocation of greetings, favors and gifts	2.4	2.8	1.0	3.247	*
Work/Industry	2.3	2.2	2.7	0.246	
Social status	2.1	1.7	3.7	4.699	*
Succorance	2.1	2.4	1.0	2.162	
Adventure	2.0	1.7	3.3	3.377	
Expensiveness	1.8	1.3	3.7	7.456	**

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(Table 6.2 continued)

Appeal	Total (n=1439) %	Domestic (n=1140) %	Foreign (n=299) %	X² (df=1)
Wealth	1.6	1.8	0.7	2.073
Filial piety	1.5	1.8	0.7	1.854
Courtesy	1.4	1.4	1.3	0.007
Durability	1.3	1.6	0.3	2.816
Neatness	1.0	0.8	1.7	1.916
Morality	0.6	0.8	0.0	2.375
Respect for the elderly	0.6	0.8	0.0	2.375

*: p<0.05; **: p<0.01

In order to test H1, I compared the frequencies of utilitarian and symbolic appeals (Table 6.3). Results show that the total frequency of utilitarian value appeals is 1877 while that of symbolic appeals is 4741. This difference is significant ($X^2=1239.4$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$). In addition, instead of examining total value appeals, I also compared the difference among the top 8 appeals with frequencies over 20% and the difference among the top 14 appeals with frequencies over 10%. Results indicate that symbolic value appeals are used with significantly greater frequency than utilitarian appeals in both cases. Thus H1 is supported. Furthermore, commercials are classified into two groups according to product brand origin, domestic or foreign. Table 6.3 indicates that symbolic value appeals are significantly more frequently used than utilitarian value appeals in commercials for both Chinese domestic and foreign brands, further supporting H1. In addition, Table 6.3 also shows that utilitarian value appeals are more frequently used in commercials for foreign brands than in those for Chinese domestic brands ($t=-4.06$, $p<0.01$, $df=1437$) whereas symbolic value appeals are used in similar frequencies between commercials for domestic and foreign brands.

With regard to H2, results show that the total frequency of Western value appeals is 1711 whereas that of Eastern value appeals is 2147 (Table 6.3), indicating significant

differences ($X^2=49.273$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$). Since Eastern value appeals are significantly more frequently used than Western appeals in Chinese television advertising, H2 is not supported.

With regards to H3, results suggest that Eastern value appeals are significantly more frequently used than Western appeals in commercials for Chinese domestic brands ($X^2=111.13$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) whereas Western appeals are significantly more frequently used than Eastern appeals in commercials for foreign brands ($X^2=26.316$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$), lending support to both H3a and H3b respectively. In addition, I also compared differences of value appeals between brand origins. Table 6.3 shows that Western appeals are significantly more frequently used in commercials for foreign brands than in those for Chinese domestic brands ($t=-7.2$, $p<0.01$, $df=423.1$) while Eastern appeals are significantly more frequently used in commercials for Chinese domestic brands than those for foreign brands ($t=6.42$, $p<0.01$, $df=568.31$), further supporting H3a and H3b respectively.

Besides the general tendencies of utilitarian versus symbolic, and Eastern versus Western value appeals, I also respectively compared frequencies of each specific value appeal across brand origins and found significant differences in 24 value appeals (Table 6.2). Though most of them are consistent with the overall tendencies that have been confirmed in H3, several value appeals show a contrary tendency. For instance, 'quality' and 'health' are more often used in ads for domestic products whereas 'oneness with nature' is more frequently used in ads for foreign products.

Table 6.3 Frequencies of value appeal across brand origin

Appeal	Total (n=1439)	Domestic brands (n=1140)	Foreign brands (n=299)	t (df=1437)
Utilitarian	1877	1419	458	-4.06**
Symbolic	4741	3741	1000	-0.51
X² (df=1)	1239.4**	1044.9**	201.5**	
Western	1711	1233	478	-7.2^a**
Eastern	2147	1815	332	6.42^b**
X² (df=1)	49.273**	111.13**	26.316**	

*: p<0.05; **: p<0.01; a: df=423.1; b: df=568.31

Table 6.4 Frequencies of value appeals across FCB dimensions (1)

Appeal	High-involvement products (n=802)	Low-involvement products (n=520)	t
Utilitarian	1165	633	4.086 ^a **
Symbolic	2411	1950	-7.159 ^b **
Appeal	Think products (n=872)	Feel products (n=450)	t
Utilitarian	1327	471	8.033 ^c **
Symbolic	2855	1506	-0.676

***: p<0.01. a: df=1290.165; b: df=1046.148; c: df=1030.219

In regard to H4 and H5, products are categorized based on the involvement level and think/feel involvement type of the FCB grid. Results in Table 6.4 show that ads for high-involvement products (n=802) employ an average of 1.45 utilitarian value appeals while those for low-involvement products (n=520) employ an average of 1.22 utilitarian value appeals, and this difference is significant (t=4.086, p<0.01, df=1290.165). Thus H4a is supported. On the other hand, ads for low-involvement products feature an average of 3.75 symbolic value appeals while those for high-involvement products use 3.01 symbolic value appeals. The difference is significant (t=7.159, p<0.01, df=1046.148) and supports H4b. Thus, H4 is supported. Regarding H5, ads for think products (n=872) use an average of 1.52 utilitarian value appeals while those for feel products (n=450) use an average of 1.05 utilitarian value appeals. The difference is

significant ($t=8.033$, $p<0.01$, $df=1030.219$). Thus H5a is supported. On the other hand, ads for feel products use an average of 3.35 symbolic value appeals whereas those for think products use an average of 3.27 value appeals, and the difference is not significant. Thus H5b is not supported. Consequently, H5 is only partially supported.

Rather than the above general patterns, I also examined the usages of specific value appeals based on the FCB grid model (Table 6.5, Table 6.6) and results on specific value appeals are not entirely consistent with the above general patterns. As far as utilitarian value appeals are concerned, compared to ads for low-involvement products, ads for high-involvement products contain significantly more utilitarian value appeals, i.e., decorativeness, technology, safety, and durability. In contrast, several utilitarian value appeals are significantly more often used in ads for low-involvement products, i.e., effectiveness, health, naturalness, and neatness. On the other hand, ads for think products contain significantly more utilitarian appeals, i.e., effectiveness, technology, convenience, economy, health, and neatness, while ads for feel products also contain two utilitarian appeals at significantly higher frequencies, i.e., decorativeness and naturalness. In regard to symbolic value appeals, most of them are significantly more often used in ads for low-involvement products than in those for high-involvement products; however, several symbolic value appeals demonstrate an opposite tendency, i.e., modernity, sexuality, environmental concern, individualism, patriotism, social status, and adventure are used more often in ads for high-involvement products. In addition, many specific symbolic appeals are also used significantly differently in ads for think and feel products, even though in general the differences are not significant. Furthermore, in order to investigate the usages of value appeals under the FCB grid model, Table 6.6 shows frequencies of each value appeal across the four FCB grid

quadrants, which allows comparisons of every two quadrants and generates more detailed results. As Table 6.6 demonstrates, most of the value appeals are used significantly differently across the four quadrants.

