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“SEEING IS BELIEVING?” A PERSUASION KNOWLEDGE MODEL ON
ATTITUDINAL EVALUATIONS IN ADVERTISEMENTS

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2009

“SEEING IS BELIEVING?” A PERSUASION KNOWLEDGE MODEL ON
ATTITUDINAL EVALUATIONS IN ADVERTISEMENTS

by
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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the effects of individuals' beliefs about persuasion tactics (i.e., persuasion knowledge) evoked in an advertisement on their attitudes toward the advertisement and the advertised brand. Drawing on persuasion knowledge theory, this thesis develops a conceptual model that argues how ad image incongruence, defined as an inappropriate match-up between model type (western versus local) and advertised product category (western product category versus local product category) featured in advertisements, leads to the use of persuasion knowledge, which in turn affects attitudinal evaluations. A series of experimental studies were conducted. The results suggest that individual's use of persuasion knowledge mediates the effect of ad image incongruence on ad attitude.

This research contributes to a better understanding of the effectiveness of advertisements in a globalized marketing communication context. First, it empirically investigates how people react to different ad appeals by using persuasion knowledge. Second, it tests the moderating role of ad skepticism which then offers implications to the extension of persuasion knowledge theory. Further, it has managerial implications by identifying conditions when and why local vs. western culture ad positioning strategies tend to be more effective. Convenience students sample was used in two experimental search studies. Additional survey was conducted to test the conceptual model directly and to complement the results of experimental studies. Limitations will be discussed.

Declaration

I declare that this is an original work based primarily on my own research, and I warrant that all citations of previous research, published or unpublished, have been duly acknowledged.

WU Yan
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Date 2009-8-15

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL OF THESIS

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EVALUATIONS IN ADVERTISEMENT

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research background, objectives of the research, the methodology and the main findings. The theoretical contributions and practical implications of the research are also discussed.

1.1 Research Background

The marketplace has become globalizing especially when Levitt (1983) called for global marketing strategies. Since then, western and global advertising appeals have been evident in advertising arena. In particular, most multinational companies choose to use local models or images when come into China market. They seem to favor a localized approach to recognize cultural differences in values, beliefs, tradition, and language or only to attract consumers' attentions. Meanwhile, some local companies appear to emphasize the use of western models or images to show global cosmopolitanism in an effort to become member of the global village (Abbas 2000; Lock 2003; Mathews 2000). Previous studies have focused on ad elements incongruence (e.g., Heckler and Childers, 1992; Lee and Mason, 1999). In this research, we will add to this field by looking at the ad image incongruence between model type and product category.

Due to globalization, the concept of country of origin for a product or brand has become problematic (e.g., O'Cass and Lim 2002; Samiee 1994; Thakor and Kohil 1996). But still, consumers would ascribe some products into western category and some into local category. For example, pizza is a typical western thing while lantern is a traditional Chinese product. Because of confusion about whether a product is

western or local, we acknowledge the importance of dealing with what consumers perceive as “western” or “local”. We use “western” and “local” here to refer to the perceived locus of the product, regardless of whether the advertised good’s country of origin is China or elsewhere. Thus, it is plausible that when western product use local model people may spend more time to process the advertisement, vice versa. Here we define “ad image incongruence” as the incongruence between model type (western vs. local) and the product category (western vs. local). We propose that ad image incongruence affects the ad response.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study has three major objectives. The first is to examine how ad image incongruence affects ad response. Although previous studies have explored ad effectiveness by introducing many mediating variables such as source credibility (Ohanian 1990) and advertisement credibility (Herbig and Milewicz 1995), little has been done to address ad effectiveness within the context of culture-oriented ad positioning strategies (Alden et al., 1999). In this research, based on persuasion knowledge model, we integrate several theoretical frameworks to develop a model to fill the gap in the existing literature.

The second objective is to bridge persuasion knowledge model (PKM) and attitude toward advertisement research. Specifically, we attempt to empirically test the relationship between ad image incongruence and consumers’ attitude toward advertisement from the PKM perspective.

Thirdly, we assess the role of consumer skepticism toward advertisements as a moderator. Specifically, the individuals with medium skepticism are more likely to use persuasion knowledge than the ones with low or high skepticism. In the

following presentation, we begin with a brief review of theoretical foundations of the research.

1.3 Theoretical Foundation

In the context of this research, the theoretical rationale for the effect of ad image incongruence on ad response is built on persuasion knowledge model. Our investigation of persuasion knowledge is grounded in the basic literature on the acquisition of cognitive skills and in the idea that people develop a “schemer schema”, that is, beliefs about the tactics that advertisers and marketers use to try to persuade them. The development of this persuasion-related knowledge is partially dependent on changes in information-processing abilities.

Central to people’s persuasion knowledge are their perceptions of persuasion tactics that agents use to influence them (Friestad and Wright 1994). The perceptions then significantly shape how consumers respond to persuasion attempts. These ideas in persuasion knowledge model (PKM) are taken from the recent literature on how consumers interpret actions by salesperson (Williams, Fitzsimons, and Block 2004) and how consumers process salesperson tactics to form response strategies (Campbell and Kirmani 2000).

As Wright’s (1985) notion of persuasion knowledge as a “schemer schema”, consumers do have some beliefs about advertising in general (Bauer and Greyser 1968). Schemas are cognitive structures of organized prior knowledge, abstracted from experience, that guide inferences and predictions (Fiske 1982). They help shape people’s expectations in new or ambiguous contexts (Fiske and Linville 1980). Also, consumers’ beliefs about advertising shape their respond to certain advertisement.

From the PKM perspective, consumers (or targets) are motivated to use their persuasion knowledge especially when there are some unexpected elements. In this research, when ad model type is incongruent with the advertised product category, consumers are assumed to process the ads more carefully; they are more likely to use persuasion knowledge to infer the persuasion motive of the ads. As a result, they perceive the ads as less sincere and believable.

1.4 Research Methodology

Two experimental studies were conducted. The first study manipulated ad image incongruence by combining 2 products (western vs. local) with 2 model type (western vs. local). The dependent variables included ad attitude and individual's use of persuasion knowledge. Convenience students sample was used.

The second study manipulated ad image incongruence by combining Chinese product with either local model or western model. Skepticism toward advertising was measured and subjects were classified into three groups: high skeptical, medium skeptical and low skeptical. The dependent variables included ad attitude, brand attitude and individual's use of persuasion knowledge. We also used convenience sample of students.

A survey was conducted to complement the experimental results. In the survey, we measured ad image incongruence as an independent variable, as well as skepticism toward advertising. Ad attitude, brand attitude and individual's use of persuasion knowledge were measured as dependent variables. Instead of using student sample, we randomly selected respondents from all over China, including both urban areas and new towns.

The key research statistic methods used in the three studies were ANOVA, MANVOVA and regression analyses.

1.5 Key Findings

Based on the three studies, ad image incongruence had a direct negative effect on ad attitude. Individual's use of persuasion knowledge mediated this relationship. Further, individual's use of persuasion knowledge had both a direct negative effect on brand attitude and an indirect negative effect on brand attitude through ad attitude.

To reinforce the main findings, we further examined whether skepticism toward advertising affect individual's use of persuasion knowledge. The regression results showed that consumers' skepticism toward ad moderates the relationship between ad image incongruence and individual's use of persuasion knowledge. The medium skeptical consumers demonstrated a higher tendency to use persuasion knowledge than the highly skeptical and lowly skeptical consumers.

Additional regression results showed that consumers hold a favorable ad attitude of the ads with western model than of the ads with local model. A symbolic meaning of status of foreign model was suggested.

1.6 Contributions

1.6.1 Theoretical contributions

This thesis contributes to the relevant literature by further exploring the relationship between persuasion knowledge model and attitudinal research in international advertising. As Friestad and Wright (1994) mentioned, the persuasion knowledge model offers a theoretical framework for examining attitude toward ad phenomena. However, it is not possible to definitively relate persuasion knowledge

model to the attitude toward ad research. In this study, based on persuasion knowledge model, we develop a conceptual model that bridges the gap. It empirically examined the effect of individual's use of persuasion knowledge on their attitude toward ads. Also, it empirically investigates how ad image incongruence affects individuals to access persuasion knowledge.

Another contribution of this study is that it tests the moderating role of ad skepticism on individual's use of persuasion knowledge, which then offers implications to measure persuasion knowledge. Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) pointed that advanced persuasion knowledge include moderate levels of skepticism toward advertising. Specifically speaking, highly skeptical consumers may perceive smaller differences in different ad appeals because they generally disbelieve or discount the ad claims. So, both highly and lowly skeptical consumers are less likely to adopt persuasion knowledge. This study provides empirical evidence of the moderating effect of ad skepticism.

1.6.2 Managerial implications

The ultimate aim of advertising is to persuade people to buy the advertised product. This thesis has managerial implications by identifying conditions when and why some advertisements are more efficient. The findings suggest that consumers are more likely to access persuasion knowledge, which leads to negative attitude toward ads, when the ad model type is incongruent with the advertised product category. For example, when a typical Chinese product features a typical foreign model, consumers tend to infer the ultimate persuasion intent of the advertisement by use their persuasion knowledge. From this perspective, advertiser and marketers should avoid the perceived information incongruence in advertising.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into 6 chapters as follows: Chapter 2 elaborates the researching gap and reviews the major existing literature of persuasion knowledge and relevant constructs. Chapter 3 develops a conceptual model based on literature review and proposes a series of hypotheses. The research methodology and data collection are presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents the empirical results, and Chapter 6 concludes. Limitations and the directions for future research are discussed.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the background of this research and review the relevant literature in order to establish a theoretical framework. Previous studies of consumer response to incongruent advertising information and appeals are reviewed first. Then, the persuasion knowledge model and its relevance to the current research context are presented. Following that, the literature on skepticism toward advertising is discussed.

2.1 Need for Congruence in Advertisement

Congruence in advertising means that the information in an ad is congruent with consumers' previously developed schemata or expectations. However, advertisers hope to increase the amount of attention given to the ad by using incongruent images (Heckler and Childers 1992). Previous studies have addressed the pros and cons of congruence/incongruence in advertising by focusing both on the verbal and visual information. Advertising effectiveness should be investigated across product or service types (Hanssens and Weitz 1980). Peterson and Kerin (1977) proposed a "product/model congruency" hypothesis which held that certain types of models generate more favorable responses when employed in advertisements for appropriate products than they did when employed in less appropriate ones. The following table reports some empirical evidence supporting the hypothesis.

TABLE 1

EVIDENCE OF PRODUCT/MODEL CONGRUENCY HYPOTHESIS

Authors	Findings
Peterson and Kerin(1977)	The propensity of Western manufactures for using Western model is most obvious in personal-care product.
Kassarjian(1969)	Travel and tourism advertisements promoting exotic locations featuring black people is favorable.
Brooke(1987)	Caucasian models “could not offend” consumers in the case of obviously international products such as airlines.
Baker and Churchill (1977)	Detergent ads featuring expertise is more acceptable.
Stafford, Stafford, and Day (2002)	Perfume ads featuring woman is favorable.

Based on the foregoing literature review, the importance of “product/model congruency” is highlighted. The need for congruence has also been suggested by other studies (e.g. need for congruence between gender and role, Hong and Zinkhan 1995; need for congruence between endorser type and product type, Friedman and Friedman 1979).

To sum up, existing literature on congruence studies has focused on many variables such as usage of foreign models and country of origin. In the current research, we are particularly interested in the congruence between model or endorser and advertised product category.

The use of foreign models in advertising has been addressed in the literature. Neelankavil *et al.* (1994) presented a model to explain the importance of congruence between models and products in advertising. They found that the choice of model is a

function of the country of origin, the target customer group, the use of foreign language and product type. When economy becomes global, a lot of multinational companies enter into Chinese market. As a consequence, it is very common to see foreign models in kinds of foreign product advertisements. Indeed, a number of multinational companies have been very successful in using global advertising appeals. For example, Philips's ads feature people from different countries: "Let's Make Things Better". This ad image as well as the slogan enjoys popular support. Another example is Adidas's advertisement endorsed by David Beckham. We can see different versions of the ad all over the world. As a matter of fact, standardized advertising is common, featuring universal models around the world.

