

A COMPARISON OF VISUAL AND VERBAL CONTENT OF PRINT COSMETIC
ADVERTISING BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

By

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Abstract

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This study was intended to discover and understand the differences in cosmetic advertisements in print media between the U.S. and China. The study content analyzed a total of 378 cosmetic advertisements that appeared in three international fashion magazines published between 2003 and 2007. Each advertisement was coded for focal object, verbal content, visual, the racial background of the character, and so forth. This study employed Resnik and Stern's informational classification system and Moriarty's visual typology to analyze the information and visual contents. The study found that the U.S. and the Chinese advertisements differed in the use of verbal content and visual. The cosmetic ads in the Chinese magazines contained more information cues than the ads in the U.S.. For skin care products, the ads in the Chinese magazines relied more heavily on symbolic visuals while the U.S. ads heavily utilized literal visuals. In addition, although the majority of the cosmetic advertisements from both countries used symbolic visuals as the focal object, the U.S. cosmetic ads used literal visuals significantly more frequently than the Chinese ads. When examining the ads run by international/global brands only, the U.S. and China differed in the use of focal object. The Chinese international ads used more symbolic visuals while the U.S. international ads relied more heavily on literal visuals as focal objects. In addition, the global ads in the Chinese magazines contained significantly more information cues both in the

headlines and in the entire copies and significantly more visuals, both literal and symbolic, than the U.S. counterparts.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Lihan Sun and my mother, Zhiling Zhang, and father,
Yizhou Wang.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is an attempt to persuade, paid by a sponsor or a client, and delivered through mass media (O'Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2006), such as television, magazine, newspaper, internet, and so on. According to O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik (2006), the production of advertising involves the participation and interaction of several key players including the imagined target audience, the mass media, the advertiser, the advertising agency, and the client or the sponsor. The end product, such as advertisements has a chain of impacts on individual consumers, families, business organizations, communities, the society, and the culture. Advertising, either directly or indirectly, reflects and shapes the current regional culture in a society (Potter, 1954; Schudson, 1983; Pollay, 1983; Avery, 1991).

One of the core issues in advertising is identifying the target audience and their needs and wants. A target audience in advertising is “a particular group of consumers singled out by an organization for an advertisement or advertising campaign” (O'Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2006, p. 16). Effective ads reflect the target audience's needs, wants, lifestyles, values, and culture and contain the benefits the target audiences desire to gain (Kelly & Jugenheimer, 2006). Advertising messages are therefore likely to address either functional or emotional or both benefits to appeal to their target audiences. Functional benefits are provided by factual information regarding the advertised product and its performance, whereas emotional benefits are offered by advertising content that aims to make people feel good (Kelly & Jugenheimer, 2006).

Traditional target audiences of advertising were defined by their demographic characteristics. Nowadays, however, understanding consumers' psychographical dimensions (e.g. attitudes, interests, and opinions) are considered as a more critical issue for successful advertising. Further, with the upsurge of global market, firms frequently encounter the situation where their target audiences are not in a single geographical region but all over the world. Hence, needless to mention, it becomes even harder for firms to identify and understand the right target audiences.

This study focused on women's cosmetic advertising. Although more and more cosmetic products became available for men nowadays, the majority of cosmetic products are still directed at women at various ages. Furthermore, cosmetic products are not provided only by domestic companies but also international firms. For example, international brands like Lancome, Clinique, and Estee Lauder are available in multiple countries all over the world. Global brands like those deal with multiple target audiences who may share demographic characteristics but reside in different countries with different cultural backgrounds. Those brands then normally opt for one of the two advertising strategies: standardization and localization. On the one hand, standardization occurs when execution of advertising elements is kept uniform across different countries' advertisements (Nelson & Peak, 2007) and is considered to be cost-efficient (Levitt, 1983). Localization, on the other hand, considers the heterogeneity of cultures and takes into account the importance of market segmentation for more efficient communication (Taylor, Hoy & Haley, 1996).

This study examined cosmetic advertising in two countries, U.S. and China. With very different cultural, business and advertising traditions and practices (Hall, 1973;

Hofstede, 2001; Gao, 2003; Jin, Mason, & Yim, 1998), China and the U.S. are two powerful countries representing the East and the West respectively. The latest population census conducted by National Population and Family Planning Commission of China (2008) indicated that China now has a population of over 1.3 billion, and the U.S. has a population of over 3 hundred million according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2008). Moreover, the Ministry of Commerce of People's Republic of China reported that in the year of 2008, the sum of export and import for China was estimated to reach 1,600 to 1,700 billion U.S. dollars and the U.S. reached approximately 3,965.2 billion dollars in the year of 2007. Moreover, China was ranked the second largest trade partner of the U.S. in the year of 2007. Not surprisingly, more and more international or global brands are considering China as a market of great potential. Hence, these international brands are currently heavily advertised in Chinese media. Do these international companies advertise their brands in China the same way as they do in the US? Or do they take a localization approach to persuade targets in another country and culture such as Chinese?

This study chose to examine cosmetic advertising in those two countries because both the U.S. and China are found to provide dynamic cosmetic markets that are full of growing potential. Invest In Greece Agency (2004) pointed out that the United States was the world's largest cosmetics market, while China right now is considered as one of the largest countries for luxury item consumption in the world and the largest cosmetics consumption country in Asia, according to the Associate Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (2008). European Chamber (2004) pointed out that the Chinese market for cosmetics had already exceeded 42 billion Ren Min Bi (about 6 billion U.S. dollars) in the year of 2004. According to Chinese Statistic Bureau, in 2002 the amount of

cosmetics China imported from Europe and the United States had a value of 74.32 million euros and the cosmetics China exported to Europe and the U.S. was worth 330 million. Chinese government believed that the business of cosmetics was a driving industry also for the related sectors, such as the fine chemicals and packaging industries and services including distribution and advertising (European Chamber, 2004).

Therefore, it is expected that more cosmetic companies and advertising, both international and local ones, will compete in those two markets. This indicated that those cosmetic companies need to understand the potential consumers they are targeting. Chinese women may be very different than American women as users of cosmetic products. Many scholars found that Asian women underwent more social pressure to exhibit feminine beauty than Western women because of the stubborn social gender hierarchy (e.g., Darling-Wolf, 2004) and the largely Westernized aesthetic cultures in Asian countries (Chen, 1993; Gunning, 2002; Harahap, 1982; Kaw, 1997; LeFlore, 1982; McCurdy, 1980; Nakao, 1993; Rosenthal, 1991). For example, fair, or even pale, skin is extremely popular among Asian women since it creates a delicate look that matches social expectations of femininity in Asia. However in Western countries like the U.S., instead of pale complexion, tanned skin tone is valued because it implies strong and independent personality and American women use tanning cosmetic products just as much as Asian women use whitening cosmetic products.

So far little research has explored the differences in cosmetic advertising between China and the U.S.. Previous research comparing differences in advertising between different countries has not considered various elements of advertising (e.g. the layout the an ad) and simply focused either on visual content (e.g., An & Wachanga, 2004), or

information content (e.g., Stern, Krugman & Resnik, 1981; Harmon, Razzouk, & Stern, 1983; Tom, Calvert, Goolkatsian & Zumsteg, 1984, Rice & Lu, 1988; Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000; Chen, 1995), while other studies only investigated part of the visual and information content (e.g., Nelson & Paek, 2007). That is, little advertising research has fully examined multiple elements of advertising simultaneously. Having identified the present situation of the relevant literature, this study was intended to examine the differences in print cosmetic advertisements between China and the U.S. by looking at various aspects of print advertising.

Seitz (1998) pointed out that cosmetics ads are different from apparel and fragrance ads in that cosmetic ads contain both significant amount of verbal and visual content. Therefore, this study examined both the verbal and visual elements of cosmetic ads. This study particularly employed Moriarty's (1987) visual typology and Resnik and Stern's (1977) information classification system with some modification. Both measures have been found to be robust tools for studying advertising contents (for example, An & Wachanga, 2004; Stern, Krugman & Resnik, 1981; Harmon, Razzouk, & Stern, 1983; Tom, Calvert, Goolkatsian & Zumsteg, 1984).

The results from this study could be useful to people of different fields, including advertising marketers and academic scholars and researchers. The results could serve as a detailed set of data regarding contemporary Chinese and U.S. cosmetic advertising strategies. Scholars and marketers in the field of advertising could either conduct further investigations or develop marketing and advertising strategies based on current findings. In addition, the measures employed in this study were modified from Moriarty's (1987) and Resnik and Stern's (1977) original instruments that were developed over 20 years

ago. Therefore, the modifications could serve as updated measures for verbal and visual content of contemporary advertisements. Finally, the limitations found during the process of coding could help future advertising and communication scholars identify and avoid potential problems they may encounter in research. For instance, operationalizing the measures using original definitions could cause confusion among coders since specific product category may use unique terms and expressions in their ads that need to be clarified in the coding instructions.

The following chapters of this paper will provide a review of previous studies in the field, a detailed description of the research method, a thorough analysis of the data, and finally, a conclusion and discussion of the results.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study was intended to compare cosmetic advertising between the U.S. and China. There are various factors within a country that can influence the advertising and the ad messages. In the past, the majority of scholars and researchers considered culture as the most important factor that accounted for advertising differences between two countries. However, advertising is part of marketing efforts which aim to maximize profits, enhance the company image and so on. These marketing and business principles are universal to firms across countries and cultures. Hence, it would be incomprehensive to claim that one factor is more important than the other in explaining the differences between ads from two countries. Instead, understanding differences in multiple aspects between two countries is essential for understanding the advertising differences between two countries. Therefore, in the following sections, this paper will review the differences in culture as well as in other areas, such as business practice, in China and the U.S..

The Differences between China and the U.S

Cultural Differences

Culture is defined as “the deposit of knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings...acquired by a large group of people in the course of generations through individuals and group striving” (Samover and Porter, 1985, p. 19). Advertising is believed to both directly or indirectly reflect and shape the current culture in a society (Potter, 1954; Schudson, 1983; Pollay, 1983; Avery, 1991). Markin (1974) noted that most advertising was based on the assumption that “members of given culture, subculture,

or marketing segment behave in uniform and predictable ways" (p.469). Frith (1997) pointed out that people understand ads through relating them to the shared values or beliefs in their own culture, which may have explained some differences in advertising content across different countries/cultures (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996; Frith & Mueller, 2003; Hornik, 1980; Lantos, 1987). Particularly, culture is thought to play an important role in international advertising (Biswas, Olsen & Carlet, 1992; Caillat & Mueller, 1996; Chang & Catalano, 1992; Cutler & Javalgi, 1992; Frith & Wesson, 1991; Martenson, 1987; Nevett, 1992; Ramaprasad & Hasegawa, 1992; Zandpour, Ju-Pak, 1999).

Among all the studies documenting cultural differences, Hall (1973) proposed a set of culture-value dimensions called the information context values that systematically account for cultural differences between two countries. The dimension ranges from low to high and was drawn from extensive studies by Hall on nonverbal components of intercultural communication. The high context cultures, such as Chinese culture, have shared understanding of information and therefore very few messages are coded, transmitted, or conveyed explicitly. Messages are communicated indirectly in high context cultures. On the contrary, low context cultures, such as American culture, explicitly code information in communication processes (Hall and Hall, 1990) and meanings are therefore communicated in a straightforward way.

In addition to Hall's cultural analysis, Hofstede (1984) identified five dimensions that explain cultural differences. These dimensions are individualism/collectivism, power distance, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation/short-term orientation. The dimension indexes are considered as one the most authoritative indicators of many different cultures around the world. Numerous studies have utilized

Hofstede's dimensions to analyze, explain, and explore cross-cultural issues in communication, business, and sociology (for example, Barbuto, 2007; Draguns, 2007; Matveev & Nelson, 2004; Papamarcos, Latshaw & Watson, 2007). When comparing U.S. and China on these dimensions, Hofstede (2001) stated that Chinese culture, when compared to American culture, is more conservative, less individualistic, more concerned with "face", and values indirect means of communication. American culture, on the other hand, values assertiveness, individualism, aggressiveness, frankness, and punctuality.

Relating Hall's dimension with Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimensions, it is found that high information context positively correlates with collectivism while low context positively associates with individualism (Koga and Pearson, 1992). Individualistic cultures, such as low-context American culture, encourage self-assertion and direct expression while collectivistic countries, such as high-context Chinese culture, value indirect, implicit, and impersonalized expressions (Ting-Toomey, 1985).

Researchers have examined the content of advertising across cultures and found evidence supportive to the cross-cultural differences (e.g., An, 2003; Koga & Pearson, 1992; Laroche, Toggoli, Zhang & Pons, 2001; Oh, Cho & Leckenby, 1999; Yoon & Cropp, 1999). For instance, Koga and Pearson (1992) compared Japanese and American magazine ads and found that Japanese ads contained more implicit and indirect messages while American ads had more direct and persuasive information. The authors attributed the differences between the two countries to distinctive information context values: Japan had high-context culture and U.S. had low-context culture.

Some other scholars, however, provided more critical and analytical thoughts about the cultural dimensions initiated by Hall and Hofstede. For example, Triandis

(2002) questioned the validity of treating individualism versus collectivism as purely dichotomous. He investigated people from different cultures in various aspects and pointed out that individualism and collectivism were simply ideal types. People actually employ “both individualist and collectivist cognitive structures, depending on the situation” (Triandis, 2002, p. 909). The geography, resources, the history of the society, the complexity of the culture, and the situation all have significant impacts on people’s personality of being individualist/collectivist (Carpenter, 2000; Triandis, 1994, 1995; Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Apparently, those recent scholars were no longer considering high- versus low-context or individualism versus collectivism as dichotomous or fixed. Rather, they regarded those cultural dimensions as fluid and continuous, especially in today’s ever-changing cultural environment.

Business and Advertising Differences

In addition to cultural differences, researchers have also found significant differences in business/marketing practices between the U.S. and China. For example, Gao (2003) studied the development of international advertising in China since 1979 and identified some major institutional obstacles in Chinese advertising market. Gao (2003) pointed out that advertising as a social institution was strongly shaped by the context within which it operated, and that international advertising in China should keep Chinese social context in mind. China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 and therefore entered the capitalist free market. However, Chinese political system and traditional culture have undergone no significant changes. The employment of

advertising practices and strategies should be subject to the unique cultural and political atmosphere of the country.

Jin, Mason, and Yim (1998) compared the business cultures in China and the U.S. and found some significant differences between the two countries' business styles. According to the authors, Chinese business culture was generally quiet and reserved and Chinese business people tended to be clumsy communicators compared to American ones. American business atmosphere, in contrast, was more outspoken and eloquent and American businessmen were more effective communicators.