Table 6.5 Frequencies of value appeals across FCB dimensions (2)

Appeal	High involvement (n=802) %	Low involvement (n=520) %	X² (df=1)	Think (n=872) %	Feel (n=450) %	X² (df=1)
Enjoyment/Leisure	42.9	61.3	42.970**	50.8	48.9	0.435
Effectiveness	38.0	44.8	6.005*	53.3	16.2	169.313**
Quality	33.8	32.3	0.313	33.3	33.1	0.003
Decorativeness	29.1	0.6	174.425**	14.0	25.3	26.040**
Trustworthiness	27.6	36.0	10.445**	31.1	30.4	0.056
Beauty/Vanity	22.3	28.5	6.393*	19.3	35.3	41.160**
Productivity	21.9	21.2	0.117	23.4	18.2	4.684*
Modernity	21.7	11.5	22.342**	19.8	13.6	8.046**
Technology	19.1	5.4	50.052**	15.9	9.3	10.965**
Family/kinship	19.0	25.6	8.186**	26.0	12.9	30.321**
Oneness with nature	14.6	12.1	1.64	12.6	15.6	2.183
Popularity	14.5	29.8	45.573**	18.1	25.1	8.904**
Sincerity	11.8	24.4	35.716**	18.3	13.8	4.438*
Collectivism	10.6	27.5	63.140**	14.6	22.4	12.915**
Youth	7.7	11.2	4.479*	6.7	13.8	18.265**
Competition	7.4	4.8	3.444	6.9	5.3	1.194
Magic	7.4	14.8	18.977**	11.5	8.0	3.868*
Tradition	6.9	4.4	3.368	3.7	10.2	22.954**
Commitment	5.9	6.5	0.252	8.0	2.4	16.086**
Convenience	5.7	6.7	0.543	8.4	1.8	22.437**
Economy	5.6	3.5	3.211	6.5	1.3	17.708**
Affection	5.2	7.7	3.269	5.6	7.3	1.499
Sexuality	5.1	1.7	9.912**	3.4	4.4	0.822
Long-term orientation	5.0	6.3	1.116	6.7	3.3	6.264*
Environmental concern	4.7	0.6	18.177**	3.6	2.2	1.755
Individualism	4.6	0.6	17.518**	1.7	5.6	14.881**
Health	4.4	11.7	25.421**	8.6	4.7	6.822**
Wisdom	4.4	6.7	3.524	6.1	3.8	3.132
Safety	3.9	1.9	3.960*	3.7	2.0	2.754
Patriotism	3.7	1.7	4.451*	2.4	4.0	2.627
Naturalness	3.1	12.5	43.774**	5.0	10.2	12.536**

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(Table 6.5 continued)

Appeal	High involvement (n=802) %	Low involvement (n=520) %	X ² (df=1)	Think (n=872) %	Feel (n=450) %	X ² (df=1)
Social status	3.0	1.0	6.065*	1.4	3.8	7.980**
Freedom	2.9	2.3	0.384	1.9	4.0	4.842*
Adventure	2.7	1.2	3.843*	1.6	3.1	3.246
Distinctiveness	2.6	4.6	3.826*	3.1	4.0	0.737
Expensiveness	2.4	1.2	2.511	1.3	3.1	5.473*
Nurturance	2.4	5.0	6.641**	4.9	0.4	18.173**
Durability	2.2	0.2	9.378**	1.8	0.7	2.86
Work/Industry	2.0	2.1	0.023	2.8	0.7	6.454*
Courtesy	1.5	0.8	1.395	1.3	1.1	0.056
Succorance	1.4	2.5	2.254	1.8	1.8	0.005
Wealth	1.4	1.9	0.614	2.2	0.4	5.712*
Filial piety	1.2	1.7	0.521	1.6	1.1	0.512
Reciprocation of greetings favors and gifts	1.1	4.6	15.816**	2.2	3.1	1.06
Respect for the elderly	0.7	0.4	N/A	0.3	1.1	2.904
Morality	0.5	0.8	N/A	0.8	0.2	1.663
Neatness	0.4	2.1	9.129**	1.6	0.0	7.302**

*: p<0.05; **: p<0.01

Table 6.6 Frequencies of value appeals across FCB dimensions (3)

Appeal	H/T (n=467) %	H/F (n=335) %	L/T (n=405) %	L/F (n=115) %	X ² (df=3)
Effectiveness	53.3	16.7	53.3	14.8	169.446**
Enjoyment/Leisure	45.4	39.4	57.0	76.5	59.374**
Quality	34.7	32.5	31.6	34.8	1.128
Modernity	27.0	14.3	11.6	11.3	43.784**
Decorativeness	25.7	33.7	0.5	0.9	183.022**
Technology	25.3	10.4	5.2	6.1	86.370**
Productivity	24.4	18.5	22.2	17.4	5.36
Trustworthiness	24.0	32.5	39.3	24.3	26.469**
Family/kinship	24.0	11.9	28.4	15.7	33.515**
Beauty/Vanity	15.8	31.3	23.2	47.0	58.688**
Oneness with nature	13.7	15.8	11.4	14.8	3.276
Sincerity	12.0	11.6	25.7	20.0	37.801**
Popularity	11.8	18.2	25.4	45.2	72.038**
Magic	9.4	4.5	13.8	18.3	26.051**
Economy	9.2	0.6	3.5	3.5	35.080**
Competition	8.4	6.0	5.2	3.5	5.742

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(Table 6.6 continued)

Appeal	H/T (n=467) %	H/F (n=335) %	L/T (n=405) %	L/F (n=115) %	X² (df=3)
Convenience	8.4	2.1	8.4	0.9	22.660**
Commitment	7.7	3.3	8.4	0.0	17.869**
Collectivism	7.5	14.9	22.7	44.3	100.053**
Youth	6.2	9.9	7.2	25.2	42.997**
Long-term orientation	6.0	3.6	7.4	2.6	7.248
Environmental concern	6.0	3.0	0.7	0.0	24.224**
Health	5.8	2.4	11.9	11.3	28.797**
Affection	5.1	5.4	6.2	13.0	10.555*
Safety	5.1	2.1	2.0	1.7	10.013*
Wisdom	4.7	3.9	7.7	3.5	6.907
Sexuality	4.5	6.0	2.2	0.0	12.291**
Nurturance	3.6	0.6	6.4	0.0	23.362**
Durability	3.2	0.9	0.2	0.0	16.806**
Freedom	2.8	3.0	1.0	7.0	12.796**
Work/Industry	2.8	0.9	2.7	0.0	6.802
Tradition	2.6	12.8	4.9	2.6	41.274**
Individualism	2.6	7.5	0.7	0.0	33.603**
Patriotism	2.6	5.4	2.2	0.0	11.351**
Distinctiveness	2.4	3.0	4.0	7.0	6.522
Adventure	2.1	3.6	1.0	1.7	6.041
Wealth	1.9	0.6	2.5	0.0	6.315
Social status	1.5	5.1	1.2	0.0	18.326**
Courtesy	1.5	1.5	1.0	0.0	N/A
Expensiveness	1.1	4.2	1.5	0.0	13.730**
Filial piety	1.1	1.5	2.2	0.0	N/A
Naturalness	0.9	6.3	9.9	21.7	72.647**
Succorance	0.9	2.1	3.0	0.9	6.119
Reciprocation of greetings favors and gifts	0.9	1.5	3.7	7.8	22.394**
Morality	0.6	0.3	1.0	0.0	N/A
Neatness	0.6	0.0	2.7	0.0	16.203**
Respect for the elderly	0.2	1.5	0.5	0.0	N/A

*: p<0.05; **: p<0.01

Regarding RQ1, Table 6.7 demonstrates the differences in the use of value appeals in advertising for goods and services. The top 6 value appeals used in goods ads are enjoyment/leisure, effectiveness, quality, trustworthiness, beauty/vanity and family/kinship while those in services ads are sincerity, productivity, enjoyment/leisure, trustworthiness, popularity and commitment. This means that goods and services commercials share only ‘enjoyment/leisure’ and ‘trustworthiness’ among the top six appeals, indicating that services advertising concentrates on different appeals from goods advertising. Results in Table 6.7 also reveal that compared to goods ads, Chinese services ads contain less utilitarian appeals that symbolize tangibility, such as effectiveness and quality. A comparison of all 47 variables, reveals that 23 appeals are used significantly differently between goods and services ads, among which most of the utilitarian value appeals are more frequently used in goods ads than in services ads except for the appeals of convenience and economy. In general, results show that the frequency of utilitarian value appeals is significantly higher in goods ads than in services ads, i.e., 1.43 versus 0.66 utilitarian appeals per ad ($t=11.514$, $p<0.000$, $df=364.108$), while the frequency of symbolic appeals is significantly higher in services ads than in goods ads, i.e., 4.07 versus 3.14 symbolic appeals per ad ($t=5.275$, $p<0.000$, $df=266.166$). Furthermore, results demonstrate an interesting trend that Western value appeals are significantly more often used in goods ads than in services ads, i.e., 1.28 versus 0.72 Western appeals per ad ($t=8.487$, $p<0.000$, $df=355.979$). On the other hand, Eastern value appeals are significantly more often used in services ads than in goods ads, i.e., 2.19 versus 1.35 Eastern appeals per ad ($t=7.104$, $p<0.000$, $df=271.842$).