On the other hand, there are also many international companies adopting localized strategies which take into account the heterogeneity of different cultures. Local image could inspire the feeling of similarity among consumers and thus positively influence their attitudes (Berscheid 1966). For example, the localization of San Miguel is quite successful. Its series of advertisements endorsed by Stephen Chow are very popular in Hong Kong. After years, few consumers know the country of origin of San Miguel is Spain. In China market, there are cases all around. The most popular international brands even have more than one local spokesman. For example, Nike is endorsed by LiuXiang and YiJianlian; Longines is endorsed by LiuJialing and LinZhiling; McDonalds is endorsed by WangLihong and GuoJingjing; besides, Adidas also has local spokesman YaoMing.

For local companies, it is more complicated when local product features western model in local advertisements. In China, consumers' readings of global and local advertising appeals are driven by a desire for status and cosmopolitanism in order to acquire "mianzi" which is often explained as prestige face (Zhou and Belk 2004).

Western endorser, or image, has a symbolic meaning of status. Hence, it has become a problem to decide whether to use a western model in local advertisements. For example, Peak invited Shane Battier as spokesman and joined the NBA market. In China market, Peak adopted the same advertisement. Then, there may a halo effect exists. Halo effect refers to a cognitive bias whereby the perception of a particular trait is influenced by the perception of the former trait in a sequence of interpretations. In this case, local consumers may read the brand Peak more prestigious and the sneakers of Peak more valuable. However, it remains to be seen whether western appeals featured in typical local products can be equally effective.

In short, multinational companies as well as local companies now use both global and local ad appeals (Barber 1996; Friedman 1999; Zhou and Belk 2004). Take the culture difference into account, we would examine the effect of the incongruence between model/endorser and advertised product category to explore the effectiveness of each ad appeal in international advertising context.

2.2 Persuasion Knowledge Model and Its Advertising Effects

2.2.1 Persuasion Knowledge Model

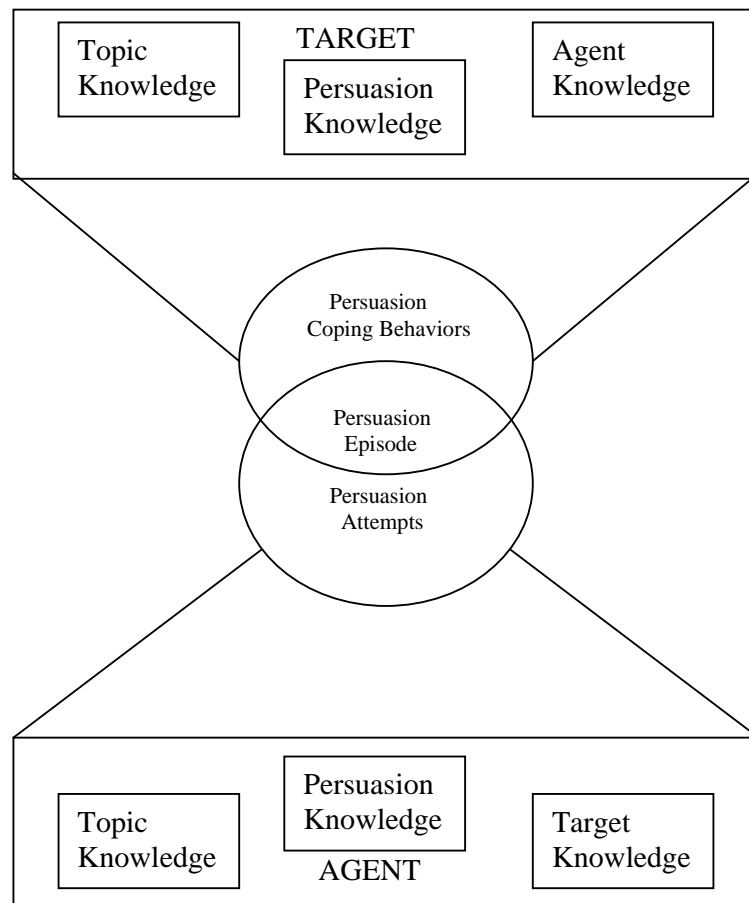
The theory of persuasion knowledge is first proposed by Friestad and Wright (1994). The core concept was that consumers use their persuasion knowledge to recognize, analyze, interpret, evaluate, and remember persuasion attempts and to select and execute coping tactics. Central to people's persuasion knowledge are their perceptions of persuasion tactics that agents use to influence them. The perceptions then significantly shape how consumers respond to persuasion attempts.

As Friestad and Wright (1994) described, the term "target" refers to those people for whom a persuasion attempt is intended (e.g., consumers, voters); the

term “agent” represents whomever a target identifies as being responsible for designing and constructing a persuasion attempt; the term persuasion “attempt” describes a target’s perception of an agent’s strategic behavior in presenting information designed to influence someone’s beliefs, attitude, decisions, or actions. This perception includes how and why the agent has designed, constructed and delivered their message. Term “cope” refers to what targets try to do in response to a persuasion attempt.

FIGURE1

THE PERSUASION KNOWLEDGE MODEL (PKM)



Source: Freistad and Wright, 1994

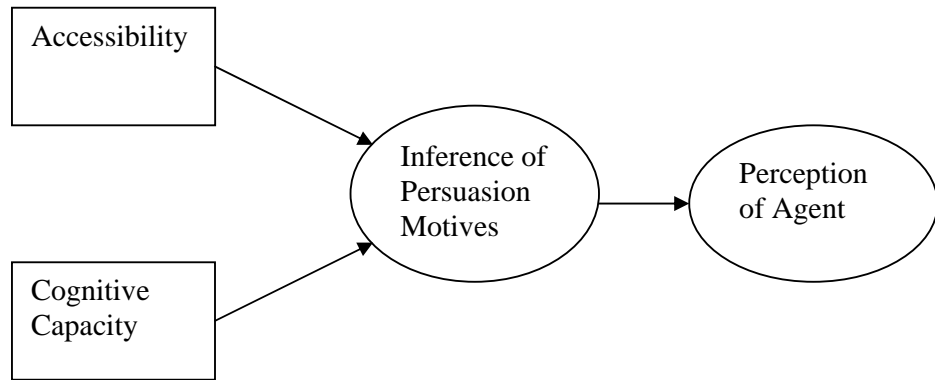
There are three knowledge structures which interact to shape and determine the outcomes of persuasion attempts. These are: persuasion knowledge, agent knowledge, and topic knowledge. Put them in advertising context, persuasion knowledge refers to beliefs about the tactics using in the advertising; agent knowledge refers to beliefs and feelings about the advertiser; topic knowledge refers to beliefs about the advertised product. These knowledge structures develop over time as consumers are exposed to tactics and come to recognize them as such.

Friestad and Wright (1994) pointed some fundamental assumptions about use of persuasion knowledge. In this case, we pay attention to the reasons that consumers access persuasion knowledge. There are three common reasons as follow: (1) consumers would like to evaluate claims about a product or service, (2) consumers find it interesting to judge what the agent is like, (3) consumers are interested in thinking about why advertisements and sales presentations are constructed as they are. Next, we will review relevant studies on the use of persuasion knowledge.

Surrounding PKM model, several studies have been conducted. Campbell and Kirmani (2000) investigated conditions that influence consumers' use their persuasion knowledge in an interpersonal sales context. They proposed that persuasion knowledge is used when consumers draw an inference that a persuasion motive may underlie a salesperson's behavior (i.e. flattering). These motive inferences then affect perceptions of the salesman. Four experimental studies using role-playing scenarios were employed test their conceptual model as follow:

FIGURE 2

A PROCESS MODEL OF CONSUMERS' USE OF PERSUASION KNOWLEDGE



Source: Campbell and Kirmani, 2000

This model describes accessibility and cognitive capacity as important factors influencing consumers' use of persuasion knowledge. They demonstrated that persuasion knowledge could be activated fairly easily when persuasion motives are made accessible.

In an advertising context, Campbell (1995) also found some significant findings. By examining two attention-getting tactics commonly used in television advertising (e.g., delay brand identification until the end of the end; includes something in an ad that is believed to be inherently involving and arousing to a significant portion of the target audience), Campbell explored how these tactics might sometimes lead consumers to infer that the advertiser is attempting to manipulate the audience. Further, the inferences of manipulative intent are found to lower advertising persuasion (e.g., ad attitudes, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions). In particular, she emphasized the importance of "fit" which refers to the extent to which the ad appeal matches the consumer's schema or expectations for the advertised product (Goodstein 1993). Advertisers sometimes use appeals with

low fit and hope these unexpected elements can attract consumers' processing attention. Campbell argued that by raising the processing level, these tactics may increase the activation of persuasion knowledge and inappropriateness judgments.

Other advertising tactics have also been studied. Cotte *et al* (2003) examined a commonly employed emotional tactic—the guilt appeal—and found that when consumers infer manipulative intent, they do not feel guilty, but have negative attitudes toward the advertisement. Ahluwalia and Burnkrant (2004) proposed a conceptual model of rhetorical question effects. They argued that consumers high in persuasion knowledge are likely to possess the ability to interpret the meaning of style elements used in advertising.

2.2.2 *Persuasive Advertising Effects*

There are many studies on attitude toward ad concerned with how people's feelings about an advertisement influence their attitudes toward the advertised brand as well as the advertised product. The traditional studies focused mainly on brand attitude and/or purchase intention. By transferring the focus to ad attitude, we could examine the impact of thoughts and feelings about the ad itself versus the thoughts and feelings about the topic (i.e., attributes of the advertised product). For example, Lutz, MacKenzie, and Belch (1983) proposed alternate models of how ad attitude mediate brand attitude and purchase intention. They (1986) proposed several underlying mechanisms drawn from traditional attitude theories. Consequently, Mackenzie and Belch (1989) compared the relative strength of the alternative models. These attitude-toward-ad researches focused attention on the underlying assumption that people evaluate marketers or advertisers' persuasion attempts.

From the PKM perspective, consumers (or targets) are motivated to use their persuasion knowledge to form valid agent knowledge. When exposure to an ads,

consumers often access their knowledge about advertising and persuasion automatically even though they may feel difficult to verbally report that knowledge in response to direct questions (Wright, Friestad, and Boush 1999). Friestad and Wright (1994) pointed out a key event----“change of meaning” which suggested that if consumers perceive a persuasion tactic, they will draw inferences of some sort, disengage somewhat from the ads, or discount the ads claims. Further, they may begin to include assessments of the effectiveness, appropriateness, and fairness of that tactic. These assessments (e.g., inference of manipulative intent) then are used to refine their attitude toward the ads and advertised brand. Put the other way round, if consumers cannot perceive the tactic, they will generate no particular evaluations. For example, in William et al (2004)’s study, asking an intention question is not perceived as a persuasion attempt. But once respondents are educated that this is definitely a persuasion attempt, the behavior impact of intention question is attenuated.

In all, PKM offers a theoretical framework for examining attitude toward ad and complements the traditional attitude theories.

2.3 Skepticism toward Advertising

Consumers’ skepticism toward advertising is defined as the general tendency toward disbelief of advertising claims (Obermiller and Spangenberg, 1998). Skepticism toward advertising influences consumers’ response to specific advertisement. It is believed that consumers with high skepticism should less attend to ads and be less inclined to form beliefs consistent with ad claims. Thus, in our research context, it is important to take this construct into account.

2.3.1 Origin of disbelieve

Continuously, researchers have an interest in how the public really feel about advertising. To investigate consumers' beliefs toward advertising in general (Bauer and Greyser 1968), Andrews (1989) verified and validated separate social and economic dimensions: social dimension include "insults intelligence", "often persuades", and "presents true picture"; economic dimension include "advertising is essential", "lower price", "raise standard of live", and "better products". An interesting finding of their study suggested that people tend to hold strong criticism of advertising's social role. In particular, people express greater agreements to statements that advertising: often persuade people to buy things they don't want, and does not present a true picture of products being advertised. These beliefs showed evidence that consumers have tendency to suspect advertising. Calfee and Ringold (1994) presented ample empirical evidence supporting this tendency. They concluded that the majority of consumers believe that advertising is often untruthful; that it attempts to persuade people to buy things they shouldn't buy; that it should be more strictly regulated; and that, nevertheless, it provides valuable information. Considering Andrews (1989)'s finding of sample difference, the information value of advertising is diminished to the extent that consumers are skeptical of ad truthfulness. To examine ad effectiveness, it is important to investigate ad skepticism with formal psychometric validity and take individual difference into account.

Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) made a great effort to enhance the validity of ad skepticism. They established and validated a scale to precisely measure consumers' skepticism toward advertising, which defined as the general tendency toward disbelief of advertising claims. To define this construct, they stated that the term "skepticism" may suggest several meanings as follow: (a) be skeptical of the

literal truth of ad claims, (b) of the motives of the advertisers, (c) of the value of the information to oneself or society, (d) of the appropriateness of advertising for specific audiences, or (e) criticisms of the embodiment of low culture or intrusiveness. Their definition limits the skepticism to the sense of disbelief, which is a single consistent response tendency.

Apparently, there must be some overlap between the scale of ad skepticism and the measures of overall attitude toward advertising in general. Obermiller and Spangenberg reviewed the items in several attitude toward advertising scales and found supports that ad skepticism and attitude toward advertising are related but separable constructs. We quoted some of their precious work here to expound this issue. As we mentioned above, the earliest formal scale of attitude toward advertising came from Bauer and Greyser (1968). Their two dimensional scale consisted of beliefs about the social effects and beliefs about the economic effects of advertising. Andrew (1989) confirmed the structure using seven of the Bauer and Greyser items. Among the seven items (see page 12), only one referred to skepticism (“...presents a true picture...”). Another scale based was developed by Sandage and Leckenby (1980). It includes beliefs about the institution of advertising and beliefs about its practice. This scale focused on the evaluative response to advertising, and only one referred to skepticism clearly (honest/dishonest). Muehling (1987)’s 20 items scale attempt to capture commonly held beliefs about advertising. After regressing beliefs against a global measure of attitude, he found only five items significantly associated with attitude. One of these five items appears to be related to skepticism (presents a true picture of the product).

Subsequently, Obermiller and Spangenberg (2000) further investigate the origin and distinctness of consumer skepticism toward advertising. Their findings that

different sources of information produced difference levels of skepticism and the pattern of results were not significantly correlated indicate ad skepticism as a separate construct from skepticism toward other sources of product information. The construct validity of skepticism toward advertising scale was further consolidated.

Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) made another contribution by proposing a nomological network for ad skepticism which depicts the relation of ad skepticism with other marketplace beliefs. Here we review some significant ones which are relevant to our study. First, they argued that consumers who are skeptical of advertising are apt to dislike advertising. In other words, ad skepticism could be seen as an input to attitude toward advertising. Second, they proposed that ad skepticism moderates persuasive effect of advertising. They argued that high skeptics may be more aware of advertising strategies, or, persuasive tactics. The awareness is a signal of activation of persuasion knowledge. Third, they also pointed out some situational factors which could moderate the effect of ad skepticism, for example, product type. Since it is highly relevant to our experimental design, we will review this part in next section.

2.3.2 Studies of Ad Skepticism

Product type could affect ad claim believability (Hanssens and Weitz 1980). Nelson (1970) identified three categories of goods: search goods, which can be determined by information search prior to purchase or use, experience goods, which cannot be determined by search but can be determined by use experience, and credence goods, which cannot be determined by either search or experience for these goods are too complex for typical consumer or require too much expert knowledge to evaluate. He hypothesized that consumers are more skeptical of experience than search attribute claims. Ford et al. (1990) tested and found support for the hypothesis.

Darby and Karni (1973) hypothesized that consumers will be more skeptical of credence than of experience attribute claims, but no support was found. Ford, Smith and Swasy (1988) reported that 65% of ad claims were either experience or credence type. To get a more significant result, we will adopt experience ad claims in our study.

Among the studies of ad skepticism, two are highly relevant and important to our research. Hardesty, Calson and Bearden (2002) investigated the moderating effect of ad skepticism regarding the use of external reference price, which is ubiquitous in marketplace. They found that consumers high in ad skepticism are positively influenced by a high invoice price (versus low invoice price) when brand familiarity is high but not when brand familiarity is low. Nevertheless, consumers low in ad skepticism are positively influence by a high invoice price (versus low invoice price) no matter brand familiarity is high or low. Their study suggested that skeptical consumers respond to advertising tactics differently, which addressed the need to investigate the conditions in which consumer's persuasion knowledge are likely to be used and the extent to which ad skepticism influence the responses to specific advertisements. Such situational considerations include the set of ad structure and execution factors also. As we noted previously, Campbell (1995) examined attention-getting tactics to test the hypothesis that such tactics may create perception of manipulative intent. The perception will in turn result in increased counterarguing and resistance to persuasion. Campbell did not take belief in advertising claims into account, but follow her logic, some counterarguing may take the form of ad skepticism, high skeptics may be more likely to infer manipulative intent, and thus ad skepticism influence the effect of attention-getting tactics.

To test the consequences of ad skepticism, Obermiller et al. (2005) conducted three studies which investigate the effects of ad skepticism on responses to advertisement. The results suggested that consumers high in ad skepticism like advertising less, rely on it less, attend to it less, and respond more positively to emotional appeals than to informational appeals. The findings supported the central premise of persuasion knowledge model in that highly skeptical consumers have likely become skeptical over time in response to numerous interactions in the marketplace. Advertisers in turn employed strategies to approach these skeptical consumers, such as emotional appeals. This study offered managerial implications that marketers and advertisers have a need to find ways to influence skeptical consumers.

2.3.3 Ad Skepticism and Persuasion Knowledge

Compared with ad skepticism, persuasion knowledge is a more general construct. Greater persuasion knowledge implies greater control of the persuasion outcome rather than greater resistance to persuasion (Freistad and Wright 1994), whereas higher ad skepticism implies less possible to persuade by means of information. A clear difference between these two constructs is the implied response to information. Obermiller and Spangenberg (2000) stated that ad skepticism can be seen as an important component of persuasion knowledge and proposed (1998) that ad skepticism changes as persuasion knowledge develops. Is this relationship linear?

Freistad and Wright (1994) suggested that low persuasion knowledge is characterized by low skepticism and low persuasion knowledge could also be reflected by too much skepticism, which means too much or too little skepticism are surely harmful. Since the development of persuasion knowledge depends on the maturation of some basic cognitive skills and on people's accumulated experience

with what occurs in social encounters and their exposure to social discourse about persuasion, advertising, and psychological events, through some set of socialization and marketplace experience, consumers may come to trust advertising to some degree. Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998, 2000) also addressed that a “healthy” skepticism toward advertising may be the best control on a free advertising market. These previous studies implied that advanced persuasion knowledge includes moderate levels of ad skepticism. We thereby recognize the importance of studying ad skepticism to get a better understanding of persuasion knowledge. In the meantime, it is obvious that ad skepticism could moderate the persuasive effect of advertising since the effect is influenced and can be reflected by the use of persuasion knowledge.

To sum up, persuasion knowledge is reflected by ad skepticism and the effect of advertising is reflected by the use of persuasion knowledge. In this research, we emphasize the importance of examining ad skepticism to explore individual’s use of persuasion knowledge in specific advertisement. In next Chapter, our conceptual model and research hypotheses are presented.

Chapter 3

Conceptual Framework and Research Hypotheses

As discussed in the foregoing chapter, persuasion knowledge model (PKM) offers a theoretical framework for examining attitude toward ad. Based on PKM and relevant research on attitudinal studies, we develop a conceptual model and present several research hypotheses. This model explains how individuals use of persuasion knowledge influence their perception of both the advertisement and advertised brand when ad model type is incongruent with the advertised product category.

3.1 The Effect of Ad Image Incongruence

More and more advertisers use a variety of tactics to create more advertisement attractive. For example, western models are used on local products to enhance credibility (e.g., Jin Sang Zi use western football star Kaka as spokesman). However, many consumers believe that advertisers sometimes inappropriately use advertising tactics to try to manipulate consumers (Alsop and Abrams, 1986; Moog, 1990). The effectiveness of the ad tactics thus attracts a lot of attention. In this study, we draw attention to the use of western model on product from local category and also the use of local model on product from western category.

Due to globalization, the concept of country of origin for a product or a brand has become problematic (e.g., Thakor and Kohli 1996; Zhou and Belk, 2004). Because of confusion about what is or is not a western product, we simply deal with what consumers perceive as “western” or “local” product. Drawing on the vast majority of the country-of-origin effect research, some product categories are involved with country stereotyping effects such that become our research objects.

We divide these products into two categories: western category, such as perfume and pizza, refers to what consumers perceive as typical western product; local category, such as Chinese herbal medicine and dumpling, refers to what consumers perceive as typical Chinese product. Here, we define ad image congruence/incongruence as the congruence/incongruence between model type (western vs. local) and the product category (western vs. local) in an advertisement.

Peterson and Kerin (1977) proposed a “product/model congruency” hypothesis which held that certain types of models generate more favorable responses when employed in advertisements for appropriate products than they did when employed in less appropriate ones. Thus, we expect to find a difference of ad image incongruence on ad attitude. In our research context, ad image incongruence refers to the usage of western model/endorser on a typical local product or the usage of local model/endorser on a typical western product. Following our discussion in Chapter 2, we hypothesize that ad image incongruence has a negative effect on attitude toward advertisement.

H1a: *Ad image incongruence has a negative effect on attitude toward advertisement.*

When the ad model type is incongruent with the advertised product, consumer’s attention to the ads will enhance (Goodstein, 1993). As experienced targets of persuasion attempts in daily life, consumers build up knowledge about persuasion and persuasive tactics (Friestad and Wright, 1994), including concepts about the appropriateness or fairness of advertisers’ persuasion tactics (Campbell, 1991; Friestad and Wright, 1994). With increased processing attention, consumers often appear to infer that advertiser is trying to manipulate the consumer audience----that is, to use persuasion knowledge to judge that the advertiser is attempting to persuade by inappropriate, unfair, or manipulative means (Campbell, 1995). Previous studies

about advertising persuasion also suggested that increasing processing attention would increase activation of persuasion knowledge because consumers are interested in judging why advertisements are constructed this way (Friestad and Wright 1994). Here, we defined individual's use of persuasion knowledge as the degree of the inferences of the persuade intent of an ad and the appropriateness of the persuasive tactics used in an ad. Therefore, we advance the following hypothesis:

H1b: *Ad image incongruence has a positive effect on individual's use of persuasion knowledge.*

3.2 The Effect of Individual's Use of Persuasion Knowledge

An individual's use of persuasion knowledge may have potential negative effects on ad responses. For example, when consumers perceive that an advertisement is manipulative or the aim of ad is to persuade them buy product, they may discount the message. Previous studies about traditional attitude theories suggest that the inferences of manipulative intent in ad could negatively affect advertiser credibility which leads to low attitude toward advertisement (A_{ad}) and brand (A_{brand}) (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989). Research also suggests that when people recognize a message is biased toward a position (an ad/advertiser are seen as biased toward the advertised product) and is intended to influence, they resist the persuasive message (Wood and Eagly, 1981). Consistent with these researches, we propose that individual's use of persuasion knowledge has a negative effect on attitude toward advertisement.

H2a: *Individual's use of persuasion knowledge has a negative effect on attitude toward advertisement.*

Low A_{ad} could in turn lead to low A_{brand} either through affect transfer (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1982) or by lowering audience acceptance of the advertised message (MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch, 1986). In addition to this indirect effect, individual's use of persuasion knowledge may have a direct impact on A_{brand} because consumer may make attributions about the brand based on the inferences of persuasive intent (Campbell, 1995). For example, a consumer could guess that the quality of a product is low since the advertiser uses manipulative tactics to sell it. In our case, a consumer could feel that if a local product features with western model, the advertiser must aim to make him believe the popularity of the product---even a foreigner purchases the product. However, he may doubt whether foreigners really use the product, especially when the product is a typical local product. Thus, the brand may be perceived as less honest. We propose the following hypothesis:

H2b: *Individual's use of persuasion knowledge has a direct negative effect on A_{brand} and an indirect negative effect on A_{brand} through A_{ad} .*

Previous study suggested that when exposure to an advertisement, consumers often access their knowledge about advertising and persuasion automatically even though they may feel difficult to verbally report that knowledge in response to direct questions (Wright, Friestad, and Boush 1999). Friestad and Wright (1994) pointed out a key event---“change of meaning” which suggested that if consumers perceive a persuasion tactic, they will draw inferences of some sort, disengage somewhat from the ads, or discount the ads claims. Further, they may begin to include assessments of the effectiveness, appropriateness, and fairness of that tactic. These assessments (e.g., inference of manipulative intent) then are used to refine their attitude toward the ads and advertised brand. Following this logic, if consumers cannot perceive the tactic, they will generate no particular evaluations. In our case, the persuasive intent is more

salient in the ads adopting a model which is incongruent with the advertised product than in the ads with a model which is congruent with the advertised product. Hence, we argue that the activation of persuasion knowledge negatively affect ad attitude when persuasion intention is salient. Further, no particular inferences will be generated when persuasion intention is not salient. To conclude, the effect of ad image incongruence on ad attitude is mediated by individual's use of persuasion knowledge.