Global Advertising: Standardization versus Localization

The differences among targets across the world also gives rise to the debate of standardization versus localization for international advertising (de Mooij, 2005), with the upsurge of globalization and market segmentation in today's global market. On the one hand, standardization occurs when execution of advertising elements are kept uniform across different countries' advertisements (Nelson & Peak, 2007) and is considered to be cost efficient (Levitt, 1983). Localized strategies, on the other hand, consider the heterogeneity of cultures and take into account the importance of market segmentation for more efficient communication (Taylor, 1996). Scholars have investigated how these strategies were utilized in contemporary advertising. Some have found significant differences in advertising between or among different countries and attributed those discrepancies to distinctive cultural values. Others, however, have identified more similarities than differences and asserted that standardization was a valid strategy for international advertising.

However different or similar the advertisements across cultures are, many scholars emphasize that the effectiveness of advertising does vary as the function of product, individual, situation (e.g., Muehling & McCann, 1993), and cultural contexts vary (e.g. Han & Shavitt, 1994). Chang (2006) suggested that advertisers keep cultural differences in mind while paying attention to “values, lifestyles, and personality traits of consumers within each target market” (p. 462). Orth, Koenig and Firbasova (2007) examined how consumers in Croatia, The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland responded to positively and negatively framed advertising appeals. As a result, the researchers identified different emotional, cognitive, and attitudinal responses across the four countries. Based upon their findings, the researchers pointed out that

“Advertisers and their clientele need to recognize that an advertisement that has been designed for an international audience featuring a specific frame may elicit a variety of emotional and attitudinal responses due to national differences between consumers. Neglecting even subtle national differences can lead to consumer misperceptions and may result in serious damage to the brand image. ...Using one advertising campaign is questionable, if not potentially damaging to advertisers' efforts” (p. 327).

In addition to those scholarly findings, the two most commonly used paradigms for studying international advertising actually stress the influence of country/cultural differences. One paradigm centers on content analysis of advertising messages to understand value differences and the prevalence of differential appeals used in ads across countries (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996; Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun, & Kropp, 1999; Zandpour et al., 1994; Zandpour & Harich, 1996). The other approach contends that

cultural factors impact individual self-construals which lead to different processes of information (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). All these arguments seem to suggest that in the execution of international advertising campaigns, pure standardization may not be an effective approach and advertisers should not neglect the specific regional differences.

Actually, some researchers have found that few international advertising campaigns were fully standardized and many ads were partially standardized and partially customized (e.g., Harris and Attour, 2003; Mueller, 1989). Moriarty and Duncan (1991) contended that there was a big middle ground between standardization and localization and future researchers should begin conceptualizing global strategy versus local strategy as a continuum rather than as a dichotomy. In a recent review of the content of international advertising papers published in the *Journal of Advertising* from 1994 to 2004, Taylor (2005) discussed several pressing issues in today's international advertising research and pointed out that "a model of when standardization is feasible and how it works would represent a major advance in the literature" (p. 11). Here, "how it works" refers to the way international advertising incorporates local elements into standardization strategy. Based on the discussion, it is now clear that how international advertising should employ standardization and localization is still deficient of research and more analyses of such issue need to be done.

The discussion in above section indicates that advertising from the U.S. and China could be different since those two countries are different in many aspects. In order to investigate the differences in print advertising between China and the U.S., it is important to first understand the essential elements that compose a piece of print advertisement.

Focal Object in Print Advertising

According to O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik (2006), in print media, there are several essential advertising elements which generally fall into two major categories: copywriting and visuals. Copywriting is defined as the "process of expressing the value and benefits a brand has to offer, via written or verbal descriptions" (O'Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2006) and includes three essential parts: headline, subhead, and the body copy. Headline is "the leading sentence or sentences...that attracts attention, communicates a key selling point, or achieves brand identification" (p. 404) while subhead is used to complement the headline and usually "appears above or below the headline" (p. 408). The body copy is the remaining part of the verbal component of an advertisement and "tells a more complete story" (p. 410) of the brand or the product. Visuals, or illustrations, are the actual drawings, paintings, photography, or computer-generated art that form the picture in an advertisement (O'Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2006).

Another important element, layout, involves how to place those previously mentioned elements in an actual advertisement. Layout affects how each advertisement as a whole is perceived by viewers. This indicates that not all elements used in print ads receive the same level of attention by the viewers. In each advertisement, there tends to be an object that compels the attention of viewers and is called focal object. A focal object reflects novelty, intensity, or changes (Lang, 2000) and is usually put at the center of the ad and more substantial in size. A focal object can be the visual, the headline and the subhead, or a mixture of both visual and verbal elements.

Based on Lachman and Lachman's (1979) information processing model, Lang (2000) proposed the Limited Capacity Model (LCM) to account for information

processing occurring in a message receiver's mind. The model contends that people are information processors with limited mental capacity. Therefore, among all the information bits that are presented in a message, only a limited number of those bits are either automatically or voluntarily selected for processing. According to LCM (Lang, 2000), structural and content features of a message compete for mental resources. Salient features of a message automatically grab viewers' attention and receive mental resources. Hence, the focal object receives more attention than rest of the elements in a print advertisement.

A review of previous studies indicates that most advertising visual and verbal content was analyzed without paying attention to the particular role of the focal objects of the ads. However, without identifying the focal object in an ad, it would be impossible for us to comprehensively and accurately understand the advertising strategy and the major message the advertisement wants to deliver.

One type of message an ad delivers is called benefits. A piece of advertisement tends to provide two types of benefits, functional and emotional benefit (Kelley & Jugenheimer, 2006).

Functional and Emotional Benefits Used in Advertising

This study also examined whether China and the U.S. are different in using those benefits to persuade their target consumers. A benefit can be defined as "what a product, service, or business does for the consumer" (Kelley & Jugenheimer, 2006, p. 51). Specifically, on the one hand, a functional benefit "describes what the brand does or how it functions or performs in ways that benefit the customer" (Kelley & Jugenheimer, 2006,

p. 51) and hence is known as a product-performance benefit. On the other hand, an emotional benefit describes “the effect of the effect” (Goode, 1936) which tends to make people feel good and is therefore a personal-performance benefit.

Cosmetic advertising tends to contain both functional and emotional benefits. It appears that women care about both how they look and feel after applying cosmetics. However, little research has examined whether there is any differences in the use of these benefits to persuade the target audiences with different cultural backgrounds. It is possible that the major benefits consumers wish to obtain from using the cosmetic products differ across countries. According to Hall's (1973) and Hofstede's (2001), people from different cultures have different values and hold different expectations to the functions and emotions advertising provides. For example, people from Western countries generally prefer straightforwardness and functionality to indirectness and emotionality in ads and commercials, while people from some Eastern countries are likely to be persuaded by emotional statements in ads. Again, a large number of studies that have examined advertising differences between countries did not paid attention to these aspects of advertisements.

Roles of Visuals and Verbal Elements in Print Advertising

Seitz (1998) did a content analysis of 870 advertisements of perfumes (100), women's apparel (676) and cosmetics (94) that appeared in *Vogue* magazines published in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK, and U.S.. The sampled issues were published between November 1991 and April 1992. Seitz found that advertisements for perfumes

and apparels were image based while cosmetic ads were balanced with both images and information.

Verbal Information in Advertising

Most content analyses of advertisements focused on verbal or textual information presented in advertising messages. Marquez (1977) distinguished informative ads from persuasive ads based on their verbal content. An informative ad produces a desire for the advertised product through providing specific and verifiable facts regarding the product, while a persuasive ad creates a desire for the advertised product without using those kinds of factual information about the product. Informative ads in general emphasize functional benefits the advertised products provide whereas persuasive ads stress emotional benefits the consumers can gain. In his study, Marquez examined 600 hundred ads published between 1973 and 1976 and grouped them based on product types. Based on analyses of the verbal information, he classified the ads into five categories: 1) basic persuasion; 2) basic information; 3) high in persuasion but low in information; 4) high in information but low in persuasion; and 5) mainly intimidation. Basic persuasion was operationalized as pure action of creating a purchasing desire for the advertised product without using any specific, relevant or verifiable facts about the product; basic information was the use of specific, relevant, and verifiable facts regarding the product to create a purchasing desire; intimidation was the use of fear appeal (Marquez, 1977). Ads that contained more than 50% of persuasion were sorted as high persuasion/low information while ads containing more than 50% of information were included in the category of high information/low persuasion. The results revealed that among all the product categories,

73% of cosmetics and toiletries ads fell in the category of basic persuasion, 18% were high persuasive/low informative, only 5% fell in basic information category, 4% were mainly intimidation, and none was high informative/low persuasive.

Resnik and Stern (1977) designed an advertising information classification system that consists of 14 categories of potentially useful information. The 14 information cues are price-value, quality, performance, components or contents, availability, special offers, tastes, nutrition, packaging or shape, guarantees and warranties, safety, independent research, company research, and new ideas. This system can be used to determine whether an ad is informative or non-informative/ persuasive by calculating the numbers of information cues it contains. An advertisement is considered as informative if it contains at least one of the 14 information criteria; otherwise it is considered as a pure persuasive ad. In their original study, the authors examined 378 TV commercials for multiple product categories and found that 49.2% of the ads were informative. Among all the informative ads identified, 16% contained two or more cues and only 1% included three or more information cues.

Many scholars employed Resnik and Stern's information classification system to analyze the verbal content of ads. For example, Tom, Calvert, Goolkatsian and Zumsteg (1984) investigated 348 American TV commercials aired between October and November 1981 to determine their informational values. The results showed that about 53% of the commercials contained one information cue, about 14% included two cues; and only about 3% contained three or more information cues. The findings were compared to Resnik and Stern's (1977) earlier study of TV commercials, the researchers

concluded that the informational value of American TV commercials had not changed much in a period of five years.

In another study, Stern, Krugman, and Resnik (1981) employed Resnik and Stern's 14-item information cues to examine print advertising. They analyzed 1,500 American magazine advertisements and found that 86% of the ads contained at least one information cue; 52% contained two cues; 26% contained three cues; 9% had four cues; and only 1% of the studied ads contained five cues. They also found that advertisements of expensive products were likely to contain more information cues. When comparing by magazine types, the researchers found that women's fashion/service magazines contained 80% of informative ads and this type of magazine was ranked as second to the least informative magazine type. This result shows that ads in women's fashion magazines did not contain many information cues. The researchers also examined the appearing frequency of the 14 information cues. Components or contents (43%), price or value (37%), availability (36%), special offers (26%), and performance (15%) were found to be the 5 most frequently appeared cues in the sampled ads. The researchers concluded that Resnik and Stern's information classification system can also be applied to print advertising. However, the authors failed to differentiate between product categories in their study and used a rough categorization of magazine types instead. For example, fashion and cosmetic advertising can be quite different in many ways while both tend to frequently appear in women's magazines.

Resnik and Stern's system has also been applied to investigation of ads in countries other than the U.S.. Chan (1995) conducted a content analysis of 324 Chinese TV commercials aired on Chinese national and local channels. Chan found 58% of the

studied commercials were informative. The most frequently used cues were performance, quality, and components/contents. Commercials of drugs and non-durable products were most informative while cigarette and liquor ads were the least informative.

Rice and Lu (1988) employed Resnik and Stern's (1977) measurement to examine Chinese magazine advertisements. They hypothesized that due to the economic condition in China during late 1980s, high involvement in making purchase decisions among Chinese people would lead to a high level of informativeness in the ads. They studied the information content of 472 Chinese magazine ads and found that 100% of the Chinese magazine ads were informative. Product and service availability was the most commonly seen cue which appeared in 98% of the studied ads. Food and health magazine ads were the most informative compared to ads appeared in other types of magazines. Ads of medicine and medical products were the most informative among all the product categories. Again, cosmetics and fashion were combined into one category. The category was found to contain 1.83 cues per ad and ranked as the least informative one among all the five categories. The researchers noted that the results of this study accurately reflected the economic and political situation in China at that time when materials and goods were very limited. However, as mentioned before, this study again put cosmetics and fashion into the same product category despite the significant advertising differences between the two.

Others employed Resnik and Stern's system to compare the information content of ads across countries and cultures. For instance, Dowling (1980) examined the information content of 239 Australian television commercials and compared the findings to those of U.S. TV commercials reported by Resnik and Stern in 1977. Specifically, the

researcher found that Australian commercials were generally more informative than American ones as 74% of the Australian ads contained at least one cue while only around 50% of American ads included one information cue. Moreover, in Australia, evening TV commercials were found to contain fewer information cues than daytime ads and American evening commercials were even less informative than Australian evening ones. Although useful in understanding the differences between the two countries, the comparisons should be made with caution as the researcher did not conduct a concurrent comparison between the two countries.

Madden, Caballero, and Matsukubo (1986) compared the information content of magazines ads between the U.S. and Japan using Resnik and Stern's classification system. The authors sampled 1,440 ads (832 were from U.S. and 608 were from Japan) from six categories of magazines including general, sports, entertainment, women's, men's, and professional. The study found that Japanese ads were generally more informative than the American counterparts. About 85% of the Japanese ads contained at least one information cue while 75% of the American ads contained at least one information cue. Sports and men's magazine ads were the most informative ads in Japan while professional magazine ads contained the largest number of information cues in the U.S.. In terms of product category, ads for recreational and entertainment products, apparel, car products, household products, and garden products were the most informative in Japan; whereas in the U.S., ads for electronics, car products, household products, and garden products were the most informative compared to ads for other types of products. However, this study again did not have a specific category of cosmetics. Instead, cosmetic ads were included in the personal care category. Advertisements of personal

care products were found to be quite similar in terms of informativeness between the two countries. Madden (1986) explained the general difference in informativeness by pointing out that Japanese culture tended to show aggressiveness through indirect means such as promotions.

More recently, Keown, Jacons, Schmidt, and Ghymn (1992) assessed the information content of ads in multiple media from four different countries. The media included were television, radio, magazine, and newspaper, and the countries were the United States, Japan, South Korea, and China. The study employed Resnik and Stern's system to compare the informativeness of ads across these countries and media. It was found that ads in electronic media were less informative than ads in print media. American electronic commercials contained more information cues than other countries' electronic ads. Chinese magazine ads were the most informative among all the magazine ads while Japanese and Chinese newspaper ads were the most informative among all the newspaper ads. The researchers pointed out that ads' informativeness varies by country and by media and suggested that international advertisers take those factors into consideration when launching their advertising campaigns across countries.

Phararalaoha (1994) also investigated the informativeness of magazine advertising across different countries. Phararalaoha (1994) focused on the creative strategies employed in Thai and U.S. magazine ads. As a part of the study, the informativeness of the ads was examined and compared between the two countries. The results indicated that there were more informative ads in Thai magazines (about 60%) than in the U.S. magazines (about 49%).