Table 6.7 Differences of value appeals in goods and services commercials

Value appeals	Goods (n=1202) %	Services (n=228) %	X² (df=1)
Enjoyment/Leisure	50.1	41.2	6.015*
Effectiveness	42.2	21.5	34.518**
Quality	35.6	11	53.771**
Trustworthiness	31.2	28.5	0.651
Beauty/Vanity	26.6	5.7	46.954**
Family/kinship	20.7	24.6	1.689
Popularity	19.9	25.4	3.594
Decorativeness	19.6	2.2	41.343**
Modernity	19.2	6.1	23.086**
Productivity	17.3	48.2	106.100**
Collectivism	16.8	17.1	0.012
Technology	15	1.8	29.878**
Oneness with nature	13.2	14.5	0.256
Sincerity	10.3	60.5	322.680**
Magic	10.1	9.2	0.188
Youth	9.4	8.3	0.261
Health	7.9	1.3	13.029**
Naturalness	7.5	0.4	15.981**
Competition	6.8	3.5	3.567
Affection	6.1	6.1	0.002
Tradition	5.6	6.6	0.358
Wisdom	5.4	3.1	2.190
Convenience	4.8	14.5	29.941**
Economy	4.5	10.5	13.530**
Sexuality	4.1	3.1	0.516
Commitment	3.7	25	132.952**
Long-term orientation	3.7	18.4	72.256**
Distinctiveness	3.6	2.2	1.132
Safety	3.4	2.6	0.366
Environmental concern	3.3	2.2	0.810
Individualism	3.2	0.9	3.678
Freedom	2.8	0.9	2.971
Patriotism	2.4	7	13.334**
Adventure	2.3	0	5.417*
Reciprocation of greetings favors and gifts	2.2	3.9	2.555
Social status	2.2	0.9	1.808
Nurturance	2.1	9.6	34.543**
Expensiveness	2.1	0	4.826*
Succorance	1.8	3.1	1.483
Work/Industry	1.6	5.7	14.878**

(Continued on next page)

(Table 6.7 continued)

Value appeals	Goods (n=1202) %	Services (n=228) %	X² (df=1)
Filial piety	1.6	1.3	0.089
Durability	1.6	0	3.653
Neatness	1.2	0	2.682
Courtesy	0.9	3.9	12.778**
Respect for the elderly	0.6	0.9	0.266
Wealth	0.5	7.5	58.613**
Morality	0.4	1.8	5.489*

*: p<0.05; **: p<0.01

In order to answer RQ2, I classified all the commercials into 16 product categories as well as ‘Others’ based on their industry origin. Table 6.8 shows the frequencies of each value appeal across 16 product categories. The five most frequently used value appeals in each product category are marked with a grey fill in Table 6.8. if we take a closer look at several representative product categories for which the sample size is relatively large, alcohol commercials heavily use trustworthiness, quality, decorativeness, tradition and enjoyment/leisure; car ads heavily use enjoyment/leisure, effectiveness, decorativeness, modernity and productivity; fashion ads heavily use beauty/vanity, popularity, collectivism, trustworthiness and enjoyment/leisure; finance and insurance ads heavily use sincerity, productivity, enjoyment/leisure, family/kinship and commitment; food and drink ads heavily use enjoyment/leisure, quality, trustworthiness, beauty/vanity and family/kinship as well as popularity; medicine ads heavily use effectiveness, trustworthiness, enjoyment/leisure, family/kinship and popularity; home durable appliance ads heavily use effectiveness, enjoyment/leisure, quality, trustworthiness and technology as well as beauty/vanity; personal care ads heavily use effectiveness, enjoyment/leisure, beauty/vanity, modernity and quality. Results indicate that the distributions of value appeals greatly differ across product categories with the

notable exception of ‘enjoyment/leisure,’ which is –the only shared value appeal among the top five appeals– across all product categories. Consequently it is clear that product category influences the use of value appeals.

The above findings have confirmed the influence of brand origin, purchasing involvement, the think/feel dimension, the goods/services dimension and product category on the use of value appeals in advertising content.

I will now examine whether and how these factors have interactive influences. Regarding the commercials for services (n=228), only 7 ads for foreign services and 1 ad for feel services are included, thus it is not appropriate to include these two factors when examining the interaction effects.

Thus, I conducted a three-way ANOVA ($2 \times 2 \times 2$) in order to examine interaction effects on the usage of utilitarian and symbolic value appeals in terms of brand origin, involvement level, and involvement type (think versus feel). Regarding the usage of utilitarian value appeal, Origin ($F=4.583$, $p<0.05$, $df=1$), Involvement level ($F=14.795$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$), and Involvement type ($F=38.347$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) show significant main effects; none of the Origin*Involvement level, Origin*Involvement type, or Involvement level*Involvement type show significant two-way interaction effects; Origin*Involvement level*Involvement type ($F=4.705$, $p<0.05$, $df=1$) shows significant three-way interaction effects (Table 6.9). Regarding the usage of symbolic value appeals, Involvement level ($F=23.807$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) and Involvement type ($F=8.126$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) show significant main effects whereas Origin does not show any main effects; only Origin*Involvement level ($F=0.027$, $p<0.05$, $df=1$) show significant two-way interaction effects; three-way interaction effects are not significant (Table 6.9). To further illustrate the differences of using utilitarian and symbolic value appeals in terms

of these three variables, I specify the simple main effects of each variable within each level combination of the other effects (Table 6.10). In terms of 'Origin,' within High involvement*Think category, there is no significant difference in the use of utilitarian or symbolic appeals between ads for local and foreign brands; within the High involvement*Feel category, ads for foreign brands use significantly more utilitarian ($F=10.072$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) and symbolic ($F=4.537$, $p<0.05$, $df=1$) appeals than those for local brands; no significant simple main effects are confirmed on the usage of either utilitarian or symbolic appeal in ads for the Low involvement*Think or the Low involvement*Feel category. In terms of 'Involvement level,' within the Local*Think category, ads for high-involvement products use significantly more utilitarian ($F=31.683$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) and less symbolic ($F=36.540$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) appeals than those for low-involvement products; within the Local*Feel category, ads for low-involvement products use significantly more symbolic ($F=26.236$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$) appeals than those for high-involvement products; within the Foreign*Think category, no significant simple main effects are found; within the Foreign*Feel category, ads for high-involvement products use significantly more utilitarian ($F=4.814$, $p<0.05$, $df=1$) appeals than those for low-involvement products. In terms of 'Involvement type,' ads for think products use significantly more Utilitarian appeal than those for feel products within all four categories under Origin*Involvement level, i.e., Local*High involvement ($F=69.602$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$), Local*Low involvement ($F=4.621$, $p<0.05$, $df=1$), Foreign*High involvement ($F=6.352$, $p<0.05$, $df=1$), and Foreign*Low involvement ($F=6.785$, $p<0.01$, $df=1$); no significant simple main effects are found in any of these categories under Origin*Involvement level.