H3: *The effect of ad image incongruence on A_{ad} is mediated by individual's use of persuasion knowledge.*

3.2 The Effect of Skepticism toward Advertising

Consumers' skepticism toward advertising is defined as the general tendency toward disbelief of advertising claims (Obermiller and Spangenberg, 1998). Skepticism toward advertising influences consumers' response to specific advertisement. It is believed that consumers with high skepticism should less attend to ads and be less inclined to form beliefs consistent with ad claims. Also, their counterarguing would be higher, which decreases persuasion (Petty, Ostorm and Brock, 1981). Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) proposed a nomological network for ad skepticism which depicts the relation of ad skepticism with other marketplace beliefs. They argued that consumers who are skeptical of advertising are apt to dislike advertising. In other words, ad skepticism could be seen as an input to attitude toward advertising. To test the consequences of ad skepticism, Obermiller et al. (2005) conducted three studies which investigate the effects of ad skepticism on responses to advertisement. The results suggested that consumers high in ad

skepticism like advertising less, rely on it less, and attend to it less. Thus, we advance the following hypothesis:

H5: *Ad skepticism has a negative effect on A_{ad}.*

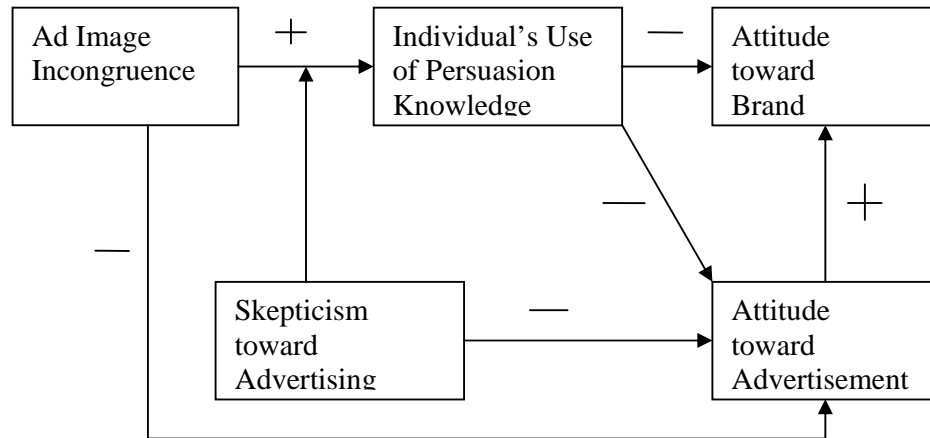
Further, there is likelihood that ad skepticism moderates persuasive effect of advertising. Researchers argues that a certain degree of skepticism in adolescent consumers is considered to be a positive and important outcome of the consumer socialization process as it assists in gathering, processing, and interpreting marketplace knowledge, producing “better” consumers (Brucks et al. 1988). Freistad and Wright (1994) suggested that low persuasion knowledge is characterized by low skepticism and low persuasion knowledge could also be reflected by too much skepticism. Obermiller and Spangenberg also suggested (1998, 2000) that some certain level of skepticism reflects a better understanding of the marketplace as well as the information in advertising. In our case, skeptical consumers may be more aware of advertising strategies, or, persuasive tactics. The awareness is a signal of activation of persuasion knowledge. But compared with medium skeptical consumers, high skeptical consumers are found to less attend to ads (Obermiller et al., 2005). Less attention implies less likely to use persuasion knowledge. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6: *Ad skepticism moderates the effect of ad image incongruence on individual’s use of persuasion knowledge.*

To sum up the above arguments, we present a conceptual model as following:

FIGURE 3

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF CONSUMER RESPONSE TO AD IMAGE
INCONGRUENCE



The conceptual model describes all of our research hypotheses: the effect of ad image incongruence on individual's use of persuasion knowledge and attitude toward advertising, the effect of individual's use of persuasion knowledge on attitude toward advertising and attitude toward brand, the mediating effect of individual's use of persuasion knowledge, the effect of skepticism toward advertising on attitude toward advertising, and also the moderating effect of skepticism toward advertising. We designed two experimental studies and one survey to test the relationships in the model. In next chapter, we detail the research methodology.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to detail the research methodologies used in this study, including the development of the stimulus advertisements, data collection, sample selection and experimental design. Three studies were conducted with print advertisements. They were designed for testing the hypotheses related to the proposed model in Chapter 3. The first is experimental study with four hypothesized advertisements. The second experimental study adopted mock advertisements. And the third is survey using real advertisements.

4.1 Study 1

In the first study, we aimed to test the differences in ad attitude and individual's use of persuasion knowledge between congruent ads and incongruent ads. Here, congruent/incongruent refers to image congruent/incongruent, which defined as the match/mismatch between the advertised product category (western versus local) and the model type (western versus local). A pilot study was conducted to choose typical local and western products. Then a single factor experimental design was conducted. Two products (egg tart and steamed vermicelli roll) were matched with two model images (a western model and a local model) to create four different advertisements. These four ads formed four experimental conditions: 2 are congruence (steamed vermicelli roll with local model, egg tart with western model) and the other 2 are incongruence (steamed vermicelli roll with western model, egg tart with local model). In the following sections, we will elaborate the pilot study, the creation of stimulus, the manipulation control and the experimental procedure.

4.1.1 Stimulus Development

A pilot study was conducted to choose typical local and western products following the procedure of Dahlen and Lange (2004). In their study, they aimed to elicit brand associations. They first asked twenty subjects to list associations they held with familiar brand and perceived as conflicting with the familiar brand. Then they quantified five most commonly mentioned associations of each kind with seven-point Likert scales and asked another twenty subjects to rate them. Resembling this procedure, ten subjects were asked to list typical local or western products in their mind firstly. We gave examples like latent and pizza and emphasized that we need products which they perceive as typical local or western products without regard to the country of origin of the products. Then the five most commonly mentioned products of each category were selected for a follow-up checking. The local product category includes steamed stuffed bun, steamed vermicelli roll, herbal tea, radix isatidis infusion and cheongsam. The western product category includes pizza, egg tart, coffee, hamburger and perfume. These products could be categorized into food, drink, medicine, and other products. In our study, the goal was to create four advertisements that differ from each other only in their model type and advertised product. Since we will compare these ads, we must concern the attractiveness of the models and the attributes of the products. Food and drink, both are experience goods and very common in our life, came to our target categories. Seven products from these two categories were quantified with seven-point Likert scales. Ten new subjects were invited to rate the products. Finally, we decided to select steamed vermicelli roll (mean score=6.5) and egg tart (mean score=6.0) as stimulus. The following table reported the results of the pilot study:

TABLE2

THE RESULTS OF PILOT STUDY IN STUDY 1

Local Products	Scores	Western Products	Scores
Steamed stuffed bun	6.0	Pizza	6.0
Steamed vermicelli roll	6.5	Egg tart	6.0
Herbal tea	6.5	Coffee	5.0
		Hamburger	5.5

The four hypothesized advertisements were all designed by a copywriter at Ogilvy & Mather Ad Agency in Guangzhou. Since Kent and Allen (1994) identified just using fictitious brand as a problem in advertising research, the ad agency adopted real products and brands: steamed vermicelli roll of Real Kungfu and egg tart of KFC. The pictures of the products were collected from commercial advertisements through internet. He also included the real brand logos and slogans in the advertisements.

A local model and a western model were created to feature with the advertised products respectively. Simulating real-world ads, the ads consisted of a big picture of model with a small picture of the product and the logo and slogan in the upper right corner. Except for experimentally controlled variable, all of the other ad elements, including the size of the picture, the background color and the composition of the picture, were kept identical so that we can adequately test the effects of experimental factor (Thompson and Hamilton, 2006).

The professional copywriter guaranteed that the four hypothesized advertisements look like real advertisements.

The ads are depicted in Appendix 1.

4.1.2 Manipulation Control

The ads were pretested in two steps prior to conducting study 1. During this process, wording was adopted as needed and ambiguous questions were clarified or deleted. The aims of the two pretests were to (1) verify the manipulation of congruence/incongruence between products category and model type, (2) make sure no confounding effects exist in the study. 30 subjects were invited to the pretests through internet. They are general public including students, white-collar workers, housewives and businessman.

The first pretest was done to ensure the manipulation of ad image incongruence. Subjects rated the fit between the model and the advertised product on a ten-point scale (“How well do the model and the product fit together?”) (Dahlen and Lange, 2004). The mean value were 7.6 (steamed vermicelli roll) and 7.0 (egg tart) for the congruent subset ($p=.221$) and 3 (steamed vermicelli roll) and 2.5 (egg tart) for the incongruent subset ($p=.325$). There is a significant between groups difference ($F=61.727$, $p<0.001$). The manipulation of the ad image incongruence of the ads was deemed satisfactory.

The second pretest was used to test control variables to make sure no confounding effects were present. Two items were measured on seven-point scales. The first is attractiveness. Subjects were shown four ads and rated how attractive the four ads are on seven-point scale ranging from (1) “extremely not attractive” to (7) “extremely attractive.” Second, we concerned the likeability for the picture components (Lee, 2000). Subjects were shown two model images taken from the stimulus ads. They were asked about their liking for the model on seven-point scale (1=don’t like at all, 7=like very much). Based on the result of ANOVA test, the ads

did not differ significantly from each other in their attractiveness ($F=.847, p=.472$). Also, subjects did not show significant difference in model image likeability (western model=5.4, local model=5.2, $p=.141$). The results rejected the possibility that preference of the ads or model may account for the difference in attitude toward ads or in individual's use of persuasion knowledge.

4.1.3 Experimental Procedure

A convenience sample of 100 university students were assigned randomly to one of the four experimental conditions. The questionnaire contained two major sections. In the first section, we gave the instructions, the print advertisement and the measure of attitude toward the advertisement. In the second section, we included the measure of individual's use of persuasion knowledge and manipulation checks. Subjects were told to read the advertisement and complete the questionnaire at their own pace and to complete the first section first. Upon completion of the first section, they could go on with the second section. We split the questions because asking questions about persuasion knowledge may cue subjects to activate persuasion knowledge. Once they activate persuasion knowledge, their attitude toward ads may be affected. So, attitude toward ads were measured firstly. Study 1 tested our basic hypotheses that ad image incongruence would influence individual's use of persuasion knowledge and their attitude toward advertisement. The results well supported the hypotheses and will be reported in Chapter 5. In next section, we designed study 2 to test other hypotheses.

4.2 Study 2

A 2 (ad image: congruence vs. incongruence) X 3 (skepticism: low, medium, high) full factorial between subjects experimental study was conducted in order to test moderating effect of skepticism toward advertising and also replicate the results from study 1. Since there was no significant difference between local product category and western product category in individual's use of persuasion knowledge in study 1, study 2 would only use local product as stimuli. We believed the moderating effect remains the same no matter the advertised product is western or local.

4.2.1 Ad Stimulus

Instead of using hypothesized advertisements, we will use a real advertisement and a mocked one (congruence vs. incongruence). At the first step, we asked 10 undergraduate students to collect print advertisements for which they perceived that the advertised product was typical local product featuring local model. After this collection, we selected five ads¹ with the greatest frequency. In order to facilitate the creation of mocked ads, we chose Shun herbal tea as the stimuli since this advertisement contains one model and several claims. The mocked advertisement is also designed by the copywriter at Ogilvy & Mather Ad Agency in Guangzhou. In the mocked ads, the model of the original ads was replaced by a western model, other elements remained the same.