The results of those comparative studies reviewed above reflected differences in advertising practice across different countries. This may indicate that advertisers are sensitive to the needs and wants of different target audiences with different cultural backgrounds. However, most of those studies were done over a decade ago and with the emergence of globalization and international advertising, one wonders if the situation would remain the same or not. This study was intended to compare specifically contemporary cosmetic ads in print media between U.S. and China to see if local brands as well as global brands are reaching their targets with uniform strategies.

The Visuals in Advertising

Visuals are considered as a vital component of contemporary advertising. Scholars have documented that visual appeals could command attention, stimulate curiosity (Hecker & Stewart, 1988; Wells, Burnett & Moriarty, 1995; Moriarty, 1997) and enhance messages ((Petty & Cacioppo, 1996). For example, Mitchell (1986) pointed out that visual-oriented advertisements were likely to induce greater attention, comprehension, liking, and persuasion and were richer in imagery than text-oriented advertisements. Motes, Hilton, and Fielden (1992) manipulated the language styles, sentences, layouts, and illustrations of one print advertisement and the manipulation generated 24 variations of the ad. Among the 24 versions, 16 contained an illustration while 8 did not. The researchers examined the readers' attitudes toward the 24 variations, including whether they thought the ad was appealing, believable, clear, attractive, informative, and the readers' overall reactions, their likelihood of reading the ad, and likelihood of using the service. As one of their findings, the researchers contended that

excluding or including a visual illustration generated a significant difference in readers' attitudes toward the ads. Furthermore, Debevec and Romeo (1992) advanced the notion of "picture superiority effect", indicating that visuals in ads enhance efficiency of catching readers' attention and function independently of other factors including language, sentence, and text layout.

Visuals also play an important role in global advertising. Kernan and Domzal (1993) suggested that the best way to execute global advertising campaigns is using a visual as the focal object with straightforward verbal messages. However, Hirschman (1991) stressed that advertisers needed to understand the product type and how specific brands were perceived in different cultures before deciding how to use images. In addition, people from different cultures may perceive visuals in different ways. Hence, understanding how people from different cultures use visuals to communicate is vital to successful advertising.

Although useful and important, not much work has been done to develop ways to examine visuals used in advertising. Messaris (1997) noted that systematic visual investigation is still in its infancy with only a few notable exceptions, such as Moriarty's (1987) visual typology. Moriarty (1987) proposed a visual typology to classify the benefits of visuals in print advertising. She created two categories based on the benefits of the visuals and termed them literal and symbolic visuals. The literal visuals are similar to functional visuals that provide functional benefits while symbolic visuals are likely to offer emotional benefits. That is, literal visuals directly communicate factual information about the product and identify, describe, and report product details. Literal visuals are the products of direct experience. Symbols, on the other hand, communicate concepts

through abstraction and metaphor. Moriarty (1987) pointed out that “symbol using involves substituting a visual form for a more complex concept” through “abstraction and metaphor” (p. 550). Further, literal visuals were classified into subcategories of identification, description, comparison, and demonstration; symbolic visuals were subcategorized into association, association with a character or celebrity, metaphor, storytelling, and aesthetics (example of each subcategory are shown in Table 1).

Table 1
Types of Literal and Symbolic Visuals

Literal Visuals	1) Identification (brand, logo, package) 2) Comparison (between two competitors, before & after) 3) Description (what it looks like, attributes, parts, schematics) 4) Demonstration (how to do, use, apply, make)
Symbolic Visuals	5) Association (lifestyle, typical person, situation) 6) Association using a Character or Celebrity 7) Metaphor (Allegorical use, unexpected substitution based on similarity of some feature) 8) Storytelling (narrative, drama, playlet) 9) Aesthetics (details become art, pattern, abstraction)

Note: Moriarty, S. E. (1987). A Content Analysis of Visuals Used in Print Media Advertising. *Journalism Quarterly*, 550-554.

A few scholars so far have utilized Moriarty’s visual analysis tool in their studies and effectively analyzed the visual content of the ads. Among those few studies, some focused on a single country’s advertisements while some conducted cross-cultural comparisons of advertisements. Moriarty (1987) examined 222 advertisements from American magazines using her visual typology. The magazines included were *Sport Illustrated*, *US News and World Report*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *Newsweek* published between 1980 and 1985. The study found that symbolic visuals (52%) were

used more frequently than literal visuals (48%). Among symbolic visuals, association visuals were used most frequently (22%) while aesthetic visuals were used least (2%). Among literal visuals, description (21%) and identification (20%) were most frequently used while demonstration (3%) and comparison (4%) were least frequently used. The study showed that there was no significant difference between the use of symbolic and literal visuals.

An and Wachanga (2004) used Moriarty's typology to compare the visual strategies employed by international brands in their local websites in Korea and the United States. The study found significant differences between the two countries on use of literal and symbolic visuals, the use of photographs and illustrations, and the frequencies of product portrayals in visuals. They attributed the differences to different cultural values, especially high versus low information contexts, between the two countries. The high context cultures, such as Korean culture, have shared understanding of information and therefore very few messages are coded, transmitted, or conveyed explicitly. The low context cultures, including American culture, value individual understanding of information and therefore explicitly code information in communication processes. The authors suggested that the multinational advertisers needed to take specific cultural values into consideration.

In another study, An (2007) employed Moriarty's visual typology to examine internet advertising in six countries including Korea, U.S., Germany, U.K., Japan, and China. The sample contained 253 web ads of 49 brands selected from world's top 100 brands identified by 2005 *Business Week*. The study found that 70% of the ads from high-context countries (China, Japan, and Korea) contained symbolic visuals while only 42%

of the ads from low-context countries (U.S., U.K., and Germany) used symbolic visuals. Moreover, literal visuals were used in 58% of the ads from low-context countries and in 30% of the ads from high-context countries. Particularly the difference between China and the U.S. was profound in use of literal versus symbolic visuals. For the U.S., the ratio of symbolic to literal visuals used in ads was 39% to 61% and for China, it was 74% to 29%. The findings confirmed the author's hypothesis that high-context cultures tended to use more soft selling (emotional) while low-context cultures was more likely to employ hard selling (informational and data-driven) strategies.

Research Questions

This study examined cosmetic advertising in two influential countries, U.S. and China. This study was exploratory, aiming to discover and understand the differences in cosmetic advertising between the two countries. In addition, this study examined whether international advertising employed localization or standardization. Although equally important, if not more, visual elements in ads have been neglected in advertising research. Moriarty's (1987) typology is one of the few tools available to analyze visual elements in ads. This study employed both Resnik and Stern's (1977) information classification system and Moriarty's (1987) visual typology to examine both verbal and visual elements used in cosmetic print ads.

Previous literature suggested several issues that are important for advertising studies but have not been fully examined. First, most of the previous studies did not differentiate between fashion and cosmetic advertising. However, it is important to study fashion and cosmetic advertising as two distinctive categories since they were found to be

very different in terms of both visual and verbal content. Second, few previous studies have examined the focal objects in ads. Yet when examining advertisements, it is essential for us to identify the focal objects and the benefits they provide because focal objects are the attention catchers for ads. Third, visuals and information are equally important for cosmetic ads but visuals were neglected in many advertising studies. Besides, Moriarty's visual typology and Resnik and Stern's information cues are two of the few available measures for analyzing advertising pictorial and verbal content respectively. Finally, China and the U.S. are different in many ways but how contemporary advertising differs between these two countries is not fully examined. Therefore, this study intended to answer the following specific questions:

RQ1: How are cosmetic ads in U.S. different from those in China?

RQ1a: How are cosmetic ads in U.S. different from those in China in the use of focal object?

RQ1b: How are cosmetic ads in U.S. different from those in China in the use of verbal information cues in both the headlines and the entire copies?

RQ1c: How are cosmetic ads in U.S. different from those in China in the use of literal and symbolic visuals?

RQs2: How are international cosmetic ads in U.S. different from those in China in use of focal object (RQ2a), verbal elements (RQ2b), and visuals (RQ2c)?

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

In order to answer the questions above, a content analysis was conducted.

Krippendorff (2003) noted that as an analytical technique, content analysis was capable of completing three tasks. It summarizes inferences from large bodies of data, discovers patterns and relationships within findings, and compares findings with data obtained through other means. In addition, advertising scholars have frequently pointed out that content analysis is an appropriate method for analyzing visual and informational elements in advertisements (e.g., An, 1993; Tansey et al., 1990).

Sampling

This study is primarily concerned with cosmetic advertising in women's magazines, especially women's fashion magazines as they contain the largest collection of cosmetic ads. International women's magazines were selected as the major sources for ads in this study because those magazines tend to convey to their female audience the ads for many global brands such as L'Oreal, Dior, Estee Lauder, and Clinique (Nelson & Paek, 2007). All the ads appearing in those international magazines were supplied by the cosmetic companies. This study specifically selected three of the most popular international fashion magazines (*Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Cosmopolitan*) in both China and the U.S.. According to Audit Bureau of Circulation (2007), *Elle*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Lucky* were ranked as the most popular women's magazines in the U.S.. In China, some of the most authoritative and influential websites (e.g., www.sina.com.cn, www.xinhuanet.com) have pointed out that *Elle*, *Harper's*

Bazaar, *Vogue*, and *Cosmopolitan* had the highest circulation rates among all the fashion magazines available in the Chinese market. Since China does not publish *Lucky*, and *Vogue* just entered the Chinese market in late 2005 and therefore had a much shorter life in China compared to *Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Cosmopolitan*, this study excluded those *Lucky* and *Vogue*. The three magazines selected therefore were *Elle*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Harper's Bazaar*.

This study employs purposive sampling method where equal number of magazines is sampled from each country. The sampling frame consists of 24 monthly magazines that were published between year 2004 and 2007. 12 are Chinese and 12 are American. For each country, 4 issue numbers were randomly determined for each of the 3 magazines, *Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Cosmopolitan*. The sampling unit of this study contains both one-page and two-page cosmetic advertisements from the 24 magazines since those two sizes are the most common one for cosmetic advertising. If the same ad appears more than once, only one copy will be included in the sample and the redundant ones will be excluded.

This sampling method results in an inclusion of the following issues for each country: *Elle* August 2004, November 2005, February 2006, and November 2007; *Harper's Bazaar* August, 2004, August, 2005, June, 2007, and December 2007; *Cosmopolitan* June, 2004, December 2005, July 2006, and August 2007.

Variables

The coding instrument for the content analysis is attached in Appendixes A and B. There are four primary variables. First, there are general source variables such as the

country of the magazine, the name of the magazine, the issue number of the magazine, the brand name that is advertised, the size of the advertisement, and the product type. Second, there are variables related to the focal object in ad such as the focal object type, and the benefit a focal object provides. Third, there are variables concerning the verbal information in the ad, including 13 information cues adapted from Resnik and Stern's (1977) information classification system. Fourth, there are variables concerning the visual information in the ad, including ten visual elements derived from Moriarty's (1987) visual typology.

Operationalization

This study explored the informational and visual content of cosmetics ads in the U.S. and China, using primarily Moriarty's (1987) visual typology and Resnik and Stern's (1977) information classification system. Resnik and Stern (1977) identified 14 items that indicate factual information contained in each ad. However, for the current study, two of the items, Nutrition and Taste, were irrelevant and therefore excluded from the list. Special Offer was further excluded because special offer promotions are only available at certain times which vary from brand to brand and special offer information therefore does not indicate the informativeness of the ad. Moreover, a careful observation of cosmetic ads indicated several important elements that were not reflected in the original measure and were thus added or modified. First, most of the research results posted on a cosmetic ad were obtained from clinical experiments that were usually carried out with collaborated efforts of both the company and an independent medical research institute. As a result, items Independent Research and Company Research were

merged into one single item, Research. Second, some contemporary cosmetic advertisements were found to mention the targets in the ad, so Target was added to the scale. Technology was another type of information found in some of the ads and was therefore added to the criteria. Finally, given the speedy development of high-tech communications nowadays, telephone, website, email, and fax are common means of contact. Therefore, one more new item Contact Information was added to the information criteria. The modification generated a total number of 13 information cues for the specific purpose of this study. All the information cues were operationalized according to Resnik and Stern's (1977) original definitions except for the three new items, Contact Information, Target, and Technology. Contact Information was operationalized as telephone or toll free number, website, email address, or fax number; Target was defined as information regarding the specific group of people whose needs the advertised product or brand aimed to fulfill; Technology was the verbal information regarding the application of certain techniques or technology in the production of the advertised product.

Moriarty (1987) proposed a visual typology for analyzing visuals in print advertising. She first sorted visual appeals into two categories: literal and symbolic. Next, literal visuals were further classified into subcategories of Identification, Description, Comparison, and Demonstration; symbolic visuals were subcategorized into Association, Association with A Character or Celebrity, Metaphor, Storytelling, and Aesthetics. Considering the specific nature of cosmetic advertisements, the item Description was excluded from the list. Description was defined by Moriarty (1987) as "what it looks like, attributes, parts, schematics" (p. 500) and cosmetic products generally do not contain

detailed parts or schematics as other product types do. Further, through observation of cosmetic advertising, it was found that some of the modern cosmetic ads tended to include images of ingredient(s) and visual demonstrations of the results after application. Therefore, two new items of Ingredient(s) and Result(s) were added to the literal category since both were functional visuals. Those modifications resulted in a total of ten items for this study. All the original eight visual items were operationalized according to Moriarty's (1987) original definitions. Ingredient(s) was defined as the image(s) of the main component(s) of the product and Result(s) was the image(s) demonstrating the effect(s) of the product after immediate application or continued use.

Other than Resnik and Stern's (1977) information cues and Moriarty's (1987) visual items, this paper also examined the focal objects and the benefits they provided in the ads. Based on O'Guinn, Allen, and Semenik's (2006) and Lang's (2000) definitions of advertising elements and their features, a focal object was operationalized as the major attention-getting element which is positioned at the center of the ad and most substantial in size comparing to other elements. The functional benefits and emotional benefits were both operationalized based on Kelley and Jugenheimer's (2006) and Goode's (1936) definitions.

Coding

Coding was done by two people, one of which was a communication student who was familiar with coding process and the other was outside the field of communication. Both coders were trained to become familiar with the definitions and operationalizations of the categories and variables. During the process, each coder coded independently. To

minimize possible bias, both coders were required to read the information in ads at face value without considering the credibility of the ads.

Ten advertisements in total were analyzed by the two coders independently for the purpose of checking intercoder reliability. Among the ten ads, five were selected from Chinese magazines and five were from American ones. Specifically for each country, two 2-page and three 1-page ads were randomly selected. In order to obtain precise intercoder reliability, only controversial and subjective items, including Quality, Components, Focal Object, Benefits, Technology, Aesthetics, and Special Effects, were checked. As a result, the Cronbach's Alpha was 92.3%.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Description of Sample

The sampling method employed in this study identified a total number of 378 cosmetic advertisements, among which 138 were from the U.S. and 240 were from China. Therefore, more cosmetic ads were seen in Chinese magazines than in the U.S. magazines. First, the study examined general differences in cosmetic ads between the U.S. and China. A series of Crosstabs were performed on the coded items to look at the differences. Results revealed some interesting differences between the two countries.