Table 6.8 Percentages of value appeals across product categories

Appeal	Alc	Car	D	E	F	F & I	F & D	M	Ap	H & D	I	IT	Me	P	R	S
Adventure	1.7	6.3	0.0	0.0	5.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0
Affection	0.8	5.8	3.3	5.6	12.8	7.6	7.7	2.2	4.4	5.6	10.8	11.0	0.0	7.0	0.0	0.0
Beauty/Vanity	18.3	3.4	30.0	0.0	51.2	5.9	36.9	8.8	29.1	20.8	5.4	31.7	0.0	50.0	13.0	3.7
Collectivism	24.2	5.3	20.0	5.6	31.4	22.0	28.8	19.8	5.5	1.4	13.5	23.2	40.0	14.0	4.3	14.8
Commitment	0.0	5.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.5	0.4	1.1	5.5	13.9	18.9	6.1	0.0	5.0	52.2	7.4
Competition	8.3	7.8	20.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	3.4	2.2	9.9	9.7	8.1	11.0	20.0	6.0	0.0	7.4
Convenience	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.8	0.0	4.4	7.7	6.9	8.1	34.1	40.0	3.0	26.1	3.7
Courtesy	2.5	3.4	0.0	0.0	1.2	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7
Decorativeness	43.3	42.7	0.0	5.6	7.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	22.5	48.6	8.1	13.4	0.0	1.0	4.3	0.0
Distinctiveness	4.2	1.5	0.0	0.0	2.3	1.7	8.2	3.3	2.2	2.8	5.4	3.7	0.0	2.0	0.0	3.7
Durability	0.0	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	4.2	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Economy	0.0	14.6	10.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	1.7	2.2	3.8	1.4	5.4	6.1	20.0	2.0	52.2	7.4
Effectiveness	0.8	45.1	86.7	0.0	7.0	23.7	27.9	71.4	58.2	12.5	21.6	69.5	0.0	79.0	13.0	37.0
Enjoyment/Leisure	31.7	51.5	70.0	22.2	25.6	50.8	60.1	36.3	47.8	58.3	21.6	57.3	20.0	66.0	52.2	33.3
Environmental concern	0.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.9	0.0	10.4	11.1	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expensiveness	8.3	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Family/kinship	6.7	13.6	53.3	5.6	5.8	31.4	29.2	31.9	26.9	31.9	18.9	7.3	0.0	17.0	39.1	7.4
Filial piety	4.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	9.9	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.7	0.0
Freedom	1.7	8.7	3.3	5.6	2.3	0.8	2.6	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	2.4	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Health	2.5	0.0	3.3	0.0	2.3	0.8	12.4	24.2	11.5	4.2	5.4	4.9	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
Individualism	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	17.4	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.0	2.4	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Long-term orientation	1.7	8.7	0.0	0.0	1.2	25.4	3.0	8.8	1.6	6.9	21.6	1.2	0.0	0.0	13.0	3.7
Magic	3.3	5.8	20.0	5.6	3.5	11.9	12.9	15.4	9.3	9.7	10.8	20.7	0.0	12.0	4.3	3.7
Modernity	9.2	41.7	16.7	0.0	3.5	2.5	9.0	3.3	18.7	8.3	10.8	39.0	0.0	30.0	26.1	3.7
Morality	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	3.3	0.0	1.4	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

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(Table 6.8 continued)

Appeal	Alc	Car	D	E	F	F & I	F & D	M	Ap	H & D	I	IT	Me	P	R	S
Naturalness	6.7	0.0	3.3	5.6	1.2	0.0	21.9	2.2	1.1	6.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
Neatness	0.0	0.0	36.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nurturance	0.0	2.9	6.7	0.0	2.3	17.8	0.4	12.1	0.0	0.0	2.7	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Oneness with nature	6.7	26.7	10.0	33.3	15.1	17.8	13.7	4.4	6.6	15.3	13.5	11.0	0.0	12.0	4.3	0.0
Patriotism	10.8	2.9	0.0	0.0	3.5	8.5	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.4	8.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1
Popularity	25.0	15.0	20.0	11.1	32.6	28.8	29.2	25.3	6.6	9.7	21.6	23.2	40.0	15.0	13.0	33.3
Productivity	7.5	38.8	6.7	27.8	20.9	66.9	18.0	4.4	7.1	23.6	29.7	8.5	0.0	16.0	34.8	25.9
Quality	43.3	36.4	23.3	0.0	16.3	9.3	47.6	22.0	41.2	38.9	18.9	26.8	40.0	24.0	13.0	7.4
Reciprocation of greetings favors and gifts	5.0	0.5	3.3	0.0	0.0	5.9	7.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	3.7
Respect for the elderly	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	1.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7
Safety	0.8	12.6	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.8	3.0	0.0	2.2	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.7	0.0
Sexuality	1.7	4.9	0.0	5.6	12.8	0.8	0.9	1.1	7.7	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	17.4	3.7
Sincerity	15.0	14.1	0.0	44.4	10.5	83.1	17.2	14.3	0.0	12.5	54.1	7.3	20.0	0.0	17.4	25.9
Social status	7.5	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.9	1.1	0.0	8.3	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Succorance	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	1.3	13.2	0.0	1.4	2.7	0.0	0.0	3.0	8.7	3.7
Technology	9.2	35.0	6.7	0.0	8.1	0.0	7.7	4.4	29.1	6.9	8.1	2.4	0.0	6.0	4.3	0.0
Tradition	33.3	2.9	0.0	5.6	1.2	9.3	0.9	5.5	1.6	4.2	5.4	0.0	0.0	7.0	4.3	0.0
Trustworthiness	46.7	12.6	30.0	5.6	29.1	24.6	43.3	46.2	33.0	37.5	45.9	17.1	0.0	15.0	43.5	29.6
Wealth	0.8	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.4
Wisdom	2.5	3.9	3.3	0.0	4.7	5.1	8.2	9.9	3.3	2.8	2.7	6.1	0.0	8.0	0.0	0.0
Work/Industry	1.7	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.8	1.7	0.0	0.5	0.0	8.1	1.2	0.0	2.0	0.0	7.4
Youth	4.2	11.7	3.3	5.6	18.6	5.9	15.5	9.9	0.0	5.6	5.4	7.3	0.0	12.0	17.4	18.5

Alc: alcohol; Car: automobile, motorbike and parts; D: detergent; E: events; F: fashion; F&I: finance and insurance; F&D: food and drinks; M: medicine; Ap: appliances; H&D: housing and decoration; I: institutional; IT: IT, telecom and electronics; Me: media; P: personal care; R: retailing; S: services.

Table 6.9 Test of between-subject effects (three-way ANOVA) - dependent variable: utilitarian, symbolic

Source	df	Utilitarian		Symbolic	
		Mean Square	F	Mean Square	F
Origin	1	5.044	4.583*	0.384	0.117
Involvement level	1	16.283	14.795**	77.842	23.807**
Involvement type	1	42.204	38.347**	26.570	8.126**
Origin * Involvement level	1	1.226	1.114	16.021	4.900*
Origin * Involvement type	1	0.005	0.004	4.483	1.371
Involvement level * Involvement type	1	0.442	0.402	5.153	1.576
Origin * Involvement level * Involvement type	1	5.178	4.705*	0.094	0.029
Error	1314	1.101		3.270	

