A Cross-National Comparison of the Use of Sex in Chinese and British Television Advertising

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by
Ye Hao

Department of Media and Communication
University of Leicester

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Chapter One

Introduction

The use of words and images which explicitly or implicitly convey sexual meanings in selling messages has been commonplace in the recent history of the advertising industry. Many brands, such as Calvin Klein, Guess, and Victoria’s Secret, have set a high bar for provocative nudity and sexual fire (Reichert, 2003). The manner in which sex appeals are presented in television advertising has received some attention (Downs & Harrison, 1985; Lovdal, 1989; Lin, 1998). This thesis will investigate the use of sexual themes in television advertising in Britain and China. Sexual themes have featured as an important aspect of advertising since the earliest days of media advertising in the 19th century (Reichert, 2003). These themes have continued to be used and their use in advertising has expanded and diversified. Whilst sexual themes in television advertising have been studied in Britain previously, there is little research of this kind in China. The use of sexual themes in Chinese advertising has risen along with economic growth; however, no systematic research has yet been carried out into the ways these themes are deployed in advertising in China. This thesis attempts to gain a comprehensive understanding of what ‘sex’ in advertising is, how it is represented in Chinese advertising, and how it works to affect audiences or even the whole Chinese society.
This thesis also contributes to an understanding of the differences and similarities in how sex appeals are presented in China and Britain.

Given the nature of this study, this chapter will first review the relevant background literature relating to the use of sex in advertising. The history of using sexual appeals in adverts will also be outlined.

Secondly, the content of advertising varies considerably across cultures (Frith & Mueller, 2003). Thus the portrayal of sexuality in television advertising is different in different cultures. One of the goals of this study is to fill the existing gap in Chinese research into sex in advertising and to draw a complete picture of sexual representations in advertising in Chinese society, and how this works to affect audiences. It will need to take into account the localized factors, such as cultural values, political/economic systems and advertising elements, which might affect sexuality in advertising content (Nelson & Paek, 2007). This study needs to examine the local factors of Chinese society and to examine the way sexual themes have featured in advertising. Compared to British society, the cultural values and media system in Chinese society are more complicated; this chapter will, therefore, also explain the cultural values, and the political and economic systems in Chinese society.

Thirdly, because this study contributes to the understanding of how sexual themes are presented differently in China and Britain, the importance and nature of television as an advertising medium will be discussed and the nature of television advertising in China and Britain will also be explored in this chapter.

Fourthly, the regulators and advertising codes in China and Britain which would provide essential context for this study will be introduced in this chapter.

Finally, the goals and various audiences of this study will be summarized.
Sex in Advertising

Modern advertising developed with the growth of mass production industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Elgar, 2001). It has become a necessary form of communication for manufacturers and advertisers over the last few decades. Nowadays, it is a highly sophisticated industry and has become the primary source of income for most media organizations in both the UK (Wilmshurst & Mackay, 1999) and China (Wang, 2008). Advertising has also been seen as one of the most efficient ways for manufactures and service providers to increase consumption of their products and services (Jefkins, 2000).

Therefore, manufacturers and service providers around the world spend billions of dollars on advertising every year. According to data from WARC (World Advertising Research Centre) (2009), in 2008 the United States accounted for nearly half of all global advertising expenditure, at about US$ 158,547 million, and this was a slight fall of 6.3% compared to 2007 (see table 1.1). The data shows that in 2008 the Chinese expenditure on advertising reached US$ 57,007 million, with a significant increase of 27.4% compared to the previous year. This growth rate was over three times faster than the global advertising industry average. The UK experienced a significant decrease of 10% from 2007 to 2008, and is ranked fifth on the list with US $ 26,802 million.

<p>| Table 1.1 Top 10 Countries by Ad Expenditure in 2008 |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2008 US$m</th>
<th>2007 US$m</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>158,547</td>
<td>169,178</td>
<td>-6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>57,077</td>
<td>44,805</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>41,902</td>
<td>38,529</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>28,569</td>
<td>26,759</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>26,802</td>
<td>29,911</td>
<td>-10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>17,062</td>
<td>16,031</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>13,501</td>
<td>12,844</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>11,836</td>
<td>11,270</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>11,440</td>
<td>9,509</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>11,254</td>
<td>10,664</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
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Note: For comparative purposes, data is shown in US$. Exchange rate fluctuations can distort annual growth. Also see local currency tables. Source: © WARC 2009
Advertising serves as a driving force behind the media in many countries (O’Guinn et al., 2008). These advertisements aim to capture the attention of viewers, raise awareness of available products, build brand loyalty, and, ultimately, encourage product purchase. One of the most popular features advertisers use to achieve these goals is to include sexual content in their advertisements (Reichert, 2003). Advertisers use nudity, romantic themes or suggestiveness to grab consumers’ attention to specific advertisements and the products and services they are promoting. The use of such explicit or implied sexually-oriented advertisements has been widespread in recent decades (Gunter, 2002). Numerous researchers have documented the pervasiveness of sexual content across the media (e.g., Cope & Kunkel, 2002; Greenberg et al., 1986; Kunkel et al., 1996; Reichert & Lambiase, 2003).

There is little doubt that sex can always sell, especially when it relates to brand recall and creating a positive brand image (Alexander & Judd, 1978; Severn & Belch, 1990), and marketers use more sex in advertising for a greater range of products. As well as products traditionally associated with sex appeal, such as designer clothing accessories and alcohol, appearing to feature sexual imagery that is increasing explicit; many advertisers also use sex appeal to sell products not traditionally linked to sex (Reichert, 2003).