First, as shown in Table 2 and 3, among the U.S. ads, 89 (64.5%) were 1-page ads while 49 (35.5%) were 2-page ones; 74 (53.6%) were makeup ads while 64 (46.4%) were skincare ads. Among the Chinese ads, 95 (39.5%) were 1-page ads and 145 (60.4%) were 2-page ads; 58 (24.2%) were makeup ads while 180 (75.0%) were skincare ads. Hence, Chinese magazines contained more 2-page skincare ads while American magazines had more 1-page makeup ads.

Table 2
The Distribution of Ad Size in the Two Countries

Ad Size	U.S. (% within country)	China (% within country)	Total (% of total ads)
1-Page	89 (64.5%)	95 (39.6%)	184 (48.7%)
2-Page	49 (35.5%)	145 (60.4%)	194 (51.3%)
Total (% of total ads)	138 (36.5%)	240 (63.5%)	378 (100%)

Table 3
The Distribution of Product Type in the Two Countries

Product Type	U.S. (% within)	China (% within)	Total (% of total)
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	country)	country)	ads)
Makeup	74 (53.6%)	58 (24.2%)	132 (34.9%)
Skincare	64 (46.4%)	180 (75.0%)	244 (64.6%)
Combination	0 (.0%)	2 (.8%)	2 (.5%)
Total (% of total ads)	138 (36.5%)	240 (63.5%)	378 (100%)

When examining the use of focal objects, it was found that image of character was the most frequently used type of focal object in both Chinese ads (46.0%) and the U.S. ads (44.9%). However, as shown in Table 4, the second most frequently used focal object type was product image (26.8%) for the US ads while it was both images of product and character (26.0%) for the Chinese ads. There was also slight difference in the use of headlines between the two countries. As shown in Table 5, both countries mainly used functional benefits to appeal to their target audiences. However, more Chinese ads (21.2%) offered both functional and emotional benefits in headlines than the US ads (10.4%). Both countries rarely provided purely emotional benefits to their targets.

Table 4
Use of Focal Object in the Two Countries

Focal Object	U.S. (% within country)	China (% within country)	Total (% of total ads)
Text	1 (.7%)	2 (.9%)	3 (.8%)
Product Image	37 (26.8%)	29 (12.3%)	66 (17.7%)
Character Image	62 (44.9%)	108 (46.0%)	170 (45.6%)
Both Image	27 (19.6%)	61 (26.0%)	88 (23.6%)
Both Text and Image	5 (3.6%)	32 (13.6%)	37 (9.9%)
Other	6 (4.3%)	3 (1.3%)	9 (2.4%)
Total (% of total ads)	138 (37.0%)	235 (63%)	373 (100%)

Table 5
Benefit of Headline in Cosmetic Ads from the two Countries

Benefit of	U.S. (% within	China (% within	Total (% of total
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Headline	country)	country)	ads)
Functional	108 (86.4%)	179 (75.8%)	287 (79.5%)
Emotional	4 (3.2%)	7 (3.0%)	11 (3.0%)
Both	13 (10.4%)	50 (21.2%)	63 (17.5%)
Total (% of total ads)	125 (34.6%)	236 (65.4%)	361 (100.0%)

Next, the study examined the use of information cues in cosmetic ads from the two countries. 89.9% of the U.S. cosmetic ads contained at least two information cues while 98.4% of Chinese cosmetic ads contained two or more information cues (See Table 6). The total numbers of cues used in the ads from the two countries were also different. Chinese cosmetic ads on average contained more information cues ($M=4.60$, $SD=1.81$) than the U.S. ones ($M=3.20$, $SD=1.34$). In order to see if this difference is statistically significant, a t-test was performed on the number of information cues. Results revealed that the difference was indeed significant, $t(376)=7.96$, $p<.001$. The two countries also differed in the types of information cues used in their cosmetic ads (See Table 6 and 7). Performance, contact information, and component were the top three most frequently used information cues for ads from both the countries. However, more Chinese ads (73.3%) than the U.S. ones (44.9%) contained information regarding the components. In addition, the fourth most frequently used cue for the Chinese ads was price (45.0%) while it was availability for the U.S. ads (31.9%). Similar differences were found in the use of headlines as well. Chinese cosmetic ads contained more information cues in the headlines ($M=1.02$, $SD=.64$) than the U.S. counterparts ($M=.73$, $SD=.57$) (See Table 9). The difference was again statistically significant, $t(376) = 4.40$, $p<.001$. Again, each country emphasized different sets of information cues in headlines as shown in Table 8. Both performance and component were found to be the most frequently used cues in headlines for both the countries. However, 82.1% of the Chinese ads contained performance

information in the headlines while only 61.6% of the U.S. ads mentioned product performance in the headlines. Moreover, 8.8% of the Chinese ads introduced the components of the products in the headlines whereas only 2.9% of the U.S. ads did so.

Table 6
Number of Information Cues Included in the Two Countries

Number of Cues in Entire Copy	U.S. (% within country)	China (% within country)	Total (% of total ads)
0	0 (.0%)	2 (.8%)	2 (.5%)
1	14 (10.1%)	2 (.8%)	16 (4.2%)
2	32 (23.2%)	26 (10.8%)	58 (15.3%)
3	34 (24.6%)	36 (15.0%)	70 (18.5%)
4	35 (25.4%)	55 (22.9%)	90 (23.8%)
5	17 (12.3%)	48 (20.0%)	65 (17.2%)
6	5 (3.6%)	36 (15.0%)	41 (10.8%)
7	1 (.7%)	19 (7.9%)	20 (5.3%)
8	0 (.0%)	10 (4.2%)	10 (2.6%)
9	0 (.0%)	6 (2.5%)	6 (1.6%)
Total (% of total ads)	138 (36.5%)	240 (63.5%)	378 (100%)
Total Cues	442	1104	
Mean	3.2	4.6	

Table 7
Use of Information Cues in the Two Countries

Information Cue in Entire Copy	U.S. (% within country)	China (% within country)	Total (% of total ads)
Price-Value	1 (.7%)	108 (45.0%)	109 (28.8%)
Quality	35 (25.4%)	97 (40.4%)	132 (34.9%)
Performance	126 (91.3%)	234 (97.5%)	360 (95.2%)
Components or Content	62 (44.9%)	176 (73.3%)	238 (63.0%)
Availability	44 (31.9%)	85 (35.4%)	129 (34.1%)
Packaging or Shape	1 (.7%)	85 (35.4%)	86 (22.8%)
Safety	16 (11.6%)	30 (12.5%)	46 (12.2%)
Research	25 (18.1%)	14 (5.8%)	39 (10.3%)
New Ideas	4 (2.9%)	10 (4.2%)	14 (3.7%)
Techniques	11 (8.0%)	52 (21.7%)	63 (16.7%)
Target(s)	1 (.7%)	27 (11.3%)	28 (7.4%)
Contact Information	114 (82.6%)	187 (77.9%)	301 (79.6%)

Table 8
Use of Information Cues in Headline in the Two Countries

Information Cue in Headline	U.S. (% within country)	China (% within country)	Total (% of total ads)
Quality	5 (3.6%)	14 (5.8%)	19 (5.0%)
Performance	85 (61.6%)	197 (82.1%)	282 (74.6%)
Components or Content	4 (2.9%)	21 (8.8%)	25 (6.6%)
Packaging	1 (.7%)	0 (.0%)	1 (.3%)
Safety	1 (.7%)	1 (.4%)	2 (.5%)
Research	1 (.7%)	1 (.4%)	2 (.5%)
New Ideas	0 (.0%)	2 (.8%)	2 (.5%)
Techniques	0 (.0%)	5 (2.1%)	5 (1.3%)
Target(s)	0 (.0%)	2 (.8%)	2 (.5%)

Table 9
Number of Information Cues Included in Headline in the Two Countries

Number of Cues in Headline	U.S. (% within country)	China (% within country)	Total (% of total ads)
0	46 (33.3%)	39 (16.3%)	85 (22.5%)
1	83 (60.1%)	162 (67.5%)	245 (64.8%)
2	9 (6.5%)	36 (15.0%)	45 (11.9%)
3	0 (.0%)	1 (.4%)	1 (.3%)
4	0 (.0%)	2 (.8%)	2 (.5%)
Total (% of total ads)	138 (36.5%)	240 (63.5%)	378 (100%)
Total Cues	105	240	
Mean	.76	1.00	

Next, use of visual cues in the ads was compared between the two countries. On average, Chinese ads ($M=1.83$, $SD=.69$) and the U.S. ads ($M=1.84$, $SD=.49$) were found to contain almost equal numbers of literal visuals (See Table 10). A t-test was performed on number of literal visuals used and no significant difference was found. However, cosmetic ads from China ($M=1.64$, $SD=.96$) were found to include significantly more symbolic visuals than those from the U.S. ($M=1.16$, $SD=.77$) (See Table 11), as indicated by the t-test result, $t(376) = 5.06$, $p < .001$. Table 12 shows the detailed frequency of using each type of visual in cosmetic ads from the two countries. Specifically, both the Chinese

and the U.S. ads used associate and associate using a celebrity visuals most frequently. Chinese ads were found to use more special effects (22.9%) and aesthetics (10.8%) visuals than the U.S. ads (1.4% for special effects and 2.9% for aesthetics).

Table 10
Number of Literal Visuals Used in the Two Countries

Number of Literal Visuals	U.S. (% within country)	China (% within country)	Total (% of total ads)
0	0 (.0%)	1 (.4%)	1 (.3%)
1	43 (31.2%)	48 (20.0%)	91 (24.1%)
2	78 (56.5%)	179 (74.6%)	257 (68.0%)
3	14 (10.1%)	12 (5.0%)	26 (6.9%)
4	3 (2.2%)	0 (.0%)	3 (.8%)
Total (% of total ads)	138 (36.5%)	240 (63.5%)	378 (100%)
Total Literal Visuals	253	442	
Mean	1.83	1.84	

Table 11
Number of Symbolic Visuals Used in the Two Countries

Number of Symbolic Visuals	U.S. (% within country)	China (% within country)	Total (% of total ads)
0	25 (18.1%)	23 (9.6%)	48 (12.7%)
1	71 (51.4%)	92 (38.3%)	163 (43.1%)
2	38 (27.5%)	80 (33.3%)	118 (31.2%)
3	3 (2.2%)	38 (15.8%)	41 (10.8%)
4	1 (.7%)	7 (2.9%)	8 (2.1%)
Total (% of total ads)	138 (36.5%)	240 (63.5%)	378 (100%)
Total Symbolic Visuals	160	394	
Mean	1.16	1.64	

Table 12
Use of Visuals in the Two Countries

Visuals in Ads	U.S. (% within country)	China (% within country)	Total (% of total ads)
Literal Visuals			
Identification	138 (100.0%)	238 (99.2%)	376 (99.5%)
Comparison	8 (5.8%)	31 (12.9%)	39 (10.3%)

Results	92 (66.7%)	159 (66.3%)	251 (66.4%)
Ingredient(s)	12 (8.7%)	10 (4.2%)	22 (5.8%)
Demonstration	3 (2.2%)	4 (1.7%)	7 (1.9%)
Symbolic Visuals			
Associate	96 (69.6%)	196 (81.7%)	292 (77.2%)
Associate Using A Celebrity	39 (28.3%)	77 (32.1%)	116 (30.7%)
Metaphor	19 (13.8%)	38 (15.8%)	57 (15.1%)
Story Telling	0 (.0%)	2 (.8%)	2 (.5%)
Aesthetics	4 (2.9%)	26 (10.8%)	30 (7.9%)
Special Effects	2 (1.4%)	55 (22.9%)	57 (15.1%)

Next, the racial background of the major character appeared in the ads was examined. Interestingly, Caucasian was the most frequently used character for both the Chinese (52.9%) and the U.S. (79.6%) ads while the Chinese cosmetic ads also used a significant amount of Asian endorsers (42.9%) (See Table 13). International and local ads were relatively evenly distributed in each country (See Table 14).

Table 13
The Ethnicity of the Major Character in Cosmetic Ads in the Two Countries

Ethnicity	U.S. (% within country).	China (% within country)	Total (% of total ads)
Caucasian	78 (79.6%)	101 (52.9%)	179 (61.9%)
Asian	3 (3.1%)	82 (42.9%)	85 (29.4%)
African American	6 (6.1%)	3 (1.6%)	9 (3.1%)
Hispanics	2 (2.0%)	0 (.0%)	2 (.7%)
Mixed	3 (3.1%)	4 (2.1%)	7 (2.4%)
Cannot Tell (Part of Body)	6 (6.1%)	1 (1.6%)	7 (3.1%)
Total	98 (33.9%)	191 (66.1%)	289 (100.0%)

Table 14
Distribution of International versus Local Ads in the Two Countries

Ad Source	U.S. (% within country).	China (% within country)
International Ads	77 (55.8%)	115 (47.9%)
Local Ads	61 (44.2%)	125 (52.1%)
Total (% of total ads)	138 (36.5%)	240 (63.5%)

As indicated in Table 2, the two product types were unequally distributed across the two countries. Since it is possible that ads for different product types use different strategies, a series of Crosstabs were performed on the coded items to investigate whether there were also significant differences between the two product types. The majority of the ads were clearly promoting either skin care products or makeup products. Only two ads featured both in the same ad. Hence, the discussion here will focus on the differences between the makeup and the skincare ads, particularly, on the items that revealed meaningful differences.