4.2.2 Manipulation Control

Twenty undergraduate students, none of whom participated in the previous ads collections, participated in our pretests.

¹ Advertisements of local product include Chinese herbal medicine, such as Fuke Qianjin Tablets, and Watermelon Frost Lozenge; Chinese herbal tea, such as Wang Laoji, and Shun; Chinese food, such as Master Kong Instant Noodles.

First, we aimed to check whether the product of the stimuli ads is typically local products. We adopted a measure of typicality from Loken and Ward (1990) which has three scales: exemplar goodness, typicality, and representativeness. Subjects rated how good an example of local product Shun herbal tea was on seven-point scale ranging from (1) “extremely poor example of local product” to (7) “extremely good example of local product.” Subjects rated how typical a local product Shun herbal tea was on seven-point scale ranging from (1) “very atypical” to (7) “very typical”. Subjects rated the representativeness of Shun herbal tea as a local product from (1) “very unrepresentative” to (7) “very representative”. The mean value was 5.53, well above the middle value, suggesting that Shun herbal tea is a typical local product.

Second, we concerned the manipulation of ad image incongruence. Subjects rated how well the model and the product fit together on a ten-point scale (Dahlen and Lange, 2004). The mean values were 3.2 for the mocked (incongruence) ads and 7.4 for the original (congruence) one ($p < .001$). The manipulation of the ad image incongruence was deemed satisfactory.

The third pretest concerned the likeability for the models. Subjects were asked about their liking for the models on seven-point scale (1=don’t like at all, 7=like very much). The two models did not differ significantly in their likeability ($p = 0.204$). The possibility that the preference of the model may drive the difference in attitude toward ads was rejected. The ads are depicted in Appendix 2.

4.2.3 Experimental Procedure

A sample of 180 students at a local university participated in study 2. The subjects were randomly divided into the two cells. Skepticism toward advertising was measured on an individual level. We set two cutoff points in order to divide

subjects into one low skepticism group, one medium skepticism group and one high skepticism group. A cell size was approximately 30 subjects. As same as study 1, ads attitude and individual's use of persuasion knowledge were dependent variables. Brand attitude was measured additionally. The results of the study will be reported in next Chapter.

4.3 Study 3

In this study, a survey was conducted to complement and consolidate the results of study 2. Since ad skepticism level was supposed to be fluctuating across people due to their different backgrounds. The homogenous students sample may not form a necessary situation to test the moderating role of ad skepticism. In study 3, we did not aim to compare the difference between congruent ads and incongruent ads but aim to explore the effect of ad skepticism on individual's use of persuasion knowledge when the advertisement is incongruent.

4.3.1 Stimulus Ads

In this study, our object is to test the moderating role of ad skepticism. Only one incongruence advertisement will be used as stimuli. Consistent with recent advertising research, we chose to use real ads in study 3 (see e.g., Cotte et. al. 2005). Similar selection was conducted as in study 2. At the first step, we asked 10 undergraduate students to collect print advertisements for which they perceived that the advertised product was typical local product featuring western model. After this collection, we selected one with the greatest frequency---- Golden Throat Lozenge. The advertisement and questionnaire referred to Appendix 3.

4.3.2 Pretest

Twenty undergraduate students were invited to participate in our pretest. First, we checked whether Golden Throat Lozenge is a typically local product. We measured typicality as in study 2. The mean value was 5.7, suggesting that Golden Throat Lozenge is a typical local product. Second, Subjects rated how well the model and the product fit together on a ten-point scale (Dahlen and Lange, 2004). The mean values were 2.5, suggesting that the model in advertisement is incongruent with the product of Golden Throat Lozenge.

4.3.3 Data collection

200 questionnaires were handed out randomly in different areas of China. The places include both urban areas and new towns. One reason was to minimize sample bias. Another reason was to ensure heterogeneity of respondents. We finally got 188 valid questionnaires. The independent variables were ad image incongruence and skepticism toward advertising. Ad image incongruence was measured as an independent variable. We adopted the measure of “perceived congruence” from Menon and Kahn’s study (2003), reworded and reverse scored. The dependent variables were ad attitude, brand attitude and individual’s use of persuasion knowledge. As in study 2, we set two cutoff points in order to divide respondents into one low skepticism group, one medium skepticism group and one high skepticism group. Each group had approximately 63 respondents. The results of this study will be reported in next Chapter.

4.4 Measurements

In this section, we introduce all the measures mentioned in above studies. The proposed model includes five variables: ad image incongruence, individual’s use of

persuasion knowledge, attitude towards ads, attitude toward brand, and ad skepticism. Most scales were adopted from previous studies.

4.2.1 Ad image incongruence

In this research, we adopted and reworded the scale of “perceived congruence” from Menon and Kahn’s study (2003). Subjects were asked to rate a seven-item scale ranging from 1 (definitely disagree) to 7 (definitely agree). The items are as follows:

1. The ad image is logically related to the advertised product. (Reverse scored)
2. The ad image is relevant to the advertised product. (Reverse scored)
3. The ad image is compelling for the advertised product. (Reverse scored)
4. It is strange to see the ad image in advertisement of this kind of product.
5. The ad image is congruent with the advertised product. (Reverse scored)
6. Overall, the match between the product and the ad image is good. (Reverse scored)

4.2.2 Individual’s use of persuasion knowledge

As a matter of fact, none study to our knowledge directly measure persuasion knowledge since “it is a set of interrelated beliefs about (a) the psychological events that are instrumental to persuasion, (b) the causes and effects of those events, (c) the importance of the events, (d) the extent to which people can control their psychological responses, (e) the temporal course of the persuasion process, and (f) the effectiveness and appropriateness of particular persuasion tactics” (Freistad and Wright 1994). Freistad and Wright (1995) explored seven types of persuasion beliefs about television advertising. Hardesty *et al* (2007) develop and validate a measure of pricing tactic persuasion knowledge.

Most studies measured the degree to which consumers’ persuasion knowledge was activated. As the foregoing literatures mentioned, inference of persuasion

motives and inference of manipulative intent are commonly adopted. In Williams *et al* (2004)'s research on mere-measurement effect, they simply ask two questions design to measure whether persuasion knowledge was activated. These two questions are adopted from inference of persuasion intent by Campbell and Kirmani (2000). One question is that “while I read the question I thought it was pretty obvious that the author of the question was attempting to persuade me”, which is an item of inference of persuasion intent. Another question is that “the purpose of the question on the previous page was to change my behavior”, which works as a manipulation check of Campbell and Kirmani (2000)' study. They demonstrated that the mere-measurement effect occurs because asking an intention question is not perceived as a persuasion attempt. And they find persuasion knowledge mediates the effects.

We adopted the scale of “inference of manipulative intent” from Campbell (1995), the scale of “inference of persuasion motives” from Campbell and Kirmani (2000), and the scale of “persuasion knowledge” from Moore and Rodgers (2005). We chose the ad-specific items and did a pretest to select items by using CFA. Finally, we got seven items on a 7-point scale from 1 (definitely disagree) to 7 (definitely agree) as follows:

1. The way this ad tries to persuade people seems accepted to me (reverse scored).
2. The advertiser tries to manipulate the audience in ways that I don't like.
3. I am annoyed by this ad because the advertiser seemed to be trying to inappropriately manage or control the consumer audience.
4. The ad was fair in what was said and shown (reverse scored).
5. When I read the ad, I think it's pretty obvious the ad is trying to persuade me to buy the product.

6. I notice tricks in this ad to promote the product.

7. This ad is meant to sell product.

4.2.3 Attitude toward advertisement

The variable was measured on five 7-point semantic differential items (1= definitely disagree; 7= definitely agree) taken from Lee and Mason (1999). The statements were: I dislike the ads (reverse scored); the ads is appealing to me; the ads is attractive to me; the ads is interesting to me; and I think the ads is bad (reverse scored).

4.2.4 Attitude toward brand

The variable was measured on four 7-point semantic differential items (1= definitely disagree; 7= definitely agree) taken from Lee and Mason (1999). The statements were as follows: the brand in the ad is likely to possess the stated ad claims; I react favorably to the brand; I feel positive toward the brand; I dislike the brand (reverse scored).

4.2.5 Skepticism toward Advertising

The variable was measured on nine 5-point semantic differential items (1= definitely disagree; 7= definitely agree) constructed by Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998). The statements were as follows:

1. We can depend on getting the truth in most advertising.
2. Advertising's aim is to inform the consumer.
3. I believe advertising is informative.
4. Advertising is generally truthful.
5. Advertising is a reliable source of information about the quality and performance of products.
6. Advertising is truth well told.

7. In general, advertising presents a true picture of the product being advertised.
8. I feel I've been accurately informed after viewing most advertisement.
9. Most advertising provides consumers with essential information.

4.5 Statistical Methods

First, descriptive statistics was used in pilot study. Second, T-test was conducted to check manipulation controls. The attractiveness of ads and the likeability of models were tested by comparing the means of each group. Third, we conducted Confirmatory Factor Analysis to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement of individual's use of persuasion knowledge. We established convergent validity by examining the t-test for factor loadings, and all are significant ($p < .0001$). We established discriminant validity using the confidence interval test and the variance extracted test (Hatcher, 1994). Fourth, ANOVA and MONOVA were used to compare means of each group to test our hypotheses in study 1 and 2. Fifth, to estimate the proposed relationship in the model, SOBEL test was conducted to test the mediating effects and regression was conducted to test the moderating effect. In statistics, mediation is most frequently determined by the logic of Baron and Kenny (1986) or the SOBEL test. However, Hayes (2009) suggested using bootstrapping to test mediation. Bootstrapping is a computer-intensive approach to statistical inference, falling with a broader class of resampling method. Nowadays, bootstrapping is becoming the most popular method to test mediation because it does not require the normality assumption to be met, and because it can be effectively utilized with smaller sample sizes ($N < 25$). Ader et al. (2008) recommended use of bootstrapping procedures for any of the following situations:

- (1) When the theoretical distribution of a statistic is complicated or unknown.
- (2) When the sample size is insufficient for straightforward statistical inference.
- (3) When power calculations have to be performed, and a small pilot sample is available.

Our research does not belong to any of the above cases. Thus, Sobel test works well although bootstrapping may works better. In study 3, we still adopted Sobel test for convenience.

Chapter 5

Results

This chapter presents the empirical results of the hypothesis testing of the three studies described in Chapter 4. The results include the descriptive statistics, reliability tests, ANOVA, MANOVA, and regression analyses. Manipulation checks of experimental control are also reported.

5.1 Study 1

5.1.1 Manipulation Checks

A manipulation check is essential for us to know whether the experimental manipulation produced the desired controlled condition. In this study, the fit of the model and the advertised product was measured to check the experimental conditions of ad image incongruence. A 2X2 ANOVA was conducted. As manipulated, there was no significant difference between the congruent ads, the mean value of ad image incongruence were 7.76 (steamed vermicelli roll) and 7.48 (egg tart) ($p=.309$). Also, there was no significant difference between the incongruent ads, the mean value of ad image incongruence were 2.84 (steamed vermicelli roll) and 2.92 (egg tart) ($p=.771$). There is a significant between groups difference ($F=200.089$, $p<0.001$). The manipulation of the ad image incongruence of the ads was deemed satisfactory.

Furthermore, we concerned other control variables as in the stimuli pretests. The first is the attractiveness of each advertisement. A 2X2 ANOVA was conducted. As expected, subjects indicated that they perceived no difference in the attractiveness of each advertisement ($F=.868$, $p=.460$). Second, we compared the likability of each

model. Also as expected, a 2X2 ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference in the likability of model ($F=.487, p=.692$).

5.1.2 Hypotheses Testing

It was hypothesized that ad image incongruence has a negative effect on attitude toward advertisement (H1a). On the contrary, ad image incongruence has a positive effect on individual's use of persuasion knowledge (H1b). Specifically, in the congruent conditions, individuals are less likely to use persuasion knowledge and more likely to enjoy the ads. In the incongruent conditions, individuals are more likely to use persuasion knowledge and less likely to enjoy the ads. To test these hypotheses, we first examined all of the variables simultaneously through MANOVA. The results are reported in the following table.