*: $p < 0.05$; **: $p < 0.01$

Table 6.10 Simple main effects of three-way ANOVA

			Average cues	Utilitarian (F)	Average cues	Symbolic (F)
High involvement	Think	Local	1.699	0.639	2.890	1.294
		Foreign	1.787		3.107	
	Feel	Local	0.977	10.072**	2.973	4.537*
		Foreign	1.405		3.468	
Low involvement	Think	Local	1.246	3.704	3.727	3.467
		Foreign	1.515		3.279	
	Feel	Local	0.978	0.158	4.112	0.034
		Foreign	0.885		4.038	
Local	Think	High involvement	1.699	31.683**	2.890	36.540**
		Low involvement	1.246		3.727	
	Feel	High involvement	0.977	0.000	2.973	26.236**
		Low involvement	0.978		4.112	
Foreign	Think	High involvement	1.787	2.939	3.107	0.399
		Low involvement	1.515		3.279	
	Feel	High involvement	1.405	4.814*	3.468	1.945
		Low involvement	0.885		4.038	
Local	High involvement	Think	1.699	69.602**	2.890	0.308
		Feel	0.977		2.973	
	Low involvement	Think	1.246	4.621*	3.727	3.198
		Feel	0.978		4.112	
Foreign	High involvement	Think	1.787	6.352*	3.107	1.920
		Feel	1.405		3.468	
	Low involvement	Think	1.515	6.785**	3.279	3.314
		Feel	0.885		4.038	

df=1; *: $p < 0.05$; **: $p < 0.01$

6.5 Discussion

6.5.1 Updated analytical framework

This chapter conceptually takes a big step forward in integrating Chinese cultural values into an expanded analytical framework. All the original value appeal schemes were mainly based on Western culture and incorporated only a small number of Eastern value appeals that could also be found in Western advertisements. I believe this study makes an important contribution by its integration and further expansion of extant analytical frameworks of value appeals with additional Eastern (i.e., Chinese) values. This makes the coding scheme more balanced between Western and Eastern values and –by design– more amenable to be used as a tool for studies on value appeals in advertising from East Asian (i.e., Chinese-influenced) cultures. While some of the Chinese value appeals I added to the framework were used only to a limited extent (reciprocation of greetings, favors and gifts; filial piety), other value appeals (trustworthiness; commitment; long-term orientation) were more prevalent. In fact, ‘trustworthiness,’ was found in 30.9% of commercials, the fourth most prevalent value appeal. This means that these are important value appeals in Chinese advertising that have remained undetected in previous studies. I therefore suggest that any analytical framework for measuring cultural values needs to allow for inclusion of culture-specific ‘emic’ values –whether these are Western, Eastern or specific to only one culture– in order to fully capture value appeals in advertising from various countries or cultures. In order to make cross-cultural comparisons possible, frameworks also need to include a basic battery of universally valid or ‘etic’ values. Future research needs to assess what these universal values might be. Moreover, as it would appear that over time Chinese traditional values may increasingly regain prominence, the framework proposed in this

study need to be further validated against the list of values identified by Fan (2000) in future studies involving countries in Greater China. It will also need to be modified for use in cultures with different types of indigenous values such as those in the Arab world, in Africa and on the Indian subcontinent.

6.5.2 Utilitarian value appeals versus symbolic value appeals

Irrespective of whether we limit the analysis to only the dominant value appeals or whether we include all appeals from the framework, results indicate that compared to symbolic value appeals, utilitarian appeals are significantly less prevalent in Chinese advertising. Previous research has reported that advertising from Western culture employs more utilitarian value appeals than does advertising from Eastern culture (Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Lin, 2001; Mueller, 1987). As described in chapter 2, Hall (1976) described the differences between Western and Eastern cultures in terms of the level of context that is used in communication. Western culture is characterized by low-context communication and tends to use direct, explicit, clearly articulated messages that usually consist of utilitarian value appeals, while Eastern culture is characterized by high-context communication and tends to use indirect, implicit, ambiguous messages that are usually linked to emotional or symbolic appeals. Thus Chinese high-context communication culture explains the lower prevalence of utilitarian value appeals and the higher prevalence of symbolic appeals. Nevertheless, this general trend should not be interpreted to mean that utilitarian value appeals are unimportant or ineffective for Chinese consumers. In reality, the fact that over 30% of commercials contain effectiveness and quality appeals sufficiently proves their importance. Moreover, compared to the findings reported by Cheng and Schweitzer (1996), findings in this study indicate that due to recent developments in Chinese society utilitarian value

appeals have become increasingly important.

Results also demonstrate that commercials for foreign brands use more utilitarian value appeals than those for domestic brands. However, attention should be paid to the composition of the ‘foreign brand’ category. Most of the foreign brands in this study originated from Western countries (70%), with a relatively smaller proportion originating from Eastern countries (30%) such as Japan and South Korea. Consequently, I further compare the usages of utilitarian, symbolic, Western, and Eastern value appeals in ads for Western foreign brands and those for Eastern foreign brands. Results indicate no significant differences, that is to say, ads for Eastern foreign brands demonstrate more similarities to ads for Western foreign brands rather than those for Chinese domestic brands. Thus it seems logical and acceptable to integrate all foreign brands into one group rather than to further categorize even though it is not clear why advertisers for Eastern foreign brands employ utilitarian value appeals as frequently as, or even more than their counterpart. It would be highly interesting to empirically examine the influential factors for foreign brands to employ more utilitarian appeals in future research. One potential explanation to this trend may be attributed to their advertising creatives – multinational advertising agencies in China. Even though all the international advertising corporations have entered Chinese market in the form of joint-venture with Chinese local advertising agencies (Hung et al., 2012), it is imperative to address that their cultural background, sophisticated management, experiences accumulated in Western countries greatly influence their collaborative partners and as a result their ads differ from those of Chinese local agencies.

In regards to 11 specific utilitarian value appeals, the appeals of effectiveness, quality, decorativeness, technology, health, economy, and safety show significant differences

that most of them are more frequently used in ads for foreign brands except the quality and health appeals which are more frequently used in ads for domestic brands. First, the usage of these two appeals may be highly attributed to business ethical issues Chinese consumers face directly. Even though production technology and skills have been improved in a great deal and China becomes the “world factory,” Chinese consumers have confronted no less quality problems against Chinese local brands. Business scandals related to quality and safety problems happened in a variety of product categories such as food, baby milk powder, electronic products, automobiles, and house construction in the past decade. Because of these scandals, Chinese consumers have been showing particularly higher concern with Chinese local products, especially food, directly related to their health issue. For instance, the baby milk powder scandals in 2008 have dropped the market share of Chinese local milk powder brands from 70% down to less than 50% (Financial Times, 2014). Most Chinese mothers prefer, and are trying to pay for much higher priced baby milk powder of foreign brands. Similar situation pervades almost in all product categories. As a result, in order to response to consumers’ concern and to winning their confidence back, advertisers of Chinese local brands appeal quality and health more frequently through advertising.

Furthermore, it is well known that Chinese local brands are not able to concentrate as much on fundamental research and technological development as their foreign counterparts, which results in that those Chinese local brands have to follow and even duplicate the technology and products of their counterpart. In order to improve their poor quality reputation, advertisers of Chinese local brands appeal more quality in their ads. On the other hand, foreign brands have built their positive brand image and high quality reputation. In addition, the standard of product quality of foreign brands has

been somehow homogenized and product quality has no longer been a competitive sale proposition when differentiating from their competitors in the same market segment. Consequently they do not necessarily focus on quality appeal to their consumers.

6.5.3 Western value appeals versus Eastern value appeals

Contrary to the second hypothesis, results in reverse indicate that Eastern value appeals are more prevalent than Western appeals in Chinese television advertising. This finding is also inconsistent with prior research. For instance, Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) have argued that Western cultural values are more dominant in Chinese television advertising under the influence of building the ‘Four Modernizations’ and the ‘Reform and Opening up’ policy.²¹ Several factors may account for the inconsistency of finding in this study with previous research. First, classification method directly associates to the frequency of each category. In this study all Western value appeals are symbolic. However, previous research categorized utilitarian value appeals as Western appeals (Zhang and Shavitt, 2003), which would result in that frequencies of Western appeals surpass those of Eastern appeals substantially in the current study (3588 vs. 2147). Second, the increase update of a number of Chinese traditional value appeals to the coding framework leads to higher proportion of frequencies of Eastern appeals. Third, research on Japanese advertising indicates similar tendency that Japanese traditional value appeals reflected in advertising did not decrease but increased even under strong influence of Western culture (Mueller, 1992).