Results found that first, skincare ads ($M=1.00$, $SD=.64$) contained more information cues in the headlines than makeup ads ($M=.76$, $SD=.59$) (see Table 15). A t-test showed that the difference was significant, $t(374) = 3.61$, $p<.001$. Table 16 listed the detailed use of each verbal cue. Performance was the most frequently used cue in headlines for both skincare (79.5%) and makeup (65.2%) ads. Also, skincare ads (9.4%) were found to contain more information about components in the headlines than makeup ads did (1.5%). Furthermore, on average skincare ads ($M=4.43$, $SD=1.79$) contained more information cues in the entire body than makeup ads did ($M=3.47$, $SD=1.60$) (see Table 17). A t-test indicated that the difference was significant, $t(374) = 5.14$, $p<.001$. Table 18 listed the detailed use of each information cue in the entire copy within each product type. While performance and contact information cues were most often used in both skincare and makeup ads, skincare ads (73.8%) were found to include information about components in the entire copy more frequently than makeup ads (43.2%). Second, makeup ads ($M=1.61$, $SD=.85$) on average contained significantly more symbolic visuals

than skincare ads ($M=1.39$, $SD=.95$), $t(374) = 2.18$, $p<.05$ (See Table 19). Also, as shown in Table 20, makeup ads ($M=1.96$, $SD=.47$) included significantly more literal visuals than the skincare ads ($M=1.77$, $SD=.61$), $t(374) = 3.07$, $p<.01$. Table 21 listed the specific difference of using each type of visual between the makeup and skincare ads. Two differences were found to be particularly prominent. That is, 84.1% of the make ads contained visuals of results whereas only 57.0% of the skincare ads included that. Compared to 41.7% of the makeup ads, only 24.6% of the skincare ads had visuals of celebrity endorsers. Third, Chinese local ads featured skincare products (45.9%) more often than makeup products (9.1%) while for in the U.S. magazines, local ads featured makeup products (23.5%) more frequently than skincare ones (12.3%) (See Table 22). Finally, Caucasian was the dominant ethnicity of the major character in both makeup (74.1%) and skincare (53.2%) ads. Skincare ads (42.7%) were found to use Asian endorsers more frequently than makeup ads (10.3%) (See Table 23).

Table 15
Number of Information Cues Included in Headline in the Two Product Types

Number of Cues in Headline	Makeup (%) within product type)	Skincare (%) within product type)	Combination (%) within product type)	Total (%) of total ads)
0	43 (32.6%)	42 (17.2%)	0 (.0%)	85 (22.5%)
1	78 (59.1%)	165 (67.6%)	2 (100%)	245 (64.8%)
2	11 (8.3%)	34 (13.9%)	0 (.0%)	45 (11.9%)
3	0 (.0%)	1 (.4%)	0 (.0%)	1 (.3%)
4	0 (.0%)	2 (.8%)	0 (.0%)	2 (.5%)
Total (% of total ads)	132 (34.9%)	244 (64.6%)	2 (.5%)	378 (100%)
Total Cues	100	244	2	
Mean	.76	1.00	1.00	

Table 16
Use of Information Cues in Headline in the Two Product Types

Information Cue in Headline	Makeup (%) within product type)	Skincare (%) within product type)	Combination (%) within product type)	Total (% of total ads)
Quality	7 (5.3%)	12 (4.9%)	0 (.0%)	19 (5.0%)
Performance	86 (65.2%)	194 (79.5%)	2 (100%)	282 (74.6%)
Components or Content	2 (1.5%)	23 (9.4%)	0 (.0%)	25 (6.6%)
Packaging	1 (.8%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	1 (.3%)
Safety	0 (.0%)	2 (.8%)	0 (.0%)	2 (.5%)
Research	0 (.0%)	2 (.8%)	0 (.0%)	2 (.5%)
New Ideas	0 (.0%)	2 (.8%)	0 (.0%)	2 (.5%)
Techniques	0 (.0%)	5 (2.0%)	0 (.0%)	5 (1.3%)
Target(s)	1 (.8%)	1 (.4%)	0 (.0%)	2 (.5%)

Table 27
Number of Information Cues Included in the Two Product Types

Number of Cues in Entire Copy	Makeup (%) within product type)	Skincare (%) within product type)	Combination (%) within product type)	Total (% of total ads)
0	0 (.0%)	2 (.8%)	0 (.0%)	2 (.5%)
1	13 (9.8%)	3 (1.2%)	0 (.0%)	16 (4.2%)
2	27 (20.5%)	31 (12.7%)	0 (.0%)	58 (15.3%)
3	29 (22.%)	40 (16.4%)	1 (50.0%)	70 (18.5%)
4	31 (23.5%)	59 (24.2%)	0 (.0%)	90 (23.8%)
5	22 (16.37%)	43 (17.6%)	0 (.0%)	65 (17.2%)
6	3 (2.3%)	37 (15.2%)	1 (50.0%)	41 (10.8%)
7	4 (3.0%)	16 (6.6%)	0 (.0%)	20 (5.3%)
8	3 (2.3%)	7 (2.9%)	0 (.0%)	10 (2.6%)
9	0 (.0%)	6 (2.5%)	0 (.0%)	6 (1.6%)
Total (% of total ads)	132 (34.9%)	244 (64.6%)	2 (.5%)	378 (100%)
Total Cues	458	1081	9	
Mean	3.47	4.43	4.50	

Table 18
Use of Information Cues of the Two Product Types

Information Cue in Entire Copy	Makeup (%) within product type)	Skincare (%) within product type)	Combination (%) within product type)	Total (% of total ads)

Price-Value	25 (18.9%)	83 (34.0%)	1 (50.0%)	109 (28.8%)
Quality	53 (40.2%)	78 (32.0%)	1 (50.0%)	132 (34.9%)
Performance	121 (91.7%)	237 (97.1%)	2 (100%)	360 (95.2%)
Components or Content	57 (43.2%)	180 (73.8%)	1 (50.0%)	238 (63.0%)
Availability	40 (30.3%)	88 (36.1%)	1 (50.0%)	129 (34.1%)
Packaging or Shape	8 (6.1%)	77 (31.6%)	1 (50.0%)	86 (22.8%)
Safety	12 (9.1%)	34 (13.9%)	0 (.0%)	46 (12.2%)
Research	4 (3.0%)	35 (14.3%)	0 (.0%)	39 (10.3%)
New Ideas	3 (2.3%)	11 (4.5%)	0 (.0%)	14 (3.7%)
Techniques	18 (13.6%)	45 (18.4%)	0 (.0%)	63 (16.7%)
Target(s)	9 (6.8%)	19 (7.8%)	0 (.0%)	28 (7.4%)
Contact Information	108 (81.8%)	191 (78.3%)	2 (100%)	301 (79.6%)

Table 19
Number of Symbolic Visuals Used in the Two Product Types

Number of Symbolic Visuals	Makeup (%) within product type)	Skincare (%) within product type)	Combination (%) within product type)	Total (% of total ads)
0	8 (6.1%)	40 (16.4%)	0 (.0%)	48 (12.7%)
1	56 (42.4%)	106 (43.4%)	1 (50%)	163 (43.1%)
2	52 (39.4%)	65 (26.6%)	1 (50%)	118 (31.2%)
3	12 (9.1%)	29 (11.9%)	0 (.0%)	41 (10.8%)
4	4 (3.0%)	4 (1.6%)	0 (.0%)	8 (2.1%)
Total (% of total ads)	132 (34.9%)	243 (64.6%)	2 (.5%)	378 (100%)
Total Symbolic Visuals	220	339	3	
Mean	1.61	1.39	1.50	

Table 20
Number of Literal Visuals Used in the Two Product Types

Number of	Makeup (%)	Skincare (%)	Combination (%)	Total (% of
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Literal Visuals	within product type)	within product type)	within product type)	total ads)
0	0 (.0%)	1 (.4%)	0 (.0%)	1 (.3%)
1	17 (12.9%)	73 (29.2%)	1 (50.0%)	91 (24.1%)
2	103 (78.1%)	153 (62.7%)	1 (50.0%)	257 (68.0%)
3	12 (9.1%)	14 (5.7%)	0 (.0%)	26 (6.9%)
4	0 (.0%)	3 (1.2%)	0 (.0%)	3 (.8%)
Total (% of total ads)	132 (34.9%)	243 (64.6%)	2 (.5%)	378 (100%)
Total Literal Visuals	259	432	3	
Mean	1.96	1.77	1.50	

Table 21
Use of Visuals in the Two Product Types

	Makeup (% within product type)	Skincare (% within product type)	Combination (% within product type)	Total (% of total ads)
Literal Visuals				
Identification	131 (99.2%)	243 (99.6%)	2 (100%)	376 (99.5%)
Comparison	12 (9.1%)	27 (11.1%)	0 (.0%)	39 (10.3%)
Results	111 (84.1%)	139 (57.0%)	1 (50.0%)	251 (66.4%)
Ingredient(s)	4 (3.0%)	18 (7.4%)	0 (.0%)	22 (5.8%)
Demonstration	1 (.8%)	6 (2.5%)	0 (.0%)	7 (1.9%)
Symbolic Visuals				
Associate	116 (87.9%)	174 (71.3%)	2 (100%)	292 (77.2%)
Associate Using A Celebrity	55 (41.7%)	60 (24.6%)	1 (50.0%)	116 (30.7%)
Metaphor	17 (12.9%)	40 (16.4%)	0 (.0%)	57 (15.1%)
Story Telling	1 (.8%)	1 (.4%)	0 (.0%)	2 (.5%)
Aesthetics	9 (6.8%)	21 (8.6%)	0 (.0%)	30 (7.9%)
Special Effects	14 (10.6%)	43 (17.6%)	2 (100%)	57 (15.1%)

Table 22
Distribution of International versus Local Ads in the Two Product Types

Ad Source	Makeup (% within product type)	Skincare (% within product type)	Combination (% within product type)
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U.S. International Ads	43(32.6%)	34 (13.9%)	0 (.0%)
U.S. Local Ads	31 (23.5%)	30 (12.3%)	0 (.0%)
Chinese International Ads	46 (34.8%)	68 (27.9%)	1 (50%)
Chinese Local Ads	12 (9.1%)	112 (45.9%)	1 (50%)
Total (% of total ads)	132 (34.9%)	244 (64.6%)	2 (.5%)

Table 23

The Ethnicity of the Major Character in Cosmetic Ads in the Two Product Types

Ethnicity	Makeup (%) within product type)	Skincare (%) within product type)	Combination (%) within product type)	Total (% of total ads)
Caucasian	86 (74.1%)	91 (53.2%)	2 (100%)	179 (61.9%)
Asian	12 (10.3%)	73 (42.7%)	0 (.0%)	85 (29.4%)
African American	8 (6.9%)	1 (.6%)	0 (.0%)	9 (3.1%)
Hispanics	1 (.3%)	1 (.3%)	0 (.0%)	2 (.7%)
Mixed	3 (2.6%)	4 (2.3%)	0 (.0%)	7 (2.4%)
Cannot Tell (Part of Body)	6 (5.2%)	1 (.6%)	0 (.0%)	7 (3.1%)
Total	116 (40.1%)	171 (59.2%)	2 (.7%)	289 (100.0%)

No significant differences were found between skincare and makeup ads in other comparisons. First, for both makeup and skincare ads, character image (52.7% for makeup, 41.7% for skincare) was found to be the most frequently employed type of focal object (See Table 24). Second, headlines mainly provided functional benefits (82.1% for makeup, 78.5% for skincare) in majority of the ads (See Table 25). One-page ads and 2-page ads were distributed relatively evenly within ads for each product type (See Table 26).

Table 24

Use of Focal Object in the Two Product Types

Focal Object	Makeup (% within product type)	Skincare (% within product type)	Combination (% within product type)	Total (% of total ads)
Text	1 (.8%)	2 (.8%)	0 (.0%)	3 (.8%)
Product	15 (11.5%)	51 (21.3%)	0 (.0%)	66 (17.7%)
Image				
Character	69 (52.7%)	100 (41.7%)	1 (50.0%)	170 (45.6%)
Image				
Both Image	34 (26.0%)	53 (22.1%)	1 (50.0%)	88 (23.6%)
Both Text and Image	9 (6.9%)	28 (11.7%)	0 (.0%)	37 (9.9%)
Other	3 (2.3%)	6 (2.5%)	0 (.0%)	9 (2.4%)
Total (% of total ads)	131 (35.1%)	240 (64.3%)	2 (.5%)	373 (100%)

Table 25
Benefit of Headline in Cosmetic Ads from the two Product Types

Benefit of Headline	Makeup (% within product type)	Skincare (% within product type)	Combination (% within product type)	Total (% of total ads)
Functional	96 (82.1%)	190 (78.5%)	1 (50.0%)	287 (79.5%)
Emotional	3 (2.6%)	7 (2.9%)	1 (50.0%)	11 (3.0%)
Both	18 (15.4%)	45 (18.6%)	0 (.0%)	63 (17.5%)
Total (% of total ads)	117 (32.4%)	242 (67.0%)	2 (.6%)	361 (100.0%)

Table 26
The Distribution of Ad Size in the Two Product Types

Size	Makeup (% within product type)	Skincare (% within product type)	Combination (% within product type)	Total (% of total ads)
1-Page	69 (52.3%)	115 (47.1%)	0 (.0%)	184 (48.7%)
2-Page	63 (47.7%)	129 (52.9%)	2 (100.0%)	194 (51.3%)
Total (% of total ads)	132 (34.9%)	244 (64.6%)	2 (.5%)	378 (100.0%)

Differences in Cosmetic Ads between the U.S. and China (RQ1)

As stated above, there were some differences in the use of visual and verbal elements between the two product types although they were similar in other ways. Hence, to make a fair comparison of the two countries, another set of analyses were performed. That is, product type was considered as a factor and the differences between the two countries were examined within each product type. This can show us more clearly whether the differences are still strongly associated with the cultural/societal differences or whether it is the product type that leads to different strategies.

Use of Focal Object (RQ1a)

First, to answer RQ1a, difference in the use of focal object for each product type was examined and compared between the two countries. A set of Chi-Square tests and Crosstabs were performed on the use of focal object as the dependent variable and country the independent variable under each product type. Generally, for skincare ads, there was a significant difference in the use of focal object between the two countries, $\chi^2(5) = 21.21, p < .01$. However, use of focal object in makeup advertisements was not different between the two countries.

For makeup products, both the U.S. (50.0%) and the Chinese (56.1%) advertisements used an image of character as focal object most frequently. For China, the top three most frequently used type of focal object in makeup ads were image of character (56.1%), both images of character and the product (28.1%), and both texts and image(s) (10.5%). On the other hand, for the U.S., the top three most frequently used type of focal object in makeup ads were image of character (50.0%), both images of character and the product (24.3%), and image of the product (17.6%) (See Table 27).

As for skincare products, image of character was the most frequently used focal object in both China (42.6%) and the U.S. (39.1%). However, the two countries emphasized different types of focal objects (See Table 27). For China, the three most frequently used type of focal object in skincare ads were image of character (42.6%), both images of character and the product (25.0%), and image of product (15.3%). For the U.S., the three most frequently used type of focal object in skincare ads were image of character (39.1%), image of product (37.5%), and both images of character and the product (14.1%).