Meanwhile, the use of highly sexual images in advertising is an increasingly controversial issue, particularly in the context of the social culture and psychological effects. Public debates about sex in advertising have become increasingly vociferous in recent years. Concerns about sex in advertising have centred on a number of issues relating to offences to public taste and impacts on young people (Reichert & Lambiase, 2003). For example, the clothing company Calvin Klein has long been criticized for running campaigns with explicit
sexual images, and had to publicly apologize after outrage caused by a campaign that was alleged to use images of child pornography (Irvine, 2000). Another major concern about the use of sex in advertising is the observation that advertisements routinely present women as sexual objects (Krassas et al., 2001; Gunter, 2002; Peter & Valkenburg, 2007). Women in advertising are presented as decorations without personalities – often with sexual symbolism (Courtney & Whipple, 1983).

**History of sex in Advertising**

The use of sex in advertising has a long history. American marketers and advertisers have employed sex to sell their brands since the very early days of advertising (Trachtenberg, 1986). This chapter will explore how sex has been used in advertising since the 1880s and catalogue some of the most sexual and controversial advertising campaigns seen in this period.

**Before 1910s**

At the end of the 19th century, western countries, especially United States, experienced massive development. The expansion of their economies provided the essential ingredients for the development of modern advertising.

In the 1880s, an image of a naked woman was used in tobacco advertising. W. Duke and Sons & Company inserted trading cards into cigarette packs which depicted a provocative model. In the image, the woman was shown as a frontal nude in a classical standing pose and rising from the waves (see Figure 1.1). This nude image attracted consumer attention, primarily from males, and Duke became the leading cigarette brand by 1890 (Porter, 1971). Tobacco was not the only product to employ sexual images. Advertising for underwear also began to use sexy models during this early stage. Many corsets
advertisements employed images of women who were half-naked and only wearing underwear. R&G Corset Company of New York was one of the first companies to use female models clad in their intimate wear to advertise corsets; they ran a half-page advertising featuring an image of a female model only wearing a corset (see Figure 1.2). The advertising of Birdsey, Somers & Co. displayed an image of a woman standing between two curtains wearing a corset. The advertising emphasized the model’s breasts and waist and the copy said ‘create handsome forms’.

As well as products that could draw a link with sexual content and sexy models, some products that seem completely unrelated with sexual content employed sexual appeals in advertising as well. For example, advertisements for a coal company used sexual intimacy to sell its products. S.J. Patterson’s coal advertising in the late 1990s featured images of a romantic couple cuddled up to each other in the warmth of a coal fire (see figure 1.3).

From 1880 to 1910, the expansion and modernization of advertising further encouraged sexual themes in advertising. In the early stages of sex in advertising, nude female images were the major theme of sexual content in advertising. The women in these advertisements were normally half-naked or only wearing underwear.
Figure 1.1  This 1871 tobacco label. Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-3215

Figure 1.2  R & G Corset ads. Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, Archives Centre, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, 0206062
1920s-1940s

The beginning of the 20th century was a time of continued economic growth and technological advances in western countries. From the 1920s to the 1940s, newspapers continued to play the dominant role in mass communication, whereas radio and television emerged and converged rapidly. During the 1940s, a media revolution took place in many western countries driven by the introduction of television. Obviously, the size of the population watching television created a new stage for advertising. The development of this new media format drove advertising to a new stage, but sexual content was still more commonly presented in print advertising during that time.

In 1920, Woodbury’s Facial Soap released an advertisement entitled ‘A skin you love to touch’ (see figure 1.4). The advertisement featured romantic couples and emphasized
intimacy; this campaign successfully reversed the company’s sales decline in 1920s. This advertisement is remarkable because it exemplified a sensual appeal that is still employed in contemporary advertising (Reichert, 2003b). After the big success of this advertisement, Woodbury’s Facial Soap pushed the nudity boundary in the 1930s with the image of a fully nude woman.

Encouraged by the success of Woodbury’s Facial Soap, many cosmetic advertisements began to use a romantic theme to promote their products. An advertisement for Jergens in 1922 featured a romantic couple in a tender pose with the intriguing headline, ‘Hands can be so thrilling!’ At the beginning of the 1930s, Jergens created a radio commercial promoting its products with slogan ‘With lotions of love…’

During the 1930s and 1940s, sexually-oriented commercials continued the themes of romance and sexual intimacy. In 1932, an image of a couple kissing mouth-to-mouth depicted in an advertisement for Halitosis Listerine. In 1937 the General Cigar Company advertised a cigar with images of passionate kissing between two models.

Besides nudity, romance and sexual intimacy became another major theme of sexual content in advertising from the 1920s to 1940s. The advertising in this time contained much kissing and canoodling. Female consumers were attracted by the romance conveyed by advertising; while male customers were captivated by images that depicted women as busty, beautiful, and provocative (Reichert, 2003b).
1950s - 1970s