Advertising is ‘distorted mirror’ of culture that it reflects only those values beneficial to advertisers (Pollay, 1986). Furthermore, Chinese advertising is a ‘melting pot’ that both Eastern and Western cultural values play an important role in Chinese television

²¹ The ‘Four Modernizations’ refers to the basic modernization of China’s industry, agriculture, science and technology. Together with the ‘Reform and Opening up’ policy, it is a national program launched by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s.

commercials (Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996). Discussion would be more meaningful when associated with brand origin. It is interesting to find the same clear tendency with Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) that commercials for Chinese domestic brands use more Eastern value appeals whereas those for foreign brands use more Western appeals. It is assumable that multinational advertising agencies use more Western value appeals in advertising. Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) stated that multinational advertising agencies mainly ran campaigns for imported and joint-venture products in Chinese markets. This partially explains our findings. However, multinational advertisers and advertising agencies in China should never ignore Chinese traditional culture and appeals. Furthermore, to respond to Chinese consumers, advertisers for foreign brands may also concentrate on Chinese traditional value appeals, which may be more effective in attracting Chinese consumers or circumventing government censorship (Cheng, 1997).

6.5.4 Influence of product category

The distribution of value appeals is obviously different across various product classifications, i.e., goods/services, high/low involvement level, think/feel involvement type, as well as product industry. It has been generalized that advertisers should employ different advertising strategies for goods from those for services (Abernethy and Butler, 1992; Albers-Miller and Stafford, 1999; Cutler and Javalgi, 1993; Gauci and Hill, 2003; Stafford, 1996, 2005; Zinkhan et al., 1992). In spite of inconsistent findings through previous research, this chapter initially indicates that advertisers in China use less utilitarian and more symbolic value appeals in ads for services than in ads for goods. First, the nature of services –intangibility, simultaneity, heterogeneity and perishability– partially account for the less usage of utilitarian appeals (Abernethy and Butler, 1992). On the other hand, symbolic value appeals may help services advertisers transform

service experience into positive psychological characteristics and thus reduce purchase risk (Zinkhan et al., 1992). Second, it is believed that indirect communication via symbolic appeals may be more effective to Chinese consumers under high context communication culture background (Taylor et al., 1997). Third, results have shown that utilitarian appeals are more contained in ads for foreign brands, which also contribute to the higher frequency of utilitarian value appeals in ads for goods because 98% of the ads for foreign brands are those for goods in the current sample.

In addition, service advertisers as a consequence of the unique nature of services significantly more often use a number of specific value appeals. Because of the characteristic of simultaneity of face-to-face types of services, a service encounter always involves service staff that delivers the service and a consumer who participates in the service delivery. The most important for service advertisers thus may be to initially draw consumers' attention to try the service, to keep them satisfied with the service and to make them repeat customers even though services are often heterogeneous. To achieve this goal, it is perhaps logical that service advertisers focus more on 'sincerity,' 'commitment,' 'long-term orientation,' 'nurturance,' 'courtesy,' as well as 'economy' appeals which are used significantly more often in ads for services than in those for goods. Furthermore, perhaps because it is difficult to demonstrate the specific or concrete attributes and benefits of services, service advertisers may resort more often to appeals to the more abstract 'productivity' characteristic associated with the purchase or use of the service.

As far as the FCB grid is concerned, findings in this chapter in general endorse the propositions of the FCB grid model in terms of the utilizations of value appeals, i.e., ads for high-involvement products contain more utilitarian and less symbolic value appeals

than those for low-involvement products, whereas ads for think products contain more utilitarian appeals than those for feel products. However, this study finds that symbolic value appeals are used in similar frequencies in ads for think and for feel products. In conjunction with findings presented in Table 6.3 and Table 6.10, this indicates that, most likely as the result of the Chinese collectivistic and high context communication culture, advertisers of both Chinese domestic and foreign brands in China appear to expect symbolic appeals to be more effective for both feel and think products.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that researchers are likely to focus on the general patterns and trends of utilitarian and symbolic, or Western and Eastern value appeals whereas practitioners are more interested in the usage and effectiveness of each specific value appeal rather than the general trend. Subsequently, when we analyze the distribution of specific value appeals, they do not always follow consistent patterns based on the logic behind the FCB grid model. To explain these inconsistencies, it is useful to focus more on the compositions of each FCB quadrant in terms of more narrowly defined specific product categories. The L/T grid quadrant includes such products as detergents, medicine, personal care products (excluding cosmetics), for which advertisers use a large amount of utilitarian appeals (see Table 8). Furthermore, since goods ads contain significantly more utilitarian and less symbolic value appeals than services ads, the frequencies of utilitarian value appeals used for H/T quadrant products are influenced by the fact that the H/T quadrant includes a relatively large number of insurance ads. As a result, several utilitarian appeals (i.e., effectiveness, quality) are used as often in ads for high-involvement products as, or even less than in those for low-involvement products. Decorativeness is essentially used in ads for alcohol, cars, home durable appliances, and housing and decorating products, and this

accounts for the higher frequencies in the H/T and H/F quadrants. Health is a value appeal that is used essentially in ads for food and drinks, resulting in significantly more frequencies in ads for low-involvement products. Naturalness is mainly used in food and drinks, and personal care products, leading to higher frequencies in the L/T and L/F quadrants. In respect to symbolic value appeals, the finding that modernity is more frequently used in ads for high-involvement as well as think products is attributable to the higher frequencies in ads for cars, IT, telecom and electronics, and personal care products. Sexuality is essentially used in ads for fashion and home durable appliance products, resulting in higher frequencies in ads for high-involvement products. The frequent usage of the long-term orientation appeal in ads for financial and insurance services leads to this appeal's higher usage frequency in ads for think products. Environmental concern is essentially used in ads for cars, appliances, and housing and decorating, resulting in higher frequencies in ads for high-involvement products. Individualism is mainly used in ads for cars and fashion products, leading to higher frequencies in the H/F and H/T quadrants. Health is mainly used in ads for drugs, food and drinks, and personal care (non-cosmetics) products, accounting for higher frequencies in the L/T and L/F quadrants. The higher frequency of patriotism in ads for alcohol products leads to its highest level in the H/F quadrant. Similarly, the higher frequencies of social status in ads for alcohol, and housing and decoration products result in its frequent use in the H/F quadrant. The high frequency of nurturance in ads for drug and financial products accounts for its frequent use in the L/T quadrant.

As a result, and consistent with previous studies, this chapter shows that the nature of the product category is a fundamentally important factor to explain the usage of value appeals depicted in ads. Value appeals are used distinctively across product categories.

This shows the importance for practitioners to understand the uniqueness of their industry as well as their products. The underlying patterns revealed by this study that particular value appeals are likely to be more important for a certain type of products could assist practitioners in planning advertising messages. Practitioners may either consider using similar messages in their ads with reference to the characteristics and patterns used in Chinese advertisements or decide to opt for differentiated message strategies by using value appeals that are different from the patterns for ads in their respective product categories. Moreover, advertisers should dig deeper and examine the differences in the use of value appeals within a given product category, e.g., differences in the use of appeals in commercials between domestic and foreign brands for each product category. Future research is thus necessary to examine the specific characteristics and differences in the use of value appeals within each product category.

Furthermore, practitioners should also consider the interactive influences of a variety of factors on the usage of value appeals when creating advertising messages. In this chapter, three-way ANOVA is conducted in terms of utilitarian and symbolic value appeals at a more general level. Since results show that the three-way interaction effect (Origin*Involvement level*Involvement type) on the use of utilitarian appeals is significant, practitioners should not only focus on each variable separately but should also give sufficient consideration to the correlation of these variables. Even though it is obvious that practitioners are probably more interested in the interactive effects on each particular value appeal, as a limitation, this chapter is not able to conduct ANOVA due to the nominal scale nature of the data in regard to each value appeal. Future research may consider using other statistical tools to investigate this type of nominal scale data or employ other research method instead of content analysis to examine the

effectiveness and interactive influences on value appeals.

Chapter 7 Conclusion, Limitation and Future Research

7.1 Conclusion

This study examines the characteristics and patterns of Chinese television advertising in terms of three aspects: message strategy, informativeness, and value appeals. Based on a systematically collected sample of commercials and three partly modified frameworks, I conducted three content-analytical studies. Findings with respect to each subject are summarized respectively in the three tables below.