Table 27
Types of Focal Objects Used in U.S. and China

Focal Object	U.S.		China	
	Makeup (%) within country)	Skincare (%) within country)	Makeup (%) within country)	Skincare (%) within country)
Text	0 (.0%)	1 (1.6%)	1 (1.8%)	1 (0.6%)
Product Image	13 (17.6%)	24 (37.5%)	2 (3.5%)	27 (15.3%)
Character Image	37 (50.0%)	25 (39.1%)	32 (56.1%)	75 (42.6%)
Both Image	18 (24.3%)	9 (14.1%)	16 (28.1%)	44 (25.0%)
Both Text and Image	3 (4.1%)	2 (3.1%)	6 (10.5%)	26 (14.8%)
Other	3 (4.1%)	3 (4.7%)	0 (.0%)	3 (1.7%)
Total (% of total ads within the product type)	74 (56.5%)	64 (26.7%)	57 (43.5%)	176 (73.3%)

Use of Information Cues (RQ1b)

Next, to answer RQ1b, the study examined differences in the use of information cues between the two countries for each product type. A series of two-way ANOVAs were performed using countries and product types as independent variables and number of informational cues as the dependent variable. Crosstabs and Chi-Square tests were also

performed to examine the specific frequencies of use of each verbal cue for each product type in each country.

Information Cues Used in the Entire Copy

The independent variables of country and product type were found to significantly impact the number of information cues included in the advertisements, $F= 18.95, p<.001$. Specifically, both factors of country, $F= 46.12, p<.001$, and product type, $F= 5.42, p<.01$, had main effects on the number of information cues used in the ads. No significant interaction was found between country and product type. That is to say, Chinese cosmetic ads ($M=4.60, SD=1.81$) contained significantly more information cues than U.S. ones ($M=3.20, SD=1.34$); skincare ads ($M=4.43, SD=1.79$) included significantly more information cues than makeup ones ($M=3.47, SD=1.60$) (See Table 28). These results are also evident in Table 29. In the make up category, containing five information cues was most common for the Chinese makeup ads (27.6%) while including two cues was most common for American ones (27.0%). In the skincare category, over 15% of Chinese ads contained seven or more verbal cues while only 1.6% of the American ads were found to contain seven or more verbal cues.

Table 28

The Significant Relationship between the Independent Variables and the Verbal and Visual Contents in Ads

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables	df	F	p
Number of informational cues	Country	1	46.122	<.001
	Product Type	2	5.415	<.01
Number of informational cues in headline	Country	1	10.974	<.01
	Product Type	2	5.07	<.01
Number of Literal Visuals	Country	1	32.91	<.001
	Product Type	2	8.60	<.001
Number of Symbolic Visuals	Country	1	32.91	<.001
	Product Type	2	8.60	<.001

Table 29
Number of Verbal Cues Included in the Two Countries

Number of Information Cues in Entire Copy	U.S.		China	
	Makeup (%) within country)	Skincare (%) within country)	Makeup (%) within country)	Skincare (%) within country)
0	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	2 (1.1%)
1	11 (14.9%)	3 (4.7%)	2 (3.4%)	0 (.0%)
2	20 (27.0%)	12 (18.8%)	7 (12.1%)	19 (10.6%)
3	19 (25.7%)	15 (23.4%)	10 (17.2%)	25 (13.9%)
4	18 (24.3%)	17 (26.6%)	13 (22.4%)	42 (23.3%)
5	6 (8.1%)	11 (17.2%)	16 (27.6%)	32 (17.8%)
6	0 (.0%)	5 (7.8%)	3 (5.2%)	32 (17.8%)
7	0 (.0%)	1 (1.6%)	4 (6.9%)	15 (8.3%)
8	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	3 (5.2%)	7 (3.9%)
9	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	6 (3.3%)

Crosstabs were performed in order to compare the frequencies of using each verbal cue between the two countries under different product types. As shown in Table 30, in both the makeup and the skincare advertisements, performance was the most frequently used information cue for both the U.S. (95.3% for skincare and 87.8% for makeup) and China (97.8% for skincare and 96.6% for makeup). In the makeup category, the top five most frequently used cues for the U.S. ads were: performance (87.8%), contact information (78.4%), availability (36.5%), components and content (31.1%), and quality (27.0%); the top five most frequently used cues for Chinese ads were: performance (96.6%), contact information (86.2%), components and content (58.6%), quality (56.9%), and price-value (43.1%). In the skincare category, the top five most frequently used cues for the American ads were: performance (95.3%), contact information (87.5%), components and content (60.9%), research (34.4%), and availability (26.6%); the top five most frequently used cues for the Chinese ads were: performance

(97.8%), components and content (78.3%), contact information (75.0%), price-value (45.6%), and packaging or shape (42.8%).

Chi-Square tests were further carried out to compare the uses of each information cue between the two countries under each product type. The results indicated several significant differences. First, U.S. skincare ads were found to contain significantly more research information than Chinese skincare ads, $\chi^2(1) = 28.33, p < .001$. Second, both Chinese makeup ($\chi^2(1) = 6.56, p < .01$) and skincare ads ($\chi^2(1) = 40.00, p < .001$) were found to include significantly more information about packaging than the U.S. counterparts. Third, both Chinese makeup ($\chi^2(1) = 39.35, p < .001$) and skincare ads ($\chi^2(1) = 40.71, p < .001$) contained more information regarding price than the U.S. counterparts. Fourth, Chinese makeup ads contained significantly more information about product quality than American makeup ads, $\chi^2(1) = 12.07, p < .01$. Fifth, Chinese makeup ads was found to contain significantly more information about the components than the U.S. makeup ones, $\chi^2(1) = 10.05, p < .01$; Chinese skincare ads also provided more information about product components than American skincare ads, $\chi^2(1) = 7.38, p < .01$. Sixth, Chinese makeup ads included significantly more elaboration on the techniques involved in making the products than American makeup ads, $\chi^2(1) = 6.77, p < .01$. Finally, Chinese makeup ads mentioned the target consumers significantly more frequently than the U.S. makeup ads, $\chi^2(1) = 12.32, p < .001$.

Table 30
Frequent Appearances of Each Information Cue in the Two Countries' Ads

	U.S.	China		
	Makeup (% within country)	Skincare (% within country)	Makeup (% within country)	Skincare (% within country)
Price-Value	0 (.0%)	1 (1.6%)	25 (43.1%)	82 (45.6%)
Quality	20 (27.0%)	15 (23.4%)	33 (56.9%)	63 (35.0%)

Performance Components or Content	65 (87.8%) 23 (31.1%)	61 (95.3%) 39 (60.9%)	56 (96.6%) 34 (58.6%)	176 (97.8%) 141 (78.3%)
Availability Packaging or Shape	27 (36.5%) 1 (1.4%)	17 (26.6%) 0 (.0%)	13 (22.4%) 7 (12.1%)	71 (39.4%) 77 (42.8%)
Safety Research New Ideas Techniques Target(s) Contact Information	7 (9.5%) 3 (4.1%) 1 (1.4%) 5 (6.8%) 0 (.0%) 58 (78.4%)	9 (14.1%) 22 (34.4%) 3 (4.7%) 6 (9.4%) 1 (1.6%) 56 (87.5%)	5 (8.6%) 1 (1.7%) 2 (3.4%) 13 (22.4%) 9 (15.5%) 50 (86.2%)	25 (13.9%) 13 (7.2%) 8 (4.4%) 39 (21.7%) 18 (10.0%) 135 (75.0%)

Information Cues Used in Headline

The differences in the number of information cues used in the headlines were tested using country and product type as the independent variables. Specifically, the result of ANOVA indicated that only country factor had a main effect on the number of information cues used in headlines, $F= 10.97, p<.01$. The factor of product type did not have a main effect on the dependent variable and no significant interaction was found between country and product type either. This means that headlines in the Chinese cosmetics ads ($M=1.02, SD=.64$) contained significantly more information cues than those in the American ads ($M=.76, SD=.57$) (See Table 28). Table 31 provides a breakdown of numbers of information cues included in headlines in each country under different product types. 75.8% of the Chinese makeup ads contained at least one information cue in the headlines whereas 61.9% of the U.S. makeup ads contained one or more information cues. For skincare ads, 86.1% of the Chinese ones included one or more verbal cues while 73.5% of the U.S. ones had at least one cue.

Table 31
Number of Information Cues in Headline

Number of Information Cues in Headline	U.S.		China	
	Makeup (%) within country)	Skincare (%) within country)	Makeup (%) within country)	Skincare (%) within country)
0	29 (39.2%)	17 (26.6%)	14 (24.1%)	25 (13.9%)
1	40 (54.1%)	43 (67.2%)	38 (65.5%)	122 (67.8%)
2	5 (6.8%)	4 (6.3%)	6 (10.3%)	30 (16.7%)
3	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	1 (.6%)
4	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	2 (1.1%)

Crosstabs and Chi-Square tests were performed to compare the frequencies of using each verbal cue between China and the U.S. within different product types. Table 32 indicates that performance was the most frequently used verbal cue in headlines despite the country and the product type. For makeup products, the top two most frequently used cues in headlines of American ads were performance (56.8%) and quality (5.4%); the top two most frequently utilized cues in headlines of Chinese ads were also performance (75.9%) and quality (5.2%), but in different percentages. For skincare products, the top two most frequently used cues in headlines of American ads were performance (67.2%) and components (4.7%); the top two most frequently used cues in headlines of Chinese ads were still performance (83.9%) and components (11.1%) and again, in different percentages. The Chi-Square results indicated that only performance was used significantly differently headlines between American and Chinese skincare ads, $\chi^2 (1) = 8.08, p < .01$. Performance was used significantly more frequently in headlines of Chinese skincare ads than in those of the U.S. ones.

Table 32
Frequent Appearances of Each Information Cue in the Headlines of the Two Countries' Ads

Information Cue in Headline	U.S.		China	
	Makeup (%)	Skincare (%)	Makeup (%)	Skincare (%)

	within country)	within country)	within country)	within country)
Quality	4 (5.4%)	1 (1.6%)	3 (5.2%)	11 (6.1%)
Performance	42 (56.8%)	43 (67.2%)	44 (75.9%)	151 (83.9%)
Components or Content	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.7%)	1 (1.7%)	20 (11.1%)
Packaging or Shape	1 (1.4%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)
Safety	0 (.0%)	1 (1.6%)	0 (.0%)	1 (.6%)
Research	0 (.0%)	1 (1.6%)	0 (.0%)	1 (.6%)
New Ideas	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	2 (1.1%)
Techniques	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	5 (2.8%)
Target(s)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	1 (1.7%)	1 (.6%)

Use of Visuals (RQ1c)

Finally, to answer RQ1c, the study examined differences in the use of visuals between the two countries for each product type. A series of ANOVAs were performed using total numbers of visuals, both literal and symbolic, as the dependent variables and country and product type as the independent variables. Chi-Square tests and crosstabs were further performed to analyze the individual use of each type of visual.

Use of Literal Visuals

First, the results of ANOVAs indicated that only product type had a significant impact on use of literal visuals, $F= 5.07, p<.01$. Country did not play a significant role in numbers of literal visuals used and no interaction between country and product type was found. In other words, makeup ads ($M=1.96, SD=.47$) contained significantly more literal visuals than skincare ads ($M=1.77, SD=.61$). Table 33 shows the detailed use of literal visuals across product types. 87.2% of makeup ads contained two or more literal visuals while only 69.6% of skincare ads contained two or more literal visuals. Next, Chi-Square tests and crosstabs were performed to analyze the individual use of each type of literal visual. As a result, identification was found to be most frequently used in all the

advertisements despite country and product types. Chi-Square results showed no significant difference in use of each literal visual between the two countries within each product type and Table 35 provides the details.

Table 33
Total Numbers of Literal Visuals Used across Makeup and Skincare Ads

Number of Literal Visuals	Makeup (% within product type)	Skincare (% within product type)	Total (% of total ads)
0	0 (.0%)	1 (.4%)	1 (.3%)
1	17 (12.9%)	73 (29.2%)	91 (24.1%)
2	103 (78.1%)	153 (62.7%)	257 (68.0%)
3	12 (9.1%)	14 (5.7%)	26 (6.9%)
4	0 (.0%)	3 (1.2%)	3 (.8%)
Total (% of total ads)	132 (34.9%)	243 (64.6%)	378 (100%)

Use of Symbolic Visuals

Both the independent variables of country, $F= 32.91, p<.001$, and product type, $F= 8.60, p<.001$, were found to have main effects on number of symbolic visuals included in the ads, but no significant interaction was found between country and product type (See Table 28). The results indicated two things. First, Chinese cosmetic ads ($M=1.64, SD=.96$) included significantly more symbolic visuals than American cosmetic ads ($M=1.16, SD=.77$). Second, makeup ads ($M=1.61, SD=.85$) contained significantly more symbolic visuals than skincare ads ($M=1.39, SD=.95$). Table 34 offers detailed information regarding the numbers of symbolic visuals included in ads. 90.5% of American makeup ads versus 98.3% of Chinese makeup ads were found to contain at least one type of symbolic visual. Only 71.9% of American skincare ads contained one or more types of symbolic visuals while 87.8% of Chinese skincare ads included at one symbolic visual.

Table 34
Total Numbers of Symbolic Visuals Used

Number of Symbolic Visuals	U.S.		China	
	Makeup (%) within country)	Skincare (%) within country)	Makeup (%) within country)	Skincare (%) within country)
0	7 (9.5%)	18 (28.1%)	1 (1.7%)	22 (12.2%)
1	34 (45.9%)	37 (57.8%)	22 (37.9%)	69 (38.3%)
2	29 (39.2%)	8 (14.1%)	23 (39.7%)	56 (31.1%)
3	3 (4.1%)	0 (.0%)	9 (15.5%)	29 (16.1%)
4	1 (1.4%)	0 (.0%)	3 (5.2%)	4 (2.2%)

Crosstabs and Chi-Square tests were performed to provide more details about individual use of each symbolic visual. In all the coded advertisements, associate images were used most frequently. The top three most frequently used symbolic visuals in American ads were associate (81.1% for makeup and 56.3% for skincare), associate using a celebrity (40.5% for makeup and 14.1% for skincare), and metaphor (13.5% for makeup and 14.1% for skincare); the top three most frequently used symbolic visuals in Chinese ads were associate (96.6% for makeup and 76.7% for skincare), associate using a celebrity (43.1% for makeup and 28.3% for skincare), and special effects (20.7% for makeup and 23.9% for skincare) (See Table 35). Chi-Square tests found that two symbolic visuals were used differently between the two countries. First, associate images were used differently in both makeup ads, $\chi^2(1) = 7.30, p < .01$, and skincare ones, $\chi^2(1) = 9.62, p < .01$, between the U.S. and China. Second, the amount of special effects were found to significantly vary in both makeup, $\chi^2(1) = 11.01, p < .01$, and skincare ads, $\chi^2(1) = 18.56, p < .001$, between the two countries.