As can be seen, along with the widespread diffusion of television, the power of television advertising to general public has been recognized. In the United States, in 1950, television advertising revenues reached $100 million; soon thereafter, television revenues overtook radio (Geisst, 2006). Meanwhile, the sexual revolution swept Europe and America, also stimulating the growth of sexually-oriented advertising. There were also big changes in sexual attitudes and practice, particularly among the young. Traditional values related to sexuality were shifted dramatically and sex became more socially acceptable (Reichert, 2003).
Sexual liberalization brought an unprecedented upsurge in sexual consumption. Many men’s magazines with references to sexuality, such as ‘Playboy’ and ‘Penthouse’, became best-sellers instantly (Reichert, 2003b). In the context of the sexual revolution, sexually-oriented advertising experienced massive growth in western countries and nude pictures and highly provocative imagery became ever more common over time. Many brands in the 1960s, such as Noxzema, De Beers, Maidenform, and Miss Clairol, used romance and sexual titillation to sell products. Because of the feminist movement in 1960s, the sexual stereotype that men normally initiate and dominate sexual activities was challenged. In 1966, in Noxzema’s television advertising, a female model took the initiative and asked men to ‘Take it off. Take it all off.’ Commercials featuring double entendres, such as this one, also started to appear on network television in the 1960s. In the 1970s, sexually-themed television advertising became even more common. Due to the impact of feminist movement, women in advertising no longer sought romance and favour from men. In 1973, advertising for the Charlie fragrance featured an attractive, independent woman who needed no one else in her life. The new values seemed to prevail in the sexual advertising.

Moreover, in the 1960s, the advertising industry in western world experienced a creative revolution which emphasized art, creativity and simplified the expression of ideas. Instead of featuring semi-clad women and sexual intimacy, sexual content in advertising started to seek various other representations. When the imagery of pregnant man entered the advertising arena in 1971 in London, it nudged audiences’ preconceptions sideways. The poster stood out among those heralding a new era of thought-provoking advertising. It eschewed the blatant battering ram approach, and opened the field for more subtle and
sophisticated representations of sex. Since then, although barefaced sex objects still appear commonly in advertising, sex in advertising has become multi-represented; it now goes beyond the skin-deep portrayal of sexy women.

**80s - Present Day**

Advertising in last three decades has had broader acceptance and looser standards (Reichert, 2003c). Currently, the use of increasingly explicit sexual imagery in advertising, especially in print advertising, has become almost commonplace (Soley & Reid 1988). The quantity and level of sexual content both increased dramatically. The portrayal of sex has also become more diverse and sex started to be combined with many other elements to grab people’s attention (Reichert, 2003b).

Nowhere was this more evident than in jeans advertising in the 1980s and 1990s. Advertising for Request, Diesel, Calvin Klein, Jordache and Guess all took sexual themes in advertising to a new level, using ever-increasingly sexual imagery to steal market share from each other, and using sex to sell to teens also became a common commercial strategy (Reichert, 2003b). In a 1995 commercial for Calvin Klein Jeans, images of pubescent models in provocative poses caused controversy and criticism that it had crossed the line between fashion and pornography (Reichert, 2003b).

After the 1970s’ battle of the sexes, a spirited new sensibility in male-female relationships impacted the gender roles portrayed in advertising. Feminist authors such as Sommers (1994) and Wolf (1994) pointed out that women's sexual liberation had led many women to view men as sex objects. The emergence of ‘beefcake’ advertisements, with sexy male models, challenged the traditional gender stereotypes in advertising. Women started
to be portrayed as independent professionals and men began to be featured as sex objects in advertising. An innovative underwear manufacturer, Jockey International, created a remarkable campaign for its men’s briefs in 1976. The advertising was noteworthy because it featured a baseball player, the Baltimore Orioles’ pitcher Jim Palmer, and eight other athletes clad in their briefs; prior to this, beefcake images of men in their underwear were rare in mainstream advertising. In the 1980s, Jockey underwear created a series of commercials which built Palmer into the first male underwear sex symbol. Jockey’s success in the early 1980s opened the door for other brands. In 1981, Calvin Klein’s men’s underwear advertising shows an underwear-clad male model, representing a typical example of men as sex objects in advertising.

Since the 1980s, advertising featuring bare-chested, and sometimes even naked male models, has became more and more common (Reichert, 2003b). In Guess Jeans’ 1999 advertising, the images of three attractively clad young male models contributed to a brand image that was erotic, sexy, and glamorous. In 2007, sport star David Beckham showed his barely-clothed body in a series of Armani adverts. In recent years, homosexuality and other provocative sexual elements have emerged in advertising in order to grab audiences’ attention. Many brands, such as Calvin Klein, Guess, and Victoria’s Secret, have featured simulative images that were designed attract concern from public (Reichert, 2003b). Increasing tolerance from the audience and reduced censorship have contributed to the growth of those provocative themes in advertising. In the 1990s, Gucci’s men’s underwear advertising had homosexuality as the theme of its commercial.

In 2003, in London, a print advertisement for designer shoe brand Wannabe by Patrick Cox showed two men, wearing only jockstraps, who appeared to be engaged in the
act of buggery while a woman stood close by (see figure 1.5); this advertisement was banned by the advertising watchdog ASA (Advertising Standards Authority) after a couple of weeks (Billings, 2003). Another example is a German household appliance company used advertising that implied fetish and sadism and masochism to sell vacuums in 2008. The advertising contained imagery of women in fishnets and men tied up. A recent Dolce & Gabbana advertisement published by *Esquire* magazine even depicted a rape scene (Roseanne, 2004). The image featured a man holding a woman down as four other men wait their turn.

Besides the increasing level of sexual content, the methods of portrayal of sexual content in advertising have varied over time. Sexual appeals are now portrayed more creatively in advertising. For example, in 2007, The Pepperidge Farm Company produced a cookie advertisement featuring a cookie ‘man’ and a chocolate ‘woman’ locked in an intimate embrace (see figure 1.6).