TABLE 3
THE EFFECT OF AD IMAGE INCONGRUENCE IN STUDY 1

Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig
Product Category	Aad	.201	.655
	Individuals' Use of Persuasion Knowledge	.910	.342
Model Type	Aad	13.966	.000
	Individuals' Use of Persuasion Knowledge	.019	.892
Product Category *	Aad	395.285	.000
Model Type	Individuals' Use of Persuasion Knowledge	309.121	.000

Based on the results, ad image incongruence (Product Category X Model Type) had a significant effect on ad attitude ($F=395.285, P<.001$) and individual's use of persuasion knowledge ($F=309.121, P<.001$). MANOVA analysis also revealed that

there was a significant effect of model type on ad attitude ($F=13.966$, $P<.01$), but not on individual's use of persuasion knowledge ($F=.019$, $P=.892$). There was no significant effect of product category on any dependent variable.

To further examine the effect of ad image incongruence, we defined a dummy variable and assign "0" to congruent ad image conditions while "1" to incongruent ad image conditions. We excluded product category in the following analyses since it has no effect on any dependent variables. Next, we examined the dependent variables with a two factor ANOVA model. All relevant mean values are listed in the following table.

TABLE 4
THE RESULTS OF HYPOTHESES TESTING IN STUDY 1

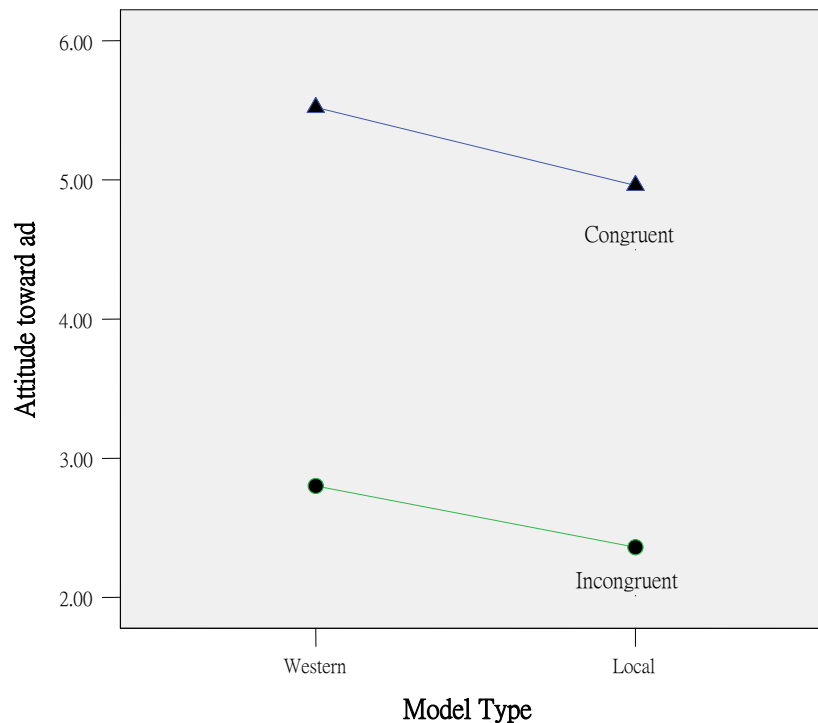
<i>Ad attitude</i>	Congruent ad	Incongruent ad	Main effect
Western Model	5.52	2.8	4.16
Local Model	4.96	2.36	3.66
Main effect	5.24	2.58	
<i>Individual's use of PK</i>			
Western Model	2.44	5.16	3.8
Local Model	2.56	5.00	3.78
Main effect	2.5	5.08	

Testing the effects on ad attitude, there was a significant main effect of ad image incongruence. The congruent ad received a mean value of 5.24, which was significantly greater than the mean value of incongruent ad ($M=2.58$) ($p<.001$). H1a was supported. Also, there was a significant main effect of model type. The ad with

western model received a mean value of 4.16 which was significantly greater than the mean value of ad with local model ($M=3.66$) ($p<.001$). There was no significant interaction effect ($F=.201$, $p=.655$). The results see figure 4.

FIGURE 4

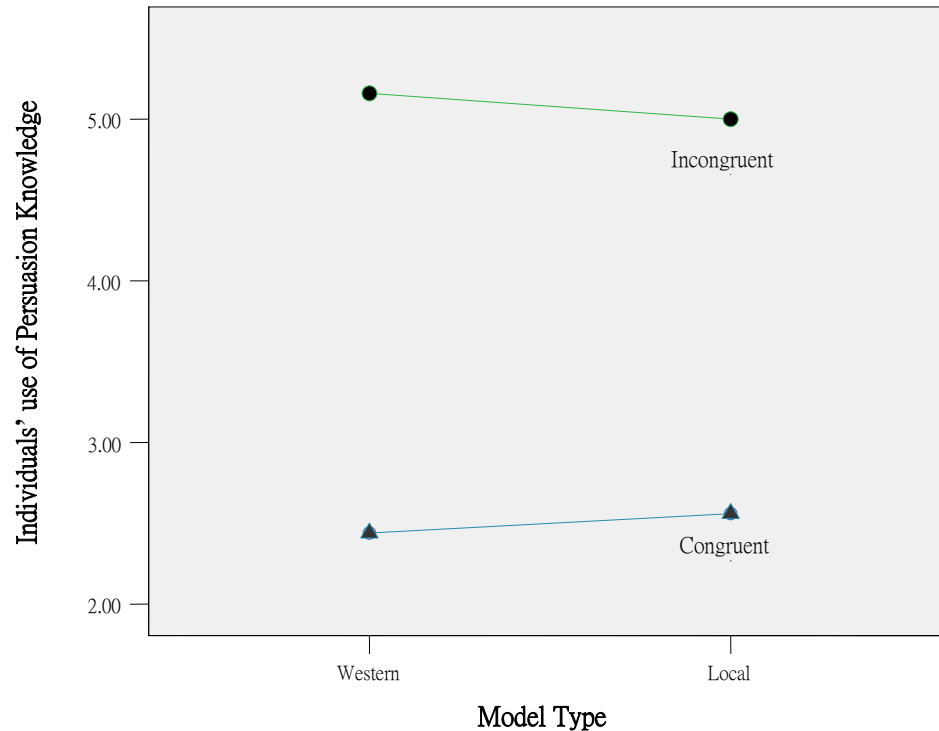
THE EFFECT OF AD IMAGE INCONGRUENCE AND MODEL TYPE ON
ATTITUDE TOWARD ADVERTISEMENT



Testing the effects on individual's use of persuasion knowledge, there was a significant main effect of ad image incongruence. The congruent ad received a mean value of 2.5 which was significantly lower than the mean value of incongruent ad ($M=5.08$) ($p<.001$). H1b is supported. However, the effect of model type was not significant on individual's use of persuasion knowledge. The ad with western model received a mean value of 3.8 which was not significantly greater than the mean value of ad with local model ($M=3.78$) ($F=.019$, $p=.892$). Also, there was no significant interaction effect ($F=.910$, $p=.342$). The results see figure 5.

FIGURE 5

THE EFFECT OF AD IMAGE INCONGRUENCE AND MODEL TYPE ON
INDIVIDUAL'S USE OF PERSUASION KNOWLEDGE



It was hypothesized that individual's use of persuasion knowledge has a significant negative effect on their ad attitude (H2a). To test this hypothesis, a linear regression was conducted. Based on the results of regression, H2a was supported ($r = -.845, P < .001$).

In summary, study 1 revealed that ad image incongruence would influence ad attitude and individual's use of persuasion knowledge. Specifically, ad attitude was lower and individual's use of persuasion knowledge was higher for the incongruent ads. Furthermore, there was a significant negative effect of individual's use of persuasion knowledge on ad attitude. Thus, individual's use of persuasion knowledge may account for the influence of ad image incongruence on ad attitude. To further examine this mediating effect, we would measure ad image incongruence and

conduct regression analyses in study 3. Not surprisingly, study 1 also revealed that ad attitude was higher for the ads with western model than the ads with local model. The symbolic meaning of status of western model was proved. In addition, product category had no significant effect on any dependent variables. In following studies, we would use local product category as stimuli for convenience.

5.2 Study 2

5.2.1 Manipulation Checks

As in study 1, the fit of the model and the advertised product was measured to check the experimental conditions of ad image incongruence. A t-test was conducted. As manipulated, there was a significant difference between the congruent ad image condition ($M=5.54$) and the incongruent ad image condition ($M=2.33$) ($p<0.001$). The manipulation of the ad image incongruence of the ads was deemed satisfactory. Also, we compared the likability of each model. As expected, a t-test revealed that there was no significant difference in the likability of model (mean value of western model=4.58, mean value of local model=4.73, $p=.187$).

5.2.2 Hypotheses Testing

It was hypothesized in H1a-b that ad image incongruence had a significant effect on ad attitude and individual's use of persuasion knowledge. In the incongruent conditions, individuals are more likely to use persuasion knowledge. It was also hypothesized in H4 that skepticism toward advertising had a significant effect on ad attitude. Furthermore, a moderating effect of skepticism toward advertising was hypothesized in H5. To test these hypotheses, we examined all of the variables including brand attitude simultaneously through MANOVA. The results are reported in the following table.

TABLE 5
THE EFFECT OF AD IMAGE INCONGRUENCE AND SKEPTICISM
TOWARD AD IN STUDY 2

Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig
Ad Image Incongruence	Aad	856.020	.000
	Abrand	854.909	.239
	Individuals' Use of Persuasion Knowledge	925.788	.000
Skepticism toward advertising	Aad	5.854	.003
	Abrand	1.690	.188
	Individuals' Use of Persuasion Knowledge	19.056	.000
Ad Image Incongruence *	Aad	10.712	.000
	Abrand	.474	.623
Skepticism toward advertising	Individuals' Use of Persuasion Knowledge	9.113	.000

Based on the results, ad image incongruence had a significant effect on ad attitude ($F=856.020$, $P<.001$) and on individual's use of persuasion knowledge ($F=925.788$, $P<.001$). MANOVA analysis also revealed that there was a significant main effect of skepticism toward advertising on ad attitude ($F=5.854$, $P<.01$) and a significant interaction effect of ad image incongruence and skepticism toward advertising on ad attitude ($F=10.712$, $P<.001$) and on individual's use of persuasion knowledge ($F=9.113$, $P<.001$). As in study 1, next we examined the dependent variables with a two factor ANOVA model to further examine the effect of ad image incongruence and skepticism toward advertising. All relevant mean values are listed in Table 6.

Testing the effects on ad attitude, there was a significant effect of ad image incongruence (H1a). The congruent ad received a mean value of 5.4 which was

significantly greater than the mean value of incongruent ad ($M=2.29$) ($p<.001$). H1a was supported.