Table 35
Use of Visuals

Visual	U.S.	China
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	Makeup (% within country)	Skincare (% within country)	Makeup (% within country)	Skincare (% within country)
Literal Visuals				
Identification	74 (100.0%)	64 (100.0%)	57 (98.3%)	179 (99.4%)
Comparison	4 (5.4%)	4 (6.3%)	8 (13.8%)	23 (12.8%)
Results	60 (81.8%)	32 (50.0%)	51 (87.9%)	107 (59.4%)
Ingredient(s)	3 (4.1%)	9 (14.1%)	1 (1.7%)	9 (5.0%)
Demonstration	0 (.0%)	3 (4.7%)	1 (1.7%)	3 (1.7%)
Symbolic Visuals				
Associate	60 (81.1%)	36 (56.3%)	56 (96.6%)	138 (76.7%)
Associate Using A Celebrity	30 (40.5%)	9 (14.1%)	25 (43.1%)	51 (28.3%)
Metaphor	10 (13.5%)	9 (14.1%)	7 (12.1%)	31 (17.2%)
Story Telling	0 (.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.7%)	1 (.6%)
Aesthetics	3 (4.1%)	1 (1.6%)	6 (10.3%)	20 (11.1%)
Special Effects	2 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (20.7%)	43 (23.9%)

Differences in Cosmetic Advertising by International Brands (RQ2)

RQ2 asked if there were differences in cosmetic advertising done by global/international brands between the two countries. This was to examine whether the global brands (advertising the same product to people in different countries) employ different strategies (e.g., standardization vs. localization) to appeal to people with different cultural backgrounds. A set of two-way ANOVAs, Chi-Square tests, and Crosstabs were performed on the use of focal object, informational cues and visual elements.

Use of Focal Object (RQ2a)

Chi-Square tests were performed for the purpose of finding out the differences of using focal object between the Chinese and the American international advertisements under each product type. Chi-Square results indicated that Chinese international skincare ads used focal objects significantly differently from the U.S. counterparts, $\chi^2 (4) = 10.64$, $p < .05$. As shown in Table 36, in American international skincare ads, the three most

frequently used focal object types were character image (44.1%), product image (32.4%), and both product and character image (17.6%). The top three most frequently used focal object types for the Chinese international skincare ads were character image (44.1%), both product and character image (29.4%), and both text and image (14.7%). These results suggested that American international skincare ads tended to rely more on literal images while Chinese international skincare ads used symbolic visuals more heavily.

Table 36
Use of Focal Objects in Chinese and U.S. International Ads

Focal Object	U.S. International Ads (% within international ads)		Chinese International Ads (% within international ads)	
	Makeup	Skincare	Makeup	Skincare
Text	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)
Product Image	5 (11.6%)	11 (32.4%)	1 (2.2%)	7 (10.3%)
Character Image	23 (53.5%)	15 (44.1%)	28 (60.9%)	30 (44.1%)
Both Image	11 (25.6%)	6 (17.6%)	12 (26.1%)	20 (29.4%)
Both Text and Image	1 (2.3%)	1 (2.9%)	5 (26.1%)	10 (14.7%)
Other	3 (7.0%)	1 (2.9%)	0 (.0%)	1 (1.5%)

Use of Information Cues (RQ2b)

Two-way ANOVA tests were performed to examine the numbers of information cues included in headlines and the entire copies using country and product type as independent variables. Only the independent variable country had a main effect on the numbers of information cues in headlines and the entire copies. That is, the Chinese international cosmetic ads included significantly more information cues in the entire copies than the American international cosmetic ads, $F(1)=22.42, p<.001$. Also, the Chinese international ads contained significantly more verbal cues in the headlines than the American counterparts, $F(1)=8.41, p<.01$. Those findings are consistent with the

previous findings regarding the different numbers of information cues included in ads from the two countries. Table 37 and 38 provide detailed information regarding the numbers of verbal cues included in the headlines and the entire copies of the international advertisements from the two countries. In the entire copies, all the U.S. international ads included one to six information cues while the numbers of verbal cues included in the Chinese international ads ranged from zero to nine. For the international makeup brands, 62.8% of the U.S. ads and 78.2% of the Chinese ads contained at least one information cue in the headlines; for the international skincare brands, 73.5% of the U.S. ads and 88.2% of the Chinese ads included one or more cues in the headlines.

Table 37

Number of Information Cues Included in Chinese and American International Ads

Number of Cues in Entire Copy	U.S. International Ads (%) within international ads)		Chinese International Ads (%) within international ads)	
	Makeup	Skincare	Makeup	Skincare
0	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	1 (1.5%)
1	4 (9.3%)	2 (5.9%)	2 (4.3%)	0 (.0%)
2	13 (30.2%)	8 (23.5%)	6 (13.0%)	11 (16.2%)
3	9 (20.9%)	6 (17.6%)	6 (13.0%)	12 (17.6%)
4	14 (32.6%)	7 (20.6%)	10 (21.7%)	9 (13.2%)
5	3 (7.0%)	8 (23.5%)	13 (28.3%)	10 (14.7%)
6	0 (.0%)	3 (8.8%)	3 (6.5%)	12 (17.6%)
7	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	3 (6.5%)	4 (5.9%)
8	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	3 (6.5%)	5 (7.4%)
9	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	4 (5.9%)

Table 38

Number of Information Cues Included in the Headlines of Chinese and American International Ads

Number of Cues in Headline	U.S. International Ads (%) within international ads)		Chinese International Ads (%) within international ads)	
	Makeup	Skincare	Makeup	Skincare
0	16 (37.2%)	9 (26.5%)	10 (21.7%)	8 (11.8%)
1	24 (55.8%)	23 (67.6%)	30 (65.2%)	47 (69.1%)
2	3 (7.0%)	2 (5.9%)	6 (13.0%)	12 (17.6%)

3	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)
4	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	1 (1.5%)

Then, Chi-Square tests and Crosstabs were further performed to compare the frequent uses of each verbal cue in the two countries under each product type. For the entire copy, the most frequently used information cues were performance and contact information for international makeup and skincare ads in both countries (see Table 39). This was not a surprising finding since these two cues were the most basic types of information for cosmetic products. However, as shown in Table 39, significantly different uses of several other information cues were also identified. First, both the Chinese international makeup ads ($\chi^2(1) = 27.32, p < .001$) and skincare ads ($\chi^2(1) = 23.31, p < .001$) contained significantly more price information than the U.S. counterparts. Second, the Chinese international skincare ads also had more information about product quality than the U.S. international skincare ads, $\chi^2(1) = 11.04, p < .01$. Third, both the Chinese international makeup ads ($\chi^2(1) = 8.56, p < .01$) and skincare ads ($\chi^2(1) = 5.04, p < .05$) were found to include significantly more information about product components than the American counterparts. Fourth, both the Chinese international makeup ads ($\chi^2(1) = 9.36, p < .01$) and skincare ads ($\chi^2(1) = 6.26, p < .05$) contained more information about the target consumers than the American counterparts. Fifth, both the Chinese international makeup ads ($\chi^2(1) = 4.95, p < .001$) and skincare ads ($\chi^2(1) = 21.25, p < .05$) included more information about product packaging than the American counterparts. Sixth, American international skincare ads were found to contain more information regarding availability than the Chinese ones, $\chi^2(1) = 8.74, p < .01$. Finally, the American international skincare

ads also contained more research statistics than the Chinese counterparts, $\chi^2(1) = 13.22$, $p < .001$.

Table 39
Frequent Appearances of Each Information Cue in the Two Countries' International Ads

Information Cue in Entire Copy	U.S. International Ads (% within international ads)		Chinese International Ads (% within international ads)	
	Makeup	Skincare	Makeup	Skincare
Price-Value	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	24 (52.2%)	32 (47.1%)
Quality	12 (27.9%)	7 (20.6%)	29 (63.0%)	26 (38.2%)
Performance	36 (83.7%)	33 (97.1%)	44 (95.7%)	67 (98.5%)
Components or Content	11 (25.6%)	18 (52.9%)	26 (56.5%)	51 (75.0%)
Availability	20 (46.5%)	10 (29.4%)	8 (17.4%)	16 (23.5%)
Packaging or Shape	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	5 (10.9%)	30 (44.1%)
Safety	6 (14.0%)	6 (17.6%)	4 (8.7%)	11 (16.2%)
Research	2 (4.7%)	14 (41.2%)	1 (1.1%)	7 (10.3%)
New Ideas	1 (2.3%)	2 (5.9%)	2 (4.3%)	6 (8.8%)
Techniques	4 (9.3%)	3 (8.8%)	11 (23.9%)	17 (25.0%)
Target(s)	0 (.0%)	1 (1.6%)	9 (15.5%)	15 (22.1%)
Contact Information	36 (83.7%)	28 (82.4%)	39 (84.8%)	42 (61.8%)

Besides information cues in the entire copy, the verbal cues contained in headline were examined as well. While the most commonly used verbal cues for all the headlines of international cosmetic ads were performance and quality, performance was still more frequently used in the Chinese international skincare ads than in the American counterparts, $\chi^2(1) = 6.34$, $p < .05$ (See Table 40).

Table 40
Frequent Appearances of Each Information Cue in the Headlines of the Two Countries' International Ads

Information Cue in Headline	U.S. International Ads (% within international ads)		Chinese International Ads (% within international ads)	
	Makeup	Skincare	Makeup	Skincare
Quality	4 (9.3%)	1 (2.9%)	3 (6.5%)	4 (5.9%)
Performance	26 (60.5%)	23 (67.6%)	36 (78.3%)	60 (88.2%)
Components or	0 (.0%)	2 (5.9%)	1 (2.2%)	8 (11.8%)

Content			
Research	0 (.0%)	1 (2.9%)	0 (.0%)
New Ideas	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)
Techniques	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)
Target(s)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	1 (2.2%)
			1 (1.5%)

Use of Visuals (RQ2c)

In order to find out the differences on total amount of literal visuals used, the total amount of symbolic visuals included, and the frequent use of each type of visual between U.S. and Chinese international ads, ANOVAs were performed using total numbers of visuals used as the dependent variables and country and product type as the independent variables. Chi-Square tests and crosstabs were further carried out to analyze the individual use of each type of visual.

Use of Literal Visuals

First, the results of ANOVAs suggested that both country, $F(1)= 5.07, p<.05$, and product type, $F(1)= 5.59, p<.05$, were significantly related to use of literal visuals. That is to say, international makeup ads ($M=1.96, SD=.40$) contained significantly more literal visuals than international skincare ads ($M=1.79, SD=.49$); Chinese international ads ($M=1.92, SD=.40$) included significantly more literal visuals than U.S. international ads ($M=1.79, SD=.52$). Table 41 lists the detailed numbers of literal visuals used between the two countries across product types. Next, the results of Chi-Square tests and crosstabs indicated the individual use of each literal visual. Chi-Square results showed that Chinese international makeup ads used significantly more comparison visuals, $\chi^2(1) = 7.10, p<.01$, than the U.S. counterparts. Table 42 offers detailed frequencies of using each type visual in international ads across the two countries.

Table 41
Total Numbers of Visuals Used in the two Countries' International Ads

Number of Visuals	U.S. International Ads (%) within international ads)		Chinese International Ads (%) within international ads)	
	Makeup	Skincare	Makeup	Skincare
Literal Visuals				
1	7 (16.3%)	13 (38.2%)	2 (4.3%)	12 (17.6%)
2	35 (81.4%)	18 (52.9%)	40 (87.0%)	55 (80.9%)
3	1 (2.3%)	3 (8.8%)	4 (8.7%)	1 (1.5%)
Symbolic Visuals				
0	2 (4.7%)	8 (23.5%)	0 (.0%)	6 (8.8%)
1	24 (55.8%)	20 (58.8%)	16 (34.8%)	48 (47.1%)
2	14 (32.6%)	6 (17.6%)	20 (43.5%)	34 (33.3%)
3	3 (7.0%)	0 (.0%)	8 (17.4%)	5 (4.9%)
4	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	2 (4.3%)	1 (1.0%)

Use of Symbolic Visuals

Both the independent variables of country, $F(1)= 21.57, p<.001$, and product type, $F(1)= 7.34, p<.01$, were found to significantly affect numbers of symbolic visuals used in the international advertisements. The results suggested two things. First, the Chinese international cosmetic ads ($M=1.68, SD=.84$) included significantly more symbolic visuals than the American international cosmetic ads ($M=1.21, SD=.71$). Second, international makeup ads ($M=1.67, SD=.81$) contained significantly more symbolic visuals than international skincare ads ($M=1.32, SD=.81$). Table 41 lists detailed numbers of symbolic visuals used in international ads from the two countries within each product type. For the international makeup brands, 100% of the Chinese ads and 95.3% of the U.S. ads contained at least one symbolic visual. For the international skincare ads, 86.3% of the Chinese ads and 74.4% of the U.S. ads included one or more symbolic visuals. Next Chi-Square and Crosstabs were performed to provide more details about use of each symbolic visual. Chi-Square tests found that both the Chinese international makeup ads

($\chi^2(1) = 6.60, p < .05$) and skincare ads ($\chi^2(1) = 4.36, p < .05$) used associate images more frequently than the American counterparts (See Table 42).

Table 42
Use of Literal and Symbolic Visuals in Chinese and U.S. International Ads

Visual	U.S. International Ads (% within international ads)		Chinese International Ads (% within international ads)	
	Makeup	Skincare	Makeup	
Literal Visuals				
Identification	43 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	45 (97.8%)	68 (100.0%)
Comparison	0 (.0%)	2 (5.9%)	7 (15.2%)	8 (11.8%)
Results	36 (83.7%)	19 (55.9%)	41 (89.1%)	45 (66.2%)
Ingredient(s)	1 (2.3%)	1 (2.9%)	0 (.0%)	3 (4.4%)
Demonstration	0 (.0%)	2 (5.9%)	1 (1.7%)	1 (1.5%)
Symbolic Visuals				
Associate	35 (81.4%)	21 (61.8%)	45 (97.8%)	55 (80.9%)
Associate Using A	15 (34.9%)	6 (17.6%)	22 (47.8%)	20 (29.4%)
Celebrity				
Metaphor	8 (18.6%)	5 (10.9%)	4 (11.8%)	8 (11.8%)
Aesthetics	2 (4.7%)	1 (2.9%)	5 (10.9%)	6 (8.8%)
Special Effects	1 (2.3%)	0 (.0%)	11 (23.9%)	14 (20.6%)

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to discover and understand the differences in cosmetic advertising between the U.S. and China through a content analysis of the ads shown in U.S. and Chinese fashion magazines. The study examined a total of 378 cosmetic ads published in three different international magazines. The ads from the two countries were compared on various items such as focal object, use of information cues, and use of visual elements. Further, in order to examine whether the international brands were using a localized or standardized strategy, the ads for the brands that were only available to each country were excluded and only the ads for the international brands were compared on the same items.