Nowadays, advertising undoubtedly embraces wider sexual content and the representation of sex in advertising is more complex and sophisticated (Reichert, 2003). Advertising is more sexually explicit and overt and the amount of sexual content has increased dramatically over the years. Meanwhile, the harshest longstanding criticisms of commercials target their representations of sexuality. More attention should be paid to the representations of sex in advertising and what boundaries need to be drawn.
Figure 1.5  Ad for designer shoe brand Wannabe by Patrick Cox. This advertisement was banned by the advertising watchdog ASA.

Figure 1.6  Ad for Pepperidge Farm Company’s Cookie
The People’s Republic of China

Because localized factors, such as cultural values, political/economic systems and advertising elements, might affect sexuality in advertising (Nelson & Paek, 2007), this section will explore the political/economic system and cultural values in Chinese society. In addition the media system in China will also be explained.

China is the largest country in East Asia and the largest developing country in the world. It occupies about 960 million square kilometres and has a population of over 1.3 billion, roughly one-fifth of the world’s total population. It is the most populous country in the world. The political system of People’s Republic of China (PRC) is one of single-party domination. The CPC (Communist Party of China) has led the PRC since the state’s foundation in 1949. The term ‘Mainland China’ is often used to define the areas under socialist policies, usually excluding its two special administrative regions: Hong Kong and Macau.

Economy

When the PRC was established, China was a government-planned economy. This continued until 1979, when Deng Xiaoping initiated China’s market-oriented reforms. Chinese leadership started to reform the economy from a Soviet-style planned economy to a more market-driven economy. The reforms boosted China’s economy and the broader liberalization of the secondary and tertiary sectors in the mid-1980s caused the devolution of decision-making power from the supervising industrial bureaux (Dorn et al., 1990).

From 1985 to 1993, the average annual growth rate of Chinese GDP was 9.4%. The biggest contributors to this GDP growth were the industrial sectors, whose annual growth reached 29% (Woo, 1998). Chinese economic development has been among the fastest in
the world ever since the 1980s. In 2007, China’s GDP reached RMB 24.66 trillion, approximately US$ 3.49 trillion (Chen, 2009).

Due to its large population and growing economy, China now plays a key role in the international trade market and the world has recognized China’s dynamic and rapidly-growing economy. China has the world’s fourth largest economy and second largest purchasing power parity. China is also a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and is involved in Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). On 11 December 2001, China became the 143rd member of World Trade Organization (WTO). Amidst the trend of globalization, China entered to a new stage of opening up.

Culture

For centuries, Confucianism guided Chinese society as the state religion. This ideology focuses on human morality and good deeds and was originally developed from the writings of the early Chinese philosopher Confucius. It became the state religion of many East Asian countries because of governmental promotion (Legge, 2004). Nowadays, Confucianism still remains greatly valued in China.

Conservatism is another main ideology that has been present in Chinese society for a long time. As a political philosophy, conservatism is difficult to define. Scruton (2002:4) defined conservatism as the ‘maintenance of the social ecology’ and ‘the politics of delay, the purpose of which is to maintain in being, for as long as possible, the life and health of a social organism’; and Kirk (2001:474) considered conservatism ‘the negation of ideology’. Conservatism is a term used to describe political philosophies that prefer tradition and gentle change, where tradition refers to religion, culture and customs. Conservatism in Chinese society emphasizes conservatism in traditional culture respects. It focuses on
propagating traditional ethos and culture and respecting authority and order. It also criticizes modernity and opposes radical reform (Dong, 2001).

The traditional values of Chinese society were mainly derived from Confucianism and Conservatism that both highlight the order and worship authority. It advocates strict ranks within family and society structures and the obedience to the state. Sexism is also an important aspect of traditional Chinese morals and culture values. In the Confucian ideology, women have a lower position than men and should be guided by men. This ideology claims that a woman should obey her father before she gets married, after she gets married she should submit to her husband, and when her husband dies she should follow her son.

After the PRC was established, some traditional values changed; especially during the Cultural Revolution, which was a large political movement which swept the country in 1969 and dealt a great blow to Chinese traditional culture. Since the Cultural Revolution ended, the Chinese government has been rebuilding its traditional culture because it has been seen as a vital part of China’s national identity.

In addition to Confucianism and Conservatism, other religions, such as Taoism and Buddhism, also impact Chinese society to some extent. Nowadays, along with the civilization of Chinese society, some traditional aspects of Chinese culture, such as its rural land tenure, extreme sexism, Confucian education and strict rank system have been largely changed. However, traditional culture values play the integral part in affecting Chinese society in every aspect.

As mentioned previously, the content of advertising, as well as representation of sexual themes, were shaped by the cultural values of the society, and these shared beliefs and attitudes have a big impact on people’s reaction to sex in advertising. Fam and Waller (2003) claimed that differences in value and attitude systems across various cultures are
associated with the major differences in consumers’ behaviours and attitudes. The dominant attitudes found in Asian culture shape ‘consumers’ motivations, lifestyles, and product choices’ (Lowe & Corkindale, 1998:254). These cultural values influence the audience’s attitude to sexual content in advertising and could determine whether the advertisements might be defined as controversial or cause offence to audiences (Fam & Waller, 2003).

**Chinese Media Industries**

Over the past 50 years, the Chinese media industries have experienced tremendous development. According to a marketing research report launched by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), in 2002 the Chinese media industries had 2,119 newspapers, 570 presses, 9,074 magazines, 282 radio stations, 314 television stations, 320 multimedia enterprises, 121 electronic presses and about 668,900 websites (SARFT, 2003). Amidst the economic reform and the influence of the WTO membership, the country’s media industries are struggling to reflect and keep pace with the changes sweeping the whole country.