TABLE 6
THE RESULTS OF HYPOTHESES TESTING IN STUDY 2

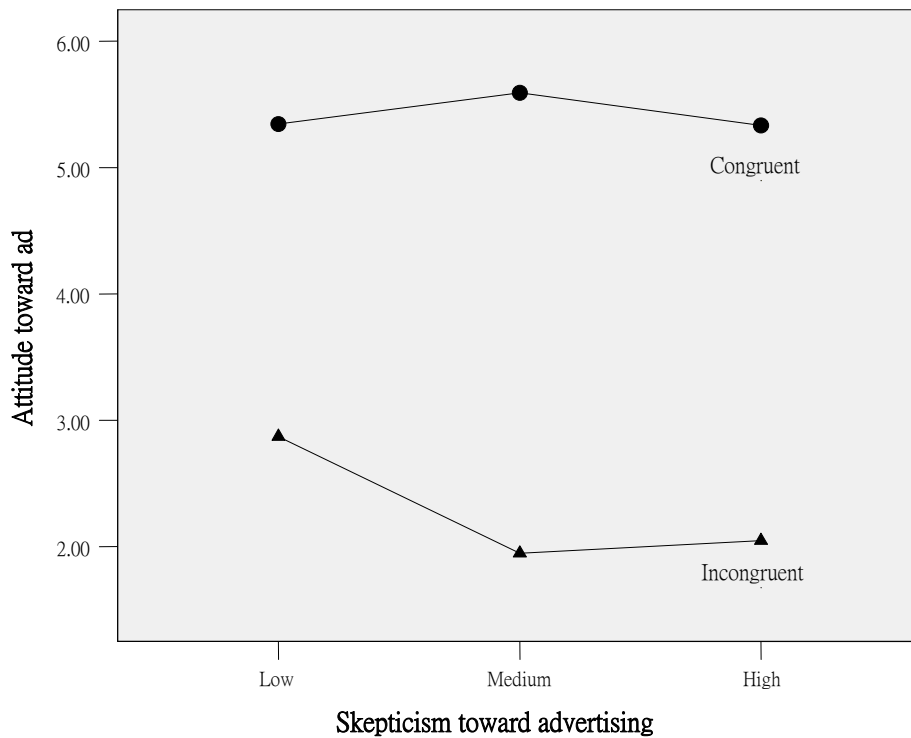
<i>Ad attitude</i>	Congruent ad	Incongruent ad	Main effect
Low Skepticism	5.34	2.87	4.07
Medium Skepticism	5.59	1.95	3.28
High Skepticism	5.33	2.05	4.18
Main effect	5.4	2.29	
<i>Brand attitude</i>			
Low Skepticism	5.59	4.90	5.245
Medium Skepticism	5.50	5.61	5.555
High Skepticism	5.44	4.71	5.075
Main effect	5.50	5.07	
<i>Individual's use of Persuasion Knowledge</i>			
Low Skepticism	2.55	4.81	3.72
Medium Skepticism	2.73	5.82	4.68
High Skepticism	2.74	5.81	3.88
Main effect	2.68	5.47	

Testing the effects on ad attitude, there was also a significant main effect of skepticism toward advertising (H4). The mean value of low skepticism group was 4.07, whereas medium skepticism group was 3.28, high skepticism group was 4.18. The difference among these three groups was significantly ($F=5.854$, $p<.01$).H4 was supported.

Furthermore, there was a significant interaction effect of ad image incongruence and skepticism toward advertising ($F=10.712$, $p<.001$). For the congruent ads, the between groups difference was not significant ($F=1.039$, $p=.358$). For the incongruent ads, the between groups difference was significant ($F=19.729$, $p<.001$). The results see figure 6.

FIGURE 6

THE EFFECT OF AD IMAGE INCONGRUENCE AND SKEPTICISM TOWARD ADVERTISING ON AD ATTITUDE



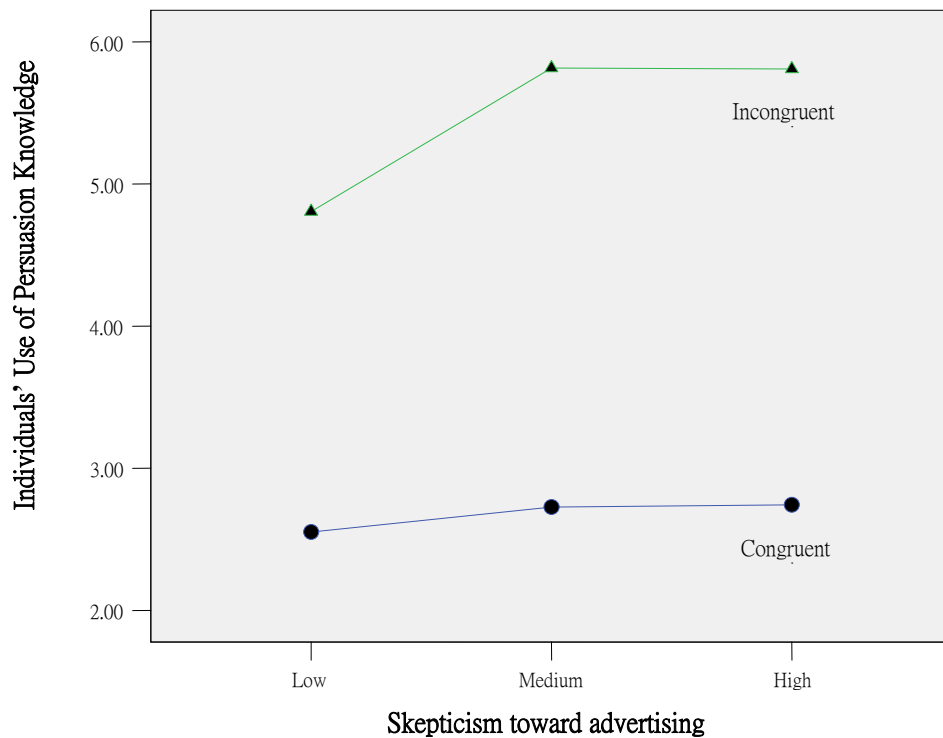
Testing the effects on individual's use of persuasion knowledge, there was a significant effect of ad image incongruence (H1b). The congruent ad received a mean value of 2.68 which was significantly lower than the mean value of incongruent ad ($M=5.47$) ($p<.001$). H1b was supported.

Furthermore, it was hypothesized in H5 that skepticism toward advertising could moderate the effect of ad image incongruence on individual's use of

persuasion knowledge. Testing the effects on individual's use of persuasion knowledge, as expected, there was a significant main effect of skepticism toward advertising ($F=19.065$, $P<.001$). The mean value of low skepticism group was 3.72, whereas medium skepticism group was 4.68, high skepticism group was 3.82. Also, there was a significant interaction effect ($F=9.113$, $p<.001$). For the congruent ads, the between groups difference was not significant ($F=1.703$, $p=.188$). For the incongruent ads, the between groups difference was significant ($F=22.142$, $p<.001$). H5 was supported. The results see figure 7.

FIGURE 7

THE EFFECT OF AD IMAGE INCONGRUENCE AND SKEPTICISM TOWARD ADVERTISING ON INDIVIDUAL'S USE OF PERSUASION KNOWLEDGE



It was hypothesized that individual's use of persuasion knowledge has a significant negative effect on ad attitude (H2a). To test this hypothesis, a linear regression was conducted. Based on the results of regression, H2a was supported ($r=-$

.827, $P < .001$). It was also hypothesized that individual's use of persuasion knowledge has both a direct negative effect on brand attitude and an indirect negative effect on brand attitude that operates through ad attitude (H2b). To test this hypothesis, a linear regression model was constructed. Based on the results of regression, a negative direct impact on brand attitude was supported ($r = -.451$, $t = -5.892$, $P < .001$). Moreover, there is also an indirect negative effect through ad attitude. The model excluding the direct path from individual's use of persuasion knowledge to brand attitude provided lower fit to the data (R square change = $-.038$). The results yielded supports for an indirect negative effect of individual's use of persuasion knowledge on brand attitude through ad attitude. Thus, both predictions of H2b were supported.

In summary, study 2 replicated and extended the results of study 1, providing additional evidence that the relationship between ad image incongruence and individual's use of persuasion knowledge was moderated by skepticism toward advertising. The study also provided evidence that skepticism toward advertising had a significant negative effect on ad attitude. Furthermore, study 2 included brand attitude as another dependent variable and examined the effect on brand attitude. These findings supported and consolidated our conceptual model.

As we expected, the moderating effect of skepticism toward advertising was salient at the ad image incongruent condition. Subjects in medium skeptical group and high skeptical group were more likely to use persuasion knowledge and thus generated a lower ad attitude. However, the high skeptics were thought to be less likely to use persuasion knowledge than the medium skeptics in relevant literatures. Actually, we could find slight differences between these two groups in figure 3 and figure 4, but the differences were not significant. Since level of ad skepticism was

supposed to be fluctuating across people due to different backgrounds, the homogenous students sample may account for the issue. In other words, we did not get extremely low or high skeptics in study 2. Therefore, in the next study, we would take into account the diversity of samples. Specifically, we handed out the questionnaires randomly in different areas of China including both urban areas and new towns. Another objective of the next study is to directly examine the proposed mediating effect by regression.

5.3 Study 3

A survey was conducted to make up the limitations of previous experimental studies. The survey involved a real advertisement in which the ad image is incongruent. We adopted a general public sample rather than student sample. The diversity of the sample ensured the fluctuating of ad skepticism. All of the independent and dependent variables were measured as continuous variables. Regression analyses were used to directly examine the relationships in our conceptual model.

5.3.1 Statistics Results

Reliability statistics for the variables are reported in table 5. Consequently, the average scores for these indices were used for subsequent analyses. The means and standard deviations of all the measures are also listed in table 7.

5.3.2 Testing for Mediating Effect

To test for mediation, a four-step process (Baron and Kenny, 1986) is suggested. The first step is to ensure that the selected mediator has a significant influence on the trial. The second step is to assess the impact of the antecedent predictor on the trial. The third step is to regress the antecedent predictor on the mediator variable. The

fourth step is to assess the influence of mediator with the antecedent predictor on the trail. In this study, we adopted a procedure developed by Sobel (1982, hereafter referred to as the Sobel test) to directly test both the direct effect and indirect effect. The Sobel test is conducted by comparing the strength of the indirect effect of the antecedent variable on the dependent variable.

TABLE 7
STATISTICS RESULTS FOR THE VARIABLES IN STUDY 3

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Mean	Standard Deviations
Ad image incongruence	.88	6	3.3850	1.65999
Individuals' Use of persuasion knowledge	.85	7	3.4875	1.71194
Aad	.91	5	4.6150	1.47632
Abrand	.92	4	4.5125	1.51363
Skepticism toward advertising	.94	9	4.3439	1.49970

5.3.2.1 Mediating Effect of Individual's Use of Persuasion Knowledge

The results of Sobel test are reported in table 8. In this table, Y stands for the trial, Aad. X stands for the antecedent predictor, ad image incongruence. M stands for the mediator, individual's use of persuasion knowledge.

Based on the above results, ad image incongruence(X) had a negative effect on Aad(Y) ($r=-.5145$, $P<.001$). H1a was supported and enhanced.

Also, ad image incongruence(X) had a positive effect on individual's use of persuasion knowledge (M) ($r=.590$, $p<.001$). H1b was supported and enhanced.

The results show that individual's use of persuasion knowledge had a negative effect on Aad($r=-.6632$, $P<.01$), supporting H2a.

TABLE 8

THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF INDIVIDUALS' USE OF PK ON AD
ATTITUDE IN STUDY 3

DIRECT AND TOTAL EFFECTS	Coefficient	Sig(two)
b(YX)	-.5145	.0000
b(MX)	.5900	.0000
b(YM.X)	-.6632	.0014
b(YX.M)	-.1172	.1892

Notes: X stands for ad image incongruence, Y stands for A_{ad}, and M stands for individuals' use of persuasion knowledge.

As predicted in H3, the mediating effect of individual's use of persuasion knowledge was supported. When the mediator was controlled, the independent variable had no effect on the trial ($r = -.1172$, $p > .1$), which suggested a complete mediation. This finding suggested that the direct effect between ad image incongruence and ad attitude is no longer statistically different from zero fixing individual's use of persuasion knowledge.

5.3.2.2 Mediating Effect of A_{ad}

In Hypothesis 2b, we presented that individual's use of persuasion knowledge has a direct negative effect on brand attitude and an indirect negative effect on brand attitude through ad attitude. We also use Sobel test to estimate the effects. The results of the regressions are reported in table 9.

Based on the above results, there was a direct negative effect of individual's use of persuasion knowledge (X) on A_{brand} (Y) ($r = -.4835$, $p < .001$). When A_{ad} was controlled, individual's use of persuasion knowledge still had a significant effect on A_{brand} ($r = -.2039$, $p < .05$), which suggested a partial mediation. Thus, there was an

indirect effect of individual's use of persuasion knowledge on Abrand through Aad ($r = -.4835 + .2039 = -.2796$, $p < .05$). H2b was supported.

TABLE 9
THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF AD ATTITUDE ON BRAND ATTITUDE IN
STUDY 3

DIRECT AND TOTAL EFFECTS	Coeff	Sig(two)
b(YX)	-.4835	.0000
b(MX)	-.6632	.0014
b(YM.X)	.4216	.0000
b(YX.M)	-.2039	.0340

Notes: X stands for individual's use of persuasion knowledge, Y stands for Abrand, and M stands for the mediator Aad.