Results revealed a number of differences in cosmetic advertising between the two countries. First, the amount of advertising done for cosmetic products differed between the two countries. There were 138 ads found in the same magazines published in the U.S. whereas the same magazines published in China contained 240 ads. More than half of the ads that appeared in the Chinese magazines were 2-page ads while 1-page ads were more dominant in the US magazines. Only less than a quarter of the ads from the Chinese magazines were makeup ads while over two thirds of the ads from the U.S. magazines were makeup ads. Second, the Chinese cosmetic ads used symbolic visuals as focal objects more frequently than the U.S. cosmetic ads. Third, as for the use of information cues, both the headlines and the entire copies in Chinese ads were found to contain more verbal cues than the U.S. ads. In addition, the headlines in Chinese cosmetic ads provided

more emotional benefits than the U.S. cosmetic ads did. Finally, Chinese cosmetic ads were found to contain more symbolic visuals than the U.S. ads did.

As stated above, the two countries had different numbers of ads for skin care products and make-up products. As the two product types have different functions, it is plausible that advertisers may employ different strategies for each of these product types. Hence, this study further examined whether the findings above differed by product type. Results showed that skincare ads contained more information cues in both the headlines and the entire copies. However, makeup ads used more literal and more symbolic visuals than skincare ads.

Specifically, RQ1 asked the differences in use of focal object (RQ1a), information cues (RQ1b), and visuals (RQ1c) between the two countries. For RQ1a, Chinese skincare ads were found to rely more heavily on the images of characters while U.S. skincare ads emphasized the images of the products as focal objects. No significant difference in use of focal objects was found between makeup ads from the two countries. Makeup ads for both countries used images of characters most frequently as focal objects. Hence, it appears that cosmetic ads likely use visuals, rather than texts, as the focal objects. When looking at the types of visuals used, results showed that although cosmetics advertisements in general tended to use symbolic (such as images of characters) rather than literal visuals (such as images of products) as the major type of focal object, the ads in the U.S. magazines still contained more literal visuals than the ads from the Chinese magazines. Generally speaking, literal visuals are used to provide functional benefits while symbolic visuals are related to emotional benefits. Therefore, U.S. cosmetic ads appear to contain more functional visuals than Chinese ones.

For RQ1b, both the headlines and the entire copies of the Chinese cosmetic ads were found to contain significantly more information cues than the American ones. On average, the Chinese ads contained 4.6 information cues and the U.S. ads included 3.2 verbal cues in the entire copies. Over 99% of the coded ads contained at least one information cue. Performance and quality were the most frequently used information cues in the headlines for both the U.S. and Chinese cosmetic ads. For the entire copy, the Chinese cosmetic ads included significantly more information on quality, price, packaging, techniques, and target consumers than the American ones; the American cosmetics ads included more information on research than the Chinese ones.

As for RQ1c, Chinese cosmetic ads and U.S. cosmetic ads were significantly different in terms of using symbolic visuals while no significant difference was identified in the use of literal visuals between the two countries. When compared between product types, makeup ads were found to contain more visuals, both literal and symbolic, than skincare ads.

RQ2 asked the differences in use of focal object (RQ2a), information cues (RQ2b), and visuals (RQ2c) in the ads for the international brands only. Results were consistent with the findings regarding RQ1s. Chinese international cosmetic ads used focal objects significantly differently than the U.S. counterparts. Moreover, the Chinese international ads also contained significantly more information cues in both the headlines and the entire copies than the U.S. international ads. Finally, Chinese cosmetic ads were also found to use significantly more visuals, both literal and symbolic, than the U.S. counterparts.

Results of the current study have some implications. First, this study found some support for the argument regarding the difference in communication styles across different cultures. As reviewed earlier, many scholars noted that U.S. is considered as a low-context culture and uses more direct means of communication whereas China is the opposite utilizing more indirect means of communication (e.g., An, 2007; Keown, Jacons, Schmidt, and Ghymn, 1992; Madden, Caballero & Matsukubo, 1986). For use of visuals, the cosmetic ads published in Chinese magazines contained more advertising elements (e.g., symbolic visuals) that are associated with indirect communication when compared to the ads published in the US magazines. For use of information cues, when compared to the U.S. ads, the Chinese cosmetic ads positively related to use of more information which is believed to implicitly create a desire of purchasing through informing the audiences of the facts regarding the advertised products.

However, as also reviewed previously, some scholars (e.g., An, 2007) have argued that low-context countries tended to use more hard-sell information, such as price and research data, than high-context cultures and hence low-context countries likely contained more information cues. However, this study showed that Chinese ads contained more information cues although the U.S. cosmetic ads provided more research-related information. The discrepancies found here reflected several important issues. For one thing, we may need to further distinguish between hard-sell and soft-sell information among the verbal cues provided by Resnik and Stern in future studies. Also, the discrepancies might be caused by the fact that high- and low-context dimensions and individualism/collectivism should no longer be considered as dichotomous, as pointed out by some scholars (e.g. Triandis, 2001). In today's world, globalization is being

accelerated with inventions of new technologies and regional cultures are hence becoming more diverse and complicated than ever. It may be inappropriate to label one country as either high- or low-context culture. Rather, we may need to consider multiple aspects of a culture to determine relatively how low/high-context it is when compared to others. Of course, it is also possible that the discrepancies were caused by other factors, such as advertising and marketing considerations to fulfill different targets' needs and therefore require further examination.

As for the differences found between makeup and skincare ads, the fact that makeup ads relied more heavily on visuals while skincare ads were relatively more balanced with visuals and the informational content may be accounted for by the unique natures of each product type. Makeup products feature colors which can be demonstrated through emotional visuals effectively, whereas skincare products focus on product effectiveness which can be conveyed through functional information and therefore relies relatively less on visual demonstration.

In addition, it appears that contemporary cosmetic advertising in both China and the U.S. is more informative than previous fashion and cosmetic advertising. The number of information cues found in an average cosmetic ad in previous studies (e.g., Stern, Krugman, & Resnik, 1981; Rice & Lu, 1988) was significantly lower than the number of cues found in this study. Rice and Lu (1988) noted that the informativeness of an ad was influenced by the economic condition and the consumers' level of involvement in making purchase decisions in the targeted region. Hence, one possibility is that Chinese women nowadays are more involved in cosmetic products consumption than American women. Of course, it is also possible that when compared to the American women, Chinese

women are in higher needs of product information since cosmetic products are still considered as luxury items in China and making a wrong purchase decision may cost them more.

The current study had some limitations. First, due to the availability of the magazines, no Harper's Bazaar published in year 2006 was included in this study. Hence, the sample used in this study was a convenient sample. Future research can use a random sample so that the results can be more generalizable. Secondly, this study did not distinguish hard-sell from soft-sell information cues. However, this is a typology used frequently in advertising. Hence, future research can incorporate this into the existing tools and examine how the information cues are used differently for different products, in different countries, and so forth. Although this study reviewed some relevant theories that explain differences across countries and cultures, it was not intended to test them. It would be useful if future research can identify and incorporate the theories from various relevant areas such as critical intercultural area, marketing, and communication. The findings showed that the new items created in this study, such as contact information, techniques, target consumers, results images, and special effects images, turned out to be the major elements used in the cosmetic advertisements. This indicates that future studies need to pay attention to advertisements of specific product types since they may actually need unique measures. Also, visuals are becoming more and more important for contemporary advertising but very limited number of valid tools are available for studying advertising visuals. More measures of visual elements in advertising need to be developed in future studies. Further, there were other types of information found in some ads but not included in the analysis (e.g., information regarding the skin problems that the

advertised product aimed to solve). The existing tools should be expanded to include this kind of information that is currently emerging. Moreover, since Resnik and Stern's measure aims to identify only functional information, this study did not analyze the verbal information that provided emotional benefits. Future studies may develop a measure that investigates emotional verbal messages in advertisements. Finally, future research is also needed to expand this study and compare the advertising appeals used in Chinese and American cosmetic ads.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Coding Sheet

1. Circle the country of the magazine: U.S. China

2. Please circle the year of publication of the magazine:
2004 2005 2006 2007

3. Please circle the issue number:
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

4. Please circle the name of the magazine:
Elle Harper's Bazaar Cosmopolitan

5. Please circle the size of the ad: 1-page 2-page

6. What is the brand name of the product being advertised?

7. What is the product type?
(1) Makeup (2) Skincare (3) Both

8. What is the focal object in the ad? Please circle one and then specify if needed.
1) Texts
2) Image of the product
3) Image of a character
4) Both the images of the product and the character
5) Both the text and the image(s)
6) Other

9. Is there a headline/sub-headline in the ad? Please circle one.
1) No (go to Question 11)
2) Yes (go to Question 10)

10. If you circled "Yes" in question No. 9, please circle a benefit of the headline.
1) Functional
2) Emotional
3) Both

11. Does the advertising include any verbal testimony/testimonies? Please circle one.
1) Yes (go to Question 12)
2) No (go to Question 13)

12. If you circled "Yes" in question No. 11, please circle a benefit of the testimony.
1) Functional
2) Emotional
3) Both

13. Are the following information items included in the texts in the ad? Please check either “Yes” or “No”.

Information items	Yes	No	Headline/Subhead	Body Copy
1) Price-Value				
2) Quality				
3) Performance				
4) Components or Contents				
5) Availability				
6) Packaging or Shape				
7) Guarantees and Warranties				
8) Safety				
9) Research				
10) New Ideas				
11) Techniques				
12) Target(s)				
13) Contact Information				

14. Are the following visual elements included in the visuals in the ad? Please check either “Yes” or “No”.

	Yes	No
1) Identification (brand, logo, package)		
2) Comparison (between two competitors, before & after)		
3) Demonstration (how to do, use, apply, make)		
4) Ingredient(s)		
5) Association (lifestyle, typical person, situation)		
6) Association using a Celebrity		
7) Metaphor (Allegorical use, unexpected substitution based on similarity of some feature)		
8) Storytelling (narrative, drama, playlet)		
9) Aesthetics (details become art, pattern, abstraction)		

15. If there is a person/people in the ad, please circle the ethnicity/ethnicities of the person/people.

- 1) Caucasian
- 2) Asian
- 3) African/African American

- 4) Hispanics
- 5) Mixed
- 6) Cannot tell (Part of Body)

Appendix B

Coding Instruction

1. This is the country where the magazine was published.
2. This is the year when the magazine was published.
3. This is the month when the magazine was published.
4. This is the name of the magazine.
5. This is the numbers of pages the advertisement occupies. Please ignore ads that covers 3 pages or more.
6. This is the brand name (e.g., Clinique, Estee Lauder, Lancome) of the product being advertised.
7. This is the type of the product (e.g., moisturizer, cleanser, sunscreen, lipstick, mascara, foundation, powder) that is advertised.
8. This is the a focal object in the ad.

A focal object is the major attention-getting element(s) which is(are) positioned at the center of the ad and most substantial in size comparing to other elements.

An image of a character is a picture, drawing, painting, photography, or computer-generated art of a person, or people, in an advertisement.

An image of the product is a picture, drawing, painting, photography, or computer-generated art of the advertised product in an advertisement.

Texts are the written or verbal descriptions in an advertisement.

9. **Headline** is “the leading sentence or sentences...that attracts attention, communicates a key selling point, or achieves brand identification” (O’Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2006, p. 404).

Subhead usually “appears above or below the headline” (O’Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2006, p. 408) to complement the headline.

10. **A benefit** is “what a product, service, or business does for the consumer” (Kelley & Jugenheimer, 2006, p. 51).

A functional benefit “describes what the brand does or how it functions or performs in ways that benefit the customer” (Kelley & Jugenheimer, 2006, p. 51) and therefore presents factual information regarding the product.

An emotional benefit describes “the effect of the effect” (Goode, 1936). In other words, it is generally a statement trying to make people feel good and therefore presents a personal-performance benefit.

11. **Verbal testimony/testimonies** normally come(s) with quotation marks.
12. Please refer to No. 10 for definitions of *benefit*, *functional benefit* and *emotional benefit*.
13. **Body Copy** is all the remaining texts in an ad excluding the *headline* and the *subhead* (please refer to Number 9 for definitions of *headline* and *subhead*).
 - 1) Price-Value
 - Is the cost of the advertised product listed?
 - Is its value-retention capability stated in the ad?
 - Is the need-satisfaction capability stated in the ad?
 - 2) Quality
 - In the ad, is there any statement about 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?
 - 3) Performance
 - In the ad, is there any statement about what the product does, and how it does what it is designed to do in comparison to alternative purchases?
 - 4) Components or Contents
 - Is there any statement about what the product is composed of, what ingredients it contains, or what ancillary items are included in the product?
 - 5) Availability
 - When and where is the product available for purchase?
 - 6) Packaging or Shape
 - Why is the packaging or the shape of the advertised product more desirable than other products of the same type?
 - What shapes or different types of packaging is the product available in?
 - 7) Guarantees and warranties
 - What post-purchase assurances does the company offer with a purchase of the advertised product?
 - 8) Safety
 - In the ad, is there any statement about the safety of using the advertised product?
 - 9) Research

- Are there any statistics or any results of research which were gathered and presented by an independent research firm or institute?
- Are there any statistics or any results of research which were gathered and presented by the manufacturing company?

10) New Ideas

- Is there a brand new concept (e.g. patent) in the advertised product introduced in the ad?
- Are the advantages of the new concept presented?

11) Techniques

- Is there any technology in the advertised product introduced in the ad?
- Are the advantages of the technology presented?

12) Target(s)

- Is the specific target of the product introduced in the ad?

13) Technology

- Is there any technology used to produce the advertised product?
- Is the advantage of the technology presented?

13) Contact Information

- Is a website provided to search for more information about the advertised product?
- Is a telephone number, a toll free number, or a fax number offered in the ad for customers to buy or find out more information about the advertised product?
- Is an e-mail address provided for customers to ask questions about the advertised product?

12.

1) Identification

- This is the image or picture of the brand, logo, or packaging of the advertised product.

2) Comparison

- This is the visual which compares the advertised product to other product(s), or demonstrates the product's effects by comparing before and after images.

3) Demonstration

- This is the visual that demonstrates how to use or apply the advertised product.

4) Ingredient(s)

- This is the visual of the ingredient(s) of the product in the ad.

5) Association

- This is the visual that associates the advertised product with a certain lifestyle, a typical person, or a certain situation.
- 6) Association using a Character or Celebrity
- This is the visual that associates the advertised product with a certain well-known character or a certain celebrity.
- 7) Metaphor
- This is the image used to substitute or represent the advertised product. The substituting image is used allegorically based on some similar feature(s) between the advertised product and the substituting image.
- 8) Storytelling
- This is an image or a series of pictures that depict(s) a mini story about the advertised product.
- 9) Aesthetics
- This is the visual that incorporates artistic touch, including abstraction, art, and pattern, to the advertisements, just for the purpose of aesthetics.
15. This is the ethnicity/ethnicities of the person or people in the ad.