**Historical Trajectory**

Before 1979, the media industries in Mainland China were controlled by a centrally-planned economy. The Chinese government took responsibility for all the expenses of the media industries. Media sectors did not have any right to arrange their finances and all of the income and expense of operations were planned by government. In 1979, China started an economic reorganization in order to reform itself from a centrally-planned economy to a more market-oriented economy. The media industries in Mainland China were involved in this reform and began a general adoption of market principles. After 1990, facing the
challenge of WTO membership, Chinese media industries accelerated the speed of reorganization. Media industries in Mainland China generally converted into capitalized operations; this is exemplified by Oriental Pearl Ltd., owner of a Shanghai television station, which came to market in 1994. However, it was not until the end of the 1990s that a second media company, Hunan Broadcasting Enterprises, entered the market. The time gap reflects the difficulties in capitalization of Chinese media industries.

In 2000, the first state-owned provincial broadcasting group, Hunan Broadcasting Group, was established in China. Since then, 14 provincial broadcasting groups have been set up. These provincial broadcasting groups are responsible for television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services in the whole province.

**Current Tendency**

Due to the capitalization of Chinese media industries and the aftershocks of joining the WTO, the Chinese media industries have seen some new trends in recent years. First, foreign media groups have increasingly played a role in Chinese media sectors. Although China did not open media industries to international market completely after entrance to the WTO, foreign media companies are becoming incrementally influential in the Chinese media sectors. In 2001, the world’s largest media company, AOL Time Warner Inc., broadcast a Mandarin-language cable channel to southern China (Kalathil, 2002); this was the first time an American media corporation was able to enter the Chinese media industry, which has always been identified as a bureaucratic propaganda apparatus and subject to special ideological considerations (Landler, 2001). Since then, more and more foreign companies have targeted the Chinese media market. Later in the same year, Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation broadcast an entertainment cable channel in Guandong Province, and meanwhile, the Phoenix satellite television channel which is owned in the majority by the
Murdoch group was also successfully approved by the Chinese government to broadcast programmes in China (Kalathil, 2002).

The second new trend to be seen is that Chinese domestic enterprises are increasingly showing their interest in investing in media. After 1990, private media enterprises started to appear on the Chinese media stage. In particular, the emergence of Enlight Media Company in 1998 has been seen as a historical milestone in the Chinese private media industry. In recent years, the government has generally been opening some areas of media investment to domestic enterprises. At the end of 2003, SARFT, which is China’s media regulation and supervising organisation, published ‘The announcement of advance in the development of communications industries’. This pointed out that the Chinese media sectors should be based on the market requirements in order to advance the economic reforms and capitalization (SARFT, 2003). Under the preconditions of government retaining the right of final approval and existing state broadcasting channels not being sold, it allowed private media companies to be set up to show programmes on traffic, the economy, gymnastics and entertainment. In August 2003, SARFT agreed to grant television production licenses to eight privately owned Chinese media companies. This great change in the government’s policy boosted the expansion of Chinese private media enterprises.

Nowadays, as the one of the largest television programme producers and distributors, Enlight Media Company turns out four hours of programmes every day, which will be broadcast on 600 television channels. Therefore, although most media sectors in China are still state owned and the stage offered by the government still has lots of restrictions, private media enterprises have been actively expanding in recent years.
A third trend is that the traditional mainstream media are being threatened by new media outlets, especially the Internet. Due to the rapid rise of new digital media, such as the Internet, mobile phones, digital television and cable television, China’s traditional mainstream media industries, such as newspapers, magazines and television broadcasting, are facing increasing challenges.

A recent survey conducted by BBDO, a worldwide communication company, revealed that the dominant role of traditional media is losing ground. The findings showed that people nowadays would prefer to live without television than without mobile phones or the Internet. In all, 3,000 consumers from 15 countries answered the question of what they think is the most desirable communication equipment; 45% of consumers chose computers, 31% people chose mobile phones, and only 12% went for television. For Chinese consumers, these proportions were 61%, 30%, and 4% respectively (Wang, 2008). This means that the Internet as a new media outlet has been largely accepted by Chinese consumers.

It is also worth pointing out that the younger generation has become increasingly reliant on new media outlets, while the audience for traditional media tends to be older. An investigation conducted by the People’s University of China in the late 1990s showed that the influence of the Internet on newspaper readers was only about 2%, which could almost be ignored. In addition, in 2004, a survey in Beijing showed that only one third of the people living in Beijing read newspapers. Of the group under the age of 35, 11% of people use the Internet to obtain information instead of newspapers. Also, the average age of readers of general newspaper in Beijing is 41, so the trend of newspaper readers aging is obvious (Wang, 2008).
All of above mentioned statistics indicate that new media outlets have been largely shaping the Chinese people’s, and especially younger people’s, media consumption behaviours; however, this does not mean that the traditional media in China are out of date. In fact, a majority of Chinese still rely on traditional media, such as newspapers and television, to get information. Data obtained from the China National Readership Survey in 2000 showed that television achieved a penetration rate of almost 100% in the 30 cities polled. Another survey, conducted by China Market and Media Research in October 2000, examined media consumption in 20 cities in Mainland China, and found that over 80% of people still rely on traditional media to obtain information (Wang, 2008).