Through an integration of the findings from the three studies, the general characteristics and patterns in Chinese television advertising can be summarized as follows. Because of the high-context communication style and collectivist culture in China, practitioners are found to use significantly more affective message strategies and symbolic value appeals in Chinese television advertising while at the same time using a relatively high level of information content.

With respect to the differences of ads for local and foreign brands, cognitive message strategies and utilitarian as well as Western value appeals are more frequently used in ads for foreign brands as compared with ads for local brands. As a result, ads for foreign brands contain a higher level of information cues. On the other hand, affective message strategies are used to a similar extent in ads for local and foreign brands, while a similar pattern emerges for the use of symbolic appeals, i.e., there is no difference between ads for local and foreign brands.

Table 7.1 Summary of findings with respect to message strategy

RQ and Hypotheses	Summary of the findings
RQ1: What are the patterns in the use of message strategies?	Main-strategy: affective (82.3%), cognitive (54.1%), conative (12.0%) Sub-strategy: use occasion/resonance (48.4%), preemptive (34.2%), brand image (23.9%)
RQ2: Are there differences between local and foreign brands?	Significantly more cognitive strategies (preemptive and comparative) for foreign brands than for local brands; similar level of affective and conative strategies between foreign and local brands
RQ3: Are there differences between goods and services?	Significantly more cognitive strategies for goods while more conative strategies for services
H1: Affective > cognitive strategies	Supported, affective (82.3%) > cognitive (54.1%)
H2: Message strategies vary across product categories	Supported, cognitive more used in ads for personal care, detergents; affective more for fashion, food and drinks, alcohol; conative more for retailing
H3a: More cognitive strategies in high- than in low-involvement product categories H3b: More affective strategies in low- than in high-involvement product categories	H3a: not supported H3b: supported (88.7% > 79.1%)
H4a: More cognitive in think than in feel product categories H4b: More affective strategies in feel than in think products	H4a: supported (62.4% > 42.4%) H4b: supported (93.8% > 77.2%)
H5: More cognitive and less affective strategies in H/T than in L/F quadrants	Supported, cognitive (63.6% > 39.1%); affective (69.0% < 95.7%)
H6: More conative strategies in low- than in high-involvement categories	Supported (14.4% > 8.2%)

Regarding the differences of ads for goods and services, findings are consistent that advertisers use more cognitive message strategies and utilitarian appeals in goods ads, while in contrast they use more affective message strategies and symbolic appeals in services ads. Consequently, goods ads contain a higher level of information cues than services ads.

Table 7.2 Summary of findings with respect to information content

RQ and Hypotheses	Summary of findings
RQ1: What is the level of informativeness?	76.3% ads contain at least 1 cue and 1.6 cues/ad (for 18 cues); 68.0% ads contain at least 1 cue and 1.2 cues/ad (for 14 cues)
RQ2: What are the most frequently used information cues?	Performance (39.1%), Variety (27.0%), and Components/contents (19.3%)
RQ3: Are there any differences in informativeness level between goods and services?	Percentage of informative ads: 80.0% goods ads versus 57.5% services ads Average number of ads: 1.7 cues/goods ad > 1.1 cues/services ad
H1: The informativeness level in this study will be lower than that in Chan and Chan (2005)	Not supported Percentage of informative ads: 68.0% > 55.2%; average number of cues: 1.7 > 1.3
H2a: The percentage of informative ads: foreign > local brands; H2b: The average number of cues: foreign > local brands	H2a: supported (89.3% > 73.1%) H2b: supported (2.2 cue/ad > 1.5 cues/ad)
H3a: The percentage of informative ads: high > low involvement products; H3b: The average number of cues: high > low involvement products	H3a: not supported (72.2% < 84.4%) H3b: not supported (1.5 cues/ad < 2.0 cues/ad)
H4a: The percentage of informative ads: think > feel; H4b: The average number of cues: think > feel products	H4a: supported (81.3% > 68.7%) H4b: supported (1.8 cues/ad > 1.4 cues/ad)
H5a: The percentage of informative ads: durable > non-durable products; H5b: The average number of cues: durable > non-durable products	H5a: not supported H5b: not supported
H6a: The percentage of informative ads varies across product categories; H6b: The average number of cues varies across product categories	H6a: supported (range from 38.9% to 100%) H6b: supported (range from 0.8 to 2.6 cues/ad)

Table 7.3 Summary of findings with respect to value appeals

RQ and Hypotheses	Summary of findings
What are the most frequently used value appeals?	Enjoyment/leisure (48.6%), effectiveness (38.7%), quality (31.7%), trustworthiness (30.9%)
H1: Symbolic appeals > utilitarian appeals	Supported (in terms of frequency: 4741 > 1877)
H2: Western appeals > Eastern appeals	Not supported (in terms of frequency: 1711 < 2147)
H3a: Domestic brands: Eastern > Western appeals; H3b: Foreign brands: Western > Eastern appeals	H3a: supported (in terms of frequency: 1815 > 1233) H3b: supported (in terms of frequency: 478 > 332)
H4a: Utilitarian appeals: high > low involvement products; H4b: Symbolic appeals: low > high involvement products	H4a: supported (1165/802 > 633/520) H4b: supported (1950/520 > 2411/1165)
H5a: Utilitarian appeals: think > feel products; H5b: Symbolic appeals: feel > think products	H5a: supported (1327/872 > 471/450) H5b: not supported
RQ1: Are there differences in the use of value appeals between goods and services?	More utilitarian appeals and Western appeals in goods ads than in services ads while more symbolic appeals and Eastern appeals in services ads
RQ2: Are there differences in the use of value appeals across product categories?	Distributions of value appeals vary across 16 product categories, indicating that product category influences the use of value appeals
RQ3: Is there any interaction effect among brand origin, involvement level and involvement type on the use of value appeals?	Refer to three-way ANOVA (2*2*2) results

With regard to the differences between ads for high and low-involvement products, affective message strategies and symbolic appeals are consistently used more frequently in ads for low-involvement products. On the other hand, cognitive message strategies are used in similar frequencies while utilitarian appeals are used more frequently in ads for high-involvement products than in those for low-involvement products. In addition, in contrast to the findings for utilitarian appeals, information cues are more frequently used in ads for low-involvement products as compared to those for high-involvement

products.

Regarding the differences between ads for think and feel products, both cognitive message strategies and utilitarian appeals are used more frequently in ads for think products than in those for feel products. Similarly, ads for think products contain a higher level of information cues. On the other hand, both affective strategies and symbolic appeals are more frequently used in ads for feel products as compared to those for think products.

This study has examined the influence of brand origin, product category, involvement level and involvement type on advertising content across the three main research topics. Findings tend to demonstrate consistency in respect to the influence of brand origin and product category. However, the two dimensions of the FCB grid model show inconsistent influence on the use of the three topics in Chinese television commercials. In respect to the FCB grid model, explanations may be twofold. On the one hand, perhaps because of the unique characteristics of Chinese culture and Chinese consumer behaviors, practitioners may be either consciously or unconsciously relying on an alternative advertising planning model instead of the FCB grid model. Perhaps practitioners feel that the FCB grid model cannot be directly applied to the Chinese market since it was originally developed for the U.S. market. On the other hand, the inconsistency of findings in this study may be due to existing limitations of the FCB grid model, for which it has been criticized (Rossiter, Percy and Donovan, 1991).

The main contributions of this dissertation are as follows. The first main contribution lies in the modification and improvement of three analytical schemes. De Mooij and Hofstede (2010) have underlined their concern regarding the use of scales or constructs developed in a Western context or culture for the study of phenomena in non-Western

cultures. They point out that the Resnik and Stern coding framework, the informational-transformation distinction, and Pollay's advertising appeals were all developed in the U.S. and that such constructs may not uncover important aspects of other cultures. To overcome this limitation, I integrated findings of prior research as well as traditional aspects of Chinese culture and respectively improved the three frameworks used in this dissertation. As a result, these frameworks can now be used to uncover additional relevant aspects of Chinese advertising.