5.3.3 Testing for Moderating Effect

It was hypothesized that ad skepticism could moderate the effect of ad image incongruence on individual's use of persuasion knowledge. To test the moderating effect, a multiple regression model was applied and the results are reported in table 10.

TABLE 10
THE MODERATING EFFECT OF SKEPTICISM TOWARD AD IN STUDY 3

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
Constant	1.384	.450		3.072	.002
Incongruence	.884	.109	.978	8.108	.000
SKEP	.243	.113	.236	2.147	.033

Incongruence *	-.110	.024	-.754	-4.565	.000
SKEP					

Model: $PK = \text{Constant} + \beta_1 \text{Incongruence} + \beta_2 \text{SKEP} + \beta_3 \text{Incongruence} * \text{SKEP}$

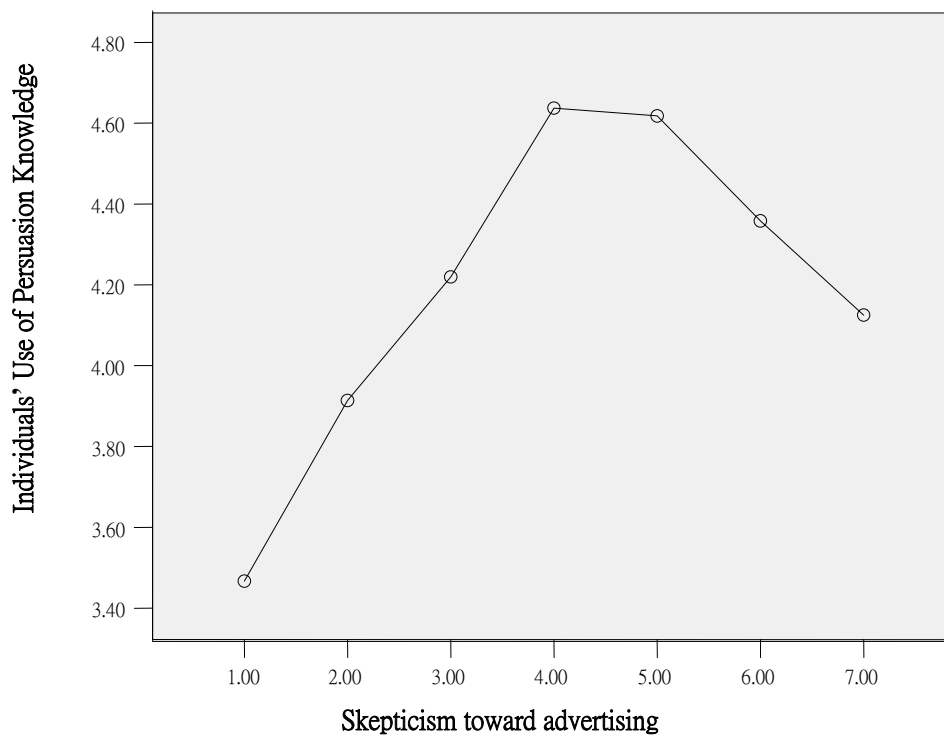
Notes: PK stands for individuals' use of persuasion knowledge, Incongruence stands for ad image incongruence, and SKEP stands for skepticism toward advertising.

Based on the results, β_1 was significant (Beta=.884, $t=8.108$, $p<.001$), β_2 was significant (Beta=.243, $t=2.147$, $p<.05$), and β_3 was significant (Beta=-.110, $t=-4.565$, $p<.001$), which suggested that ad skepticism could moderate the effect of ad image incongruence on individual's use of persuasion knowledge. H5 was supported.

Furthermore, we referred to figure 8 to see the regression plot.

FIGURE 8

THE MODERATING EFFECT OF AD SKEPTICISM IN STUDY 3



As depicted, a moderate level of skepticism yielded the highest level of use of persuasion knowledge. The moderating effect of ad skepticism resembled quadratic curve. Curve estimation was conducted to check the relationship of ad skepticism and individual's use of persuasion knowledge. The linear model was not significant ($F=3.891$, $p=.05$) while the quadratic model was significant ($F=15.793$, $p<.001$) and also the cubic model ($F=15.248$, $P<.001$). Since accurate curve estimation needs massive data, we would not make final judgment on the shape of the curve. At least we proved that the relationship of ad skepticism and individual's use of persuasion knowledge was not linear.

5.3.4 Testing for the effect of Ad Skepticism on Ad attitude

It was hypothesized that ad skepticism has a significant negative effect on ad attitude (H4). To test this hypothesis, a linear regression was conducted. Based on the results of regression, H4 was supported ($r=-.347$, $P<.01$).

In summary, study 3 provided supports for all of the hypotheses. Our conceptual model was further consolidated. In next Chapter, we will make a general conclusion on these studies. Also, the limitations of these studies will be discussed.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Discussion

This chapter summarizes the main results of this research, and discusses several limitations and possible areas for future research.

6.1 Conclusion

The objective of this research was to examine how ad image incongruence affects ad responses. Study 1 demonstrates that ad attitude is lower when ad model type is incongruent with the advertised product category. Meanwhile, individuals are more likely to use persuasion knowledge at the ad image incongruent conditions. In turn, the use of persuasion knowledge negatively affect ad attitude. Study 1 also suggests that local consumers prefer ads with western model then ads with local model. Study 2 broadens the scope of the research to reveal that brand attitude is also affected by individual's use of persuasion knowledge. Moreover, skepticism toward advertising moderates the effect of ad image incongruence on individual's use of persuasion knowledge. Finally, study 3 further examines both the mediating effect of individual's use of persuasion knowledge and the moderating effect of skepticism toward advertising. The results supports that ad image incongruence has a negative effect on ad attitude and on individual's use of persuasion knowledge. Actually, individual's use of persuasion knowledge completely mediates the effect of ad image incongruence on ad attitude. The complete mediation excludes alternative mechanisms such as source credibility to explain the effect of ad image incongruence. The results also support a moderating effect of skepticism toward advertising. Both

highly skeptical consumers and lowly skeptical consumers are less likely to use persuasion knowledge than are medium skeptical consumers.

This thesis makes contributions to the persuasion knowledge model (PKM). The PKM is a general theoretical perspective about how consumers respond to marketers' attempt at persuasion. We have focused on further developing one portion of the model, the use of persuasion knowledge in an international advertising context. Specifically, we apply the persuasion knowledge perspective to investigate consumer responses to ad image incongruence phenomenon.

Our findings indicate that persuasion knowledge takes place when persuasion intention is salient (e.g., when model type is incongruent with the advertised product category). When the persuasion intent is not salient, however, even skeptical consumer are less likely to activate persuasion knowledge. Thus no particular inferences will be generated.

This thesis also contributes to the relevant literature by further exploring the relationship between skepticism toward advertising and use of persuasion knowledge, which then offers implications to measure persuasion knowledge. It provides empirical supports that moderate levels of ad skepticism implies advanced persuasion knowledge. At the ad image incongruent conditions, the medium skeptical consumers make the most use of persuasion knowledge.

Summarizing the results, the title of this thesis asks the question "seeing is believing"? The answer to this would be depends. In our case, as long as the advertised product features with an incongruent model, skeptical consumers activate their persuasion knowledge to infer the ultimate persuasion intent of the advertisement. The effectiveness of persuasion will then be discounted. Also, the inference of persuasion intent will lead to negative ad attitude and brand attitude.

Turning now to a more detailed discussion of the results and the implication for marketers. In the context of our studies, use of persuasion knowledge led to less favorable perceptions of advertisement. This is not meant to suggest, however, that consumers resist to all persuasion. There are situations when consumers will perceive persuasion to be beneficial. For example, when a credence product features an expert, a consumer may perceive the advertisement as informational and creditable even if the consumer infers an underlying motive to persuade.

Our findings indicate that local consumers prefer western model. Using of western model in non-country-specific products could generate a more favorable ad attitude.

6.2 Limitations and suggestions for future studies

The two experimental studies were done in controlled situations, using print advertisements and student sample. Caution should be exercised in generalizing the findings to more natural consumer settings.

First, subjects were only exposed to the ad once in our study. Would the results be the same at multiple exposures? In the real marketplace, consumers are frequently exposed to print ads. The perceived incongruence may decrease when consumers become familiar with the ads. Therefore, it would be interesting to learn how the ad image incongruence is perceived when consumers are exposed to the ad several times.

Second, future research may examine the phenomenon to other kind of information incongruence and subject populations. It is possible that student subjects may be more cognitive and interested in ads and thus more likely to use persuasion knowledge than nonstudent subjects. The comparison between sub-samples seems

meaningful. Although the homogenous sample may be a limitation, refer to academic journals, researchers prefer to use homogenous sample to test hypotheses. Thus, the validity of the experimental studies is ensured.

Third, in study 2, the original ad featured with a celebrity but the mocked one featured with a non-celebrity. There may be a difference in the effect of celebrity and non-celebrity. For example, the use of celebrity may generate a higher believability to the ad claims or a more favorable attitude to the advertised brand (Kamins and Gupta, 2006). Also, in study 1 we found model type had a significant effect on ad attitude. This halo effect should be treated as confounding effect. However, in our research context, we pay more attention to ad image incongruence other than model type. In future studies, we suggest to test the halo effect to see in what degree the model type influence ad attitude.

Last but not the least, in ad attitude researches, involvement is often considered as an influence factor. High involvement products refer to high capital value goods that are purchased only after long and careful consideration, such as a car. Previous studies suggested that in high/low involvement situations, consumers may react differently to same advertising appeal. In our research context, involvement could also have a confounding effect since attention to the advertisement directly affects individuals' use of persuasion knowledge. However, in this study, we only focus on low involvement products. Future studies could take high involvement products into account to check whether involvement could moderate the effect of ad image incongruence on individuals' use of persuasion knowledge.

Appendix 1

Stimulus Advertisements in Study 1

1.1 Local Product features Local Model



1.2 Local Product features Western Model



1.3 Western Product features Western Model



1.4 Western Product features Local Model



Appendix 3

Stimulus Advertisements and Questionnaire in Study 3

Questionnaire

INSTRUCTION:

Please read the following advertisement and complete the questionnaire at your own pace. Answer the questions in sequence. When you finish, please return it back to the surveyor.



A list of statements is included in this section. There are no right or wrong answers to the statements. We are just interested in your opinions.

1. Next to each statement, please fill in the one response that best expresses the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers---- we just want your opinions.

Statements	Defintely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Definitely Agree
We can depend on getting the truth in most advertising.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advertising's aim is to inform the consumer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe advertising is informative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advertising is generally truthful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advertising is a reliable source of information about the quality and performance of products..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advertising is truth well told.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In general, advertising presents a true picture of the product being advertised	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel I've been accurately informed after viewing most advertisement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most advertising provides consumers with essential information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Please indicate you attitude toward the advertisement. Check the box that most closely represents your feelings.

Statements	Defintely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Definitely Agree
I dislike the advertisement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The advertisement is appealing to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The advertisement is attractive to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The advertisement is interesting to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think this advertisement is bad.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Please indicate your attitude toward the advertised brand. Check the box that most closely represents your feelings.

Statements	Definitely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Definitely Agree
The brand in the ads is likely to possess the stated ad claims•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I react favorably to the brand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel positive toward the brand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I dislike the brand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Next to each statement, please fill in the one response that best expresses the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers---- we just want your opinions.

Statements	Definitely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Definitely Agree
The way this ad tries to persuade people seems acceptable to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The advertiser tried to manipulate the audience in ways that I don't like.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am annoyed by this ad because the advertiser seemed to be trying to inappropriately manage or control the consumer audience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This ad was fair in what was said and shown•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I read the ad, I think it's pretty obvious the ad is trying to persuade me to buy the product.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I notice tricks in this ad to promote the product.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This ad is meant to sell product.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement on the following statements using a 7-point scale.

Statements	Definitely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Definitely Agree
The ad image is logically related to the advertised product.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The ad image is relevant to the advertised product.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The ad image is compelling for the advertised product.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is strange to see the ad image in ads of this kind of product.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The ad image is congruent with the advertised product.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, the match between the ad image and the advertised product is good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

THANK YOUR EVRY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY!
YOUR TIME AND OPINIONS ARE APPRECIATED.

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