In summary, there are three kinds of interplay in the Chinese media market nowadays: the first is the interplay between the external power from foreign media groups and domestic media enterprises; the second is between the state-owned media sectors and private media companies; and the third is between traditional mainstream media and new media outlets. Due to the increasing liberation of economic environment and government policies, Chinese traditional media still plays a crucial role in the Chinese media industry; however, its dominant position is being threatened by the unprecedented expansion of foreign media groups, domestic private media companies and new media outlets.

**Chinese Television Industries**

Television broadcasting was introduced in Mainland China in the end of 1950s. On 1 May 1958 Beijing television station broadcasted first television programmes in Chinese history, and, in September of the same year, the Shanghai television station was established. At the beginning, television broadcasting was only available in a limited number of large Chinese cities. In 1983, there were only 52 television stations in China, while by 1991 the number had reached 543, approximately 10 times more (Fang, 2000).
The Chinese television industry has witnessed rapid development. Since the middle of 1980s, satellite television has become available to television viewers in Mainland China. Because some remote mountain areas could not receive television signals, five provincial television stations were allowed to broadcast programmes via satellite. On 1 October 1999, digital television successfully passed the broadcasting test and over the last 10 years, the digital television take-up in China has been rising.

According to statistics published by SAFRT, in 2002, China’s television coverage had reached 94% of the population. There are 1,047 channels available in Mainland China. This huge television market is shared by one national central television station and 31 provincial television stations, as well as a few international media groups and domestic enterprises (SARFT, 2003).

Four-Level System

Although private domestic media corporations and international media groups are allowed to provide programming, most television stations in China are state-owned. These television stations follow a four-level system. All television networks in China need comply with State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT).

China’s television broadcast system today comprises national-level, provincial-level, local (city)-level and county-level stations. In 1983, at the 11th national broadcasting operation meeting, due to advances in the coverage of china’s television network, the Chinese government established the principle of ‘developing four-level television stations’. Since then, the Chinese television market pie has been shared primarily among China central television (CCTV), provincial-level television, city-level stations and local stations. These four levels television stations form a pyramidal structure.
Table 1.2 The Construction of Chinese Television Industries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCTV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City-level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County-level</td>
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</table>

The Importance of Television as an Advertising Medium

This study is designed to investigate how sexual themes are represented differently in Chinese and British television adverts. The importance and the nature of advertising on television need to be discussed. It particularly needs to examine the nature of television advertising in Britain and China to determine the way sexual themes have featured in advertising in both countries. The importance of television as an advertising medium and the nature and background of television advertising in China and Britain will therefore be discussed in this section.

Television has become the main source of news and entertainments for the vast majority of people in all social classes. Its importance is reflected in the increasing number of television sets worldwide. According to a report published by Ofcom (Office of Communication) in 2009, 97% of households in Britain own at least one television set (Ofcom, 2009). In 2006, a report from CVSC-TNS Research (CTR), the largest marketing and media research company in China, claimed there were 306 million households owning at least one television set, and the total population of television viewers in China was 10.7 million. The coverage rate of television was 85.88% (Wang, 2008).
The widespread popularity that television enjoys around the world makes television channels attractive to advertisers and media planners, and helps to increase their advertising revenues. From the advertisers’ standpoint, television has become the ideal medium to reach a large number of consumers in different parts of the world.

The advantage of offering both sound and pictures makes television an increasingly attractive medium that can make the viewers feel as if they are part of the events or the programmes appearing on the screen. Unlike other media outlets, television possesses a multitude of strengths and benefits that set it apart as the most persuasive communication vehicle available. Due to the long history of message delivery and communication efficacy, television has been commonly chosen to achieve an advertiser’s communication objective and contribute to the achievement of associated business, marketing and sale goals.

The above mentioned characteristics make television an important advertising medium, in spite of the fact producing and purchasing time for a television advert is considered to be the most expensive when compared to other mass media. Today, advertisers around the world allocate huge amounts of their advertising budgets to television advertising.

Moreover, the advantage of offering motion picture and sound makes television a perfect medium for sexual appeals that can effectively arouse a customer’s sexual interests and grab their attention. The widespread popularity of television advertising has led to sexual content contained in it arousing widespread public concern and debates.

Background for Chinese Television Advertising Industries

At the end of the 1970s, television advertising began appearing on screen in China. The first television commercial was broadcast by Shanghai Television Station at 5pm on 29 of January 1979; it advertised alcohol and lasted for one and half minutes. The Western press
described this advertisement as a ‘signal of China’s openness’ (Wang, 2000). On 15 March 1979, Shanghai Television Station showed its first foreign television commercial, for Swiss Rado watches. In conservative Chinese society, this foreign commercial was criticised as a ‘capitalist outcome’ by some objectors (Wang, 2000). After that, other television stations in China including China Central Television (CCTV) gradually opened to the advertising market.

During the 1980s, driven by a rapidly growing economy, Chinese television advertising witnessed major growth. The ‘Creative’ has been identified by Chinese advertisers as an important element for advertising, and television advertising began to emphasize the market and audience response (Cheng, 2009).

In last two decades, the representation of Chinese advertising has varied. The Chinese television industry is more mature than before and the revenue from television advertising has increased significantly. In 1991, television advertising expenditure exceeded RMB 10 billion and for the first time was greater than the spending on newspaper advertising (Wang, 2000). In 2009, the annual expenditure of television advertising in China reached RMB 657.82 billion, an increase of 10.94% compared to the previous year (SARFT, 2010).

Advertising Periods on Chinese Television

In 2004 the SARFT published the ‘temporary measures of managing broadcasting advertising’, which generally shaped the content, amount, broadcast and supervision of China’s television advertising. According to this paper, public welfare advertising should at least take up 3% of all advertisements each day.

The 17th code of these regulations stated that the proportion of advertising should be less than 20% of the total broadcasting time each day. In addition, the duration of advertising should not be more than 9 minutes during peak time (7pm to 9pm). The 18th
code pointed out that all advertisements in peak time should appear in blocks between programmes only; they are not allowed to interrupt programmes. For the rest of the time, during one teleplay (around 45 minutes), advertisements that are less than 2.5 minutes are permitted.

**SARFT in China**

In China, all 320 television stations must comply with SARFT, which could be described as a media regulating and supervising government organization. It was founded in March 1998 as an executive branch under the state council of the People’s Republic of China. The main task of SARFT is the administration and supervision of the state-owned media enterprises engaged in the television, radio and movie businesses. It is also responsible for censoring any materials that might be objectionable to the Chinese government or cultural standards. SARFT also has 31 provincial level local branches to help with dealing with local issues.

**Advertising Codes for Chinese Television**

Like the vast majority of countries around the world, China enforces some form of rules on mass media advertising for advertisers to follow. The main purpose of these rules is to prevent adverts from causing any threats to national culture, assist social stabilization, and to protect consumers, particularly more vulnerable consumers such as children. First, all Chinese television commercials must conform to the Advertising Law of the People’s Republic of China published by the NPC (National People’s Congress). Secondly, in China, all commercials appearing on screen must also comply with the advertising regulations imposed by SARFT, the organization responsible for regulating and supervising the Chinese communication industries. Unlike Ofcom in the UK, which is independent and self-regulatory, SARFT, as a structure of state, is controlled by the Chinese government.
SARFT published a broadcasting advertising provisional code of practice in 2003. The code supplements the Chinese advertising law, filling gaps where the law does not reach. This code of practice contains 30 rules and general principles that govern the broadcasting advertising process. It contains a set of rules related to the sexual content of adverts, such as Rule 11: ‘The advertising should not contain scenes which are sexually explicit or implied; pornography; sexual disease treatment advertising.’

Apart from establishing regulations, SARFT is also responsible for ensuring all advertising meets high standards and complies with the advertising codes. As an important part of SARFT, the broadcasting monitoring centre takes charge of supervising all broadcasting networks in China to ensure all broadcasting advertisements are legal, decent, honest and truthful.

On 25th September 2007, SARFT banned many suggestive advertisements on radio and television, and published a circular to criticize media sectors involved in broadcasting sexual advertising. The circular also stated that commercials featuring sexually-suggestive language or behaviour, or featuring scantily dressed women were ‘detrimental to society”. According to the circular, all stations are prohibited from broadcasting commercials and programmes involving drugs, sex-related health supplements, drugs for sexually transmitted diseases and sex toys, as well as ‘vulgar’ advertisements for breast enhancement and female underwear.

Commercials in which celebrities testify to the effects of products are also banned. SARFT also ordered an end to programmes with names including sex-related drugs, products or medical institutions. Furthermore, the circular also said medical treatment and health care advertisements that require legally-approval documents should avoid broadcasting during family dinner time (7pm-9pm); television commercials and television home shopping
programmes for female underwear and figure shaping products that contain appropriate content could only be broadcast between midnight and 6am.

The circular stated that ‘sexually suggestive ads and bad ads not only mislead consumers seriously and harm public health, but are socially corrupting and morally depraving, and directly discredit the radio and television industry’. In July 2007, SARFT released a notice to stop ads with inappropriate content or sexual implications from appearing on TV screens. A total of 1,466 ads, involving two billion RMB (267 million US dollars), had been removed by August of that year, statistics from the SARFT showed. The administration warned stations that failed to monitor the quality of commercials and programmes would face severe penalties.

Based on the regulations imposed by SARFT and China’s advertising law, local government can regulate local codes of advertising to manage local issues. For example, the Zhejiang province government published an advertising code for Zhejiang province on 28th of September in 2007. This advertising code contains 51 rules and makes clear the legal consequences of breaching the code.

Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that in China all television advertisements about medicines, medical treatments and health care products need get the approval documents from State Administration of Industry and Commerce before being broadcast.

**SARFT and Obscene Content in Chinese Media**

Due to influence of Chinese traditional culture values, which are grounded in Confucianism and conservatism, audiences find it difficult to accept sexual content in the media. SARFT imposes harsh regulations in this respect. More than 3,000 advertisements judged to be sexually suggestive or false have been revised or removed from television and radio broadcast across China by the end of 2007.
In addition, in 2007, SARFT punished ten radio stations for advertising content involving sexual topics. The banned advertising dealt with material of an ‘extreme pornographic nature’ and talked about sex lives, sexual experiences, sexual organs and the efficiency of certain drugs for sex. SARFT said that the decision was made because the programmes were deemed to be of ‘low and vulgar tastes’ and ‘too pornographic’. Directors, vice-directors, producers and anchors at these radio stations were warned, suspended or transferred from their posts.

After the notice had been published by SAFRT, however, the economics channel of Guizhou radio station simply changed the name of the programme and kept broadcasting the same content. On 20 February 2008, Guizhou radio station was criticized for ignoring the former warning and continuing to broadcast obscene content. SARFT issued a circular to criticize Guizhou radio for its programme that ‘wilfully played on sex life, sex experience and details of sex organs, and excessively exaggerated functions of sex enhancement drugs’. It also criticized the Guizhou Provincial Administration of Radio, Film and Television for inadequate supervision of local broadcasting stations. The administration issued circulars in July and September 2007, banning radio and TV commercials and programmes involving drugs, sex-related health supplements, drugs for sexually transmitted diseases, sex toys and ‘vulgar’ ads for breast enhancement and female underwear.

**Background for British Television Advertising Industries**

British television broadcasting started in 1936. Nowadays it has developed into a very sophisticated media industry possessing hundreds of channels. The first commercial shown on television in Britain was for Gibbs S R Toothpaste and was transmitted at 8.12 pm on 22 September 1955 by ITV (Walter, 1961). Early British advertising normally used the famous people who were familiar to the public to tell the audiences directly why they should use a
product. This style changed in the 1970s when advertisements started to promote lifestyles and values that were combined with brands (Dickason, 2000).

Except for BBC, which is financially supported by Licences fee and does not carry commercials, all the television networks in Britain are funded by advertising revenue. All advertising broadcasted on British screens has a public duty to meet certain requirements from British regulation authorities such as Ofcom (Office of Communication) and ASA (Advertising Standards Authority).

The expenditure on television advertising in Britain experienced stable growth during 1960s. Then the rapid growth in television advertising from the late 1970s until the mid-1980s did not seem sustainable. This was reflected in the expenditure on television advertising. According to data from Warc in 2009, the expenditure on television advertising in United Kingdom experienced a significantly decrease of 10% from 2007 to 2008 (Warc, 2009). The emerging threat of online advertising might be the reason for the decrease of UK television advertising. In Britain, online advertising has grown 38% annually from being the smallest market sector in 2003 to the third largest in 2007, with a new high of £2,812.6 million (Warc, 2009).

**Advertising Periods on British Television**

In 2008, Ofcom published the ‘Code on the scheduling of television advertising’. According to the code, the time devoted to television advertising and teleshopping spots on any channel in any one hour must not exceed 12 minutes. In addition, on public service channels, which are channels intended for the public benefit rather than for purely commercial concerns such as the ITV Network, Channel4 and Channel5, the time devoted to television advertising and teleshopping spots must not exceed an average of 7 minutes per hour for
every hour of transmission time across the broadcasting day; and an average of 8 minutes an hour between 6pm and 11pm.

**ITC, OFCOM, ASA in Britain**

In the United Kingdom, before 2003, all advertising appearing on all commercial television channels had to comply with the strict advertising regulations imposed by the ITC, the organization responsible for regulating and supervising commercial television in England. The ITC published its television advertising code of practice in 1998 (www.itc.org.uk). In September 2002, after extensive consultation, the ITC published a revised Advertising Standards Code. Like its predecessor code, this set the standards for the content of television advertising. The underlying principles were that advertising should not be misleading, should not encourage or condone harmful behaviour (especially in relation to children) and should not cause deep or widespread offence. But the ITC would not intervene simply on grounds of taste. In addition to general rules, the code referred to particular categories of advertising, including advertising to children, alcoholic drinks, financial services, medical products, and advertising by religious and charitable groups.

The ITC ceased to exist on 18 December 2003 and its duties have been assumed by Ofcom (Office of Communications). Ofcom is now the independent regulator and competition authority for the communication industries in the United Kingdom and has had wide-ranging responsibilities since it assumed its powers on 29 December 2003. Ofcom inherited the duties of the five existing regulators it replaced: the Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC), the Independent Television Commission (ITC), Oftel, the Radio Authority and the Radio Communications Agency. Ofcom regulates the duration, frequency and restriction of adverts on television. On commercial channels, the allowed amount of airtime
is an overall average of 7 minutes per hour, with limits of 12 minutes for any particular clock hour (8 minutes per hour between 6pm and 11pm).

Ofcom is only responsible for overseeing the amount of advertising on television. It does not govern the content of television advertising. The organization that takes responsibility for this is the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the UK’s independent regulator for advertising across all media, including television, Internet, sales promotions and direct marketing, and provides guidelines regarding what is acceptable in advertising. The role of the ASA is to ensure advertisements are legal, decent, honest and truthful by applying the Advertising Codes. The ASA makes sure advertisements must not cause serious or widespread offence against generally accepted moral, social or cultural standards, or offend public feeling in British society.

**Code of British TV Advertising and Practice**

The vast majority of the countries around the world now enforce some form of rules on mass media advertising for advertisers to follow. The main purpose of these rules is to prevent adverts from causing any threats to national culture, and to protect viewers, particularly more vulnerable viewers such as children. However, the rules vary from one country to another based on many cultural, political and economic aspects of each country.

Local and foreign advertisers around the world have to satisfy many rules and regulations put in place by national governments. Such rules and regulations can be found in industrial countries that protect freedom of speech, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, and in developing countries as well.

In general, most of the rules of advertising practice contain the following two types of rules:
1. Rules governing the content of adverts, including those rules which clearly define unacceptable verbal and visual messages, and rules identifying unacceptable products or services, such as drugs and gambling, which are banned in many countries.

2. Rules which intend to protect the general public, such as rules which forbid using any visual or verbal messages to mislead the consumer.

These rules are reflected by the general principles embodied in the International Chamber of Commerce's (ICC) International Code of Advertising Practice that ‘advertising should be decent [...] prepared with a due sense of social responsibility [...] and] not be such as to impair public confidence in advertising’ (ICC, 1987).

Reflecting these ICC principles, various clauses on decency, taste, public opinion and social responsibility are usually found in advertising self-regulatory codes and guidelines in Britain. In addition, British media regulators have their own standards of acceptance, although they vary considerably in extent and application. Laws