A second significant contribution of this dissertation is a result of the fact that it uses an unusually large and systematically collected sample. Few researchers have collected television commercials over a one-year span. Furthermore, by recording in an interval of 8 days, this sample consists of commercials aired on each day of the week from Sunday to Saturday. Thus the sample in this study is believed to better represent and reflect the nature and characteristics of Chinese television advertising, which likely makes the findings of this study more robust and reliable. Therefore, I believe and hope that based on this systematically collected sample, modified coding frameworks, and carefully designed coding procedures, this study has made important contributions both in terms of methodology and knowledge generation to the field of international advertising studies in general, and to studies on Chinese advertising in particular.

7.2 Implications, Limitations and Future Research

The findings of this dissertation have both theoretical and practical implications for international advertising practitioners as well as researchers. Findings of this dissertation consistently show that culture, brand origin, and product category influence advertising content. Chinese collectivism and high-context communication appear to be

responsible for the higher usage of affective message strategies and symbolic value appeals. Local brand advertisers tend to employ more affective message strategies and more Eastern value appeals whereas foreign brand advertisers tend to use more cognitive strategies and more Western value appeals in addition to product related information. A clear pattern emerges from the data that ads for different product categories vary significantly in their use of message strategy, information content, and value appeals. Furthermore, comparisons with previous studies indicate that U.S. commercials differ from Chinese commercials for the same product category. It would appear that these findings provide a strong argument against those arguing for standardization of advertising across the world. However, findings also imply that for international advertising practitioners some 'common ground' exists between the Chinese advertising market and advertising markets in the Western world. As an example, this dissertation provides evidence that the top three most frequently used value appeals are enjoyment/leisure, effectiveness and quality, which are believed to be more typical for Western culture and to be used more often in advertising from Western countries. Therefore, when international advertising practitioners create advertisements for the Chinese market, they should take both the differences of culture-specific influence and the 'common ground' into consideration. That is, based on the findings presented in this dissertation I would strongly suggest advertising practitioners to consider a contingency approach when advertising in the Chinese market. However, and this is a limitation of this study, I am not able to explicitly suggest what aspects practitioners should adapt to Chinese culture and what aspects they could keep standardized globally or regionally. One interesting venue for future research would thus be to examine to what extent advertising can be standardized in the Chinese

advertising market.

Findings on the frequencies of individual value appeals indicate that utilitarian and Western appeals prevail among the top 10 frequently used value appeals, though overall Eastern value appeals are used more frequently than Western value appeals in Chinese television advertising. Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) have reported that Chinese advertising is a ‘melting pot,’ which refers to the coexistence of both Western and Eastern value appeals. However, in comparison to the findings reported by Cheng and Schweitzer, results of the current study reveal that Western value appeals tend to be dominant in Chinese advertising. My findings also suggest that the use of utilitarian value appeals has increased as compared to the findings as reported by Cheng and Schweitzer (1996). This dissertation is not a longitudinal study on Chinese advertising and thus provides no empirical proof arguing that Chinese advertising has been Westernizing. Nevertheless, developments in the Chinese advertising industry and market over the past few decades may offer some insights that may explain potential reasons for increased Westernization of China’s advertising and its advertising industry. First, because of over three decades of rapid growth of Chinese advertising market and the process of globalization, all major multinational advertising agencies have entered the Chinese market by 2010 (Hung et al., 2012). Furthermore, after becoming a member of WTO, China has lifted restrictions on foreign investment in the advertising sector. As a result, foreign agencies could increase their shares in joint ventures from a minority to a majority stake (including wholly owned) ownership (Hu, 2003). In addition, the Chinese government has loosened restrictions on advertising content censorship (Li and Shooshtari, 2007). Consequently, I believe that, while Eastern value appeals are ingrained in Chinese advertising, its Westernization is evident. Accordingly, it is

necessary for future research to examine this issue through a longitudinal empirical study on Chinese advertising.

In addition, this study, based on previous research, categorized a proportion of symbolic value appeals into two groups, Western and Eastern appeals. In fact, this may be problematic. One reason is that the categorizations in previous research are not consistent on some appeals, for instance, social status, wealth, and wisdom. A more important reason is that many value appeals that were supposed to originate from Western culture have become universally important in any country or culture, and these value appeals may in fact be universal. Those value appeals include but are not limited to enjoyment/leisure, modernity, quality, beauty, freedom, etc. Conversely, it could also be argued that the same may be argued about some value appeals that are supposed to have originated from Eastern culture, for instance, family and patriotism. Therefore, instead of categorizing value appeals into Western and Eastern, I would like to suggest the need for a ‘universal value appeals’ category, which would include appeals that can be found in most cultures around the world. Nevertheless, this study, focusing on one single country, is not able to clearly determine what value appeals could be classified as ‘universal.’ Therefore, future research may challenge this issue by conducting empirical studies on comparison of advertising value appeals across multiple cultures or countries.

Another theoretical implication of this study is that the theory of the four advertising development stages may not sufficiently explain the characteristics of Chinese advertising. Leiss et al. (1997) studied the development of advertising and the advertising industry in the U.S. and divided advertising development into four stages: product information (until the 1910s), product image (1920s–1940s), personalization (1950s–1960s), and lifestyle (1970s–1980s). Based on Leiss et al.’s theoretical model,

some researchers have argued that after several decades of rapid development since the late 1970s, Chinese advertising has obviously stepped beyond the product information phase and that it has moved to the product image phase (Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Chan and Chan, 2005). However, it is important to point out that this theoretical model was based on a historical study of the U.S. magazine advertisements and thus has an inherent cultural bias or may be specific to the U.S. or other Western nations. Thus it is necessary to urge that advertising researchers should be prudent when applying it to advertising or the development of the advertising industry from a different culture or country. The reason for suggesting for prudence in this regard is that the current study found evidence that goes counter to the prediction that the informativeness of Chinese television commercials would decrease, which was proposed by Chan and Chan (2005) based on Leiss et al.'s model. Furthermore, due to the coexistence of Western and Eastern value appeals, Chinese advertising may follow a path of its own (Hung et al., 2012). Future research needs to look further into this issue.

Finally, it is necessary to point out two additional limitations of this study from the perspective of research methodology. Content analysis concentrates on analyzing what advertisers think is effective advertising but does not address how consumers perceive the advertising and how it influences their behavior. In other words, it is not clear what effects these commercials have on consumers. Consequently, researchers have criticized content analysis for providing description without prescription (e.g., Samiee and Jeong, 1994). In contrast, other researchers also argue for the importance of this methodology. De Mooij and Hofstede (2010) argue that content analysis does provide insight in advertising practice on what works best in a country. McQuarrie and Phillips (2008) state that particular elements like appeals, information cues, or strategies, are more

frequently used because they are effective. Nevertheless, it remains an inherent limitation of content analysis that it cannot provide persuasive empirical proof of effectiveness to practitioners. As a result, the limited ability to derive strong managerial implications from the studies presented in this dissertation is its ‘Achilles heel.’ Thus future research, in order to overcome this limitation, should combine content analysis with other empirical research methods such as consumer surveys and experiment, preferably in combination with actual sales data. This will allow researchers to examine whether these message strategies, information content, and value appeals are effective in positively influencing consumer behavior. In addition, future research may test the effectiveness of the sample advertisements before conducting content analysis or vice versa. It would also be interesting to compare effective advertisements with ineffective ones to clarify exactly which elements contribute to advertising effectiveness.

A second methodological limitation is that this study only concentrates on television commercials from China Central Television Station (CCTV). While CCTV’s channels have national coverage, the advertising shown on these channels may be substantially different from the advertising shown on regional or local channels. There are more than 350 television stations with over 2000 channels spanning from central, provincial, to local in China. Due to the fact that economic development in China is limited to the large urban areas, the economic level, education level, literacy level, level of sophistication, and life style of Chinese consumers varies greatly between local and urban areas. Therefore, future research should also examine those advertisements from provincial and local television stations and compare to what extent the advertisements shown on local stations differ from those ads broadcast on the CCTV channels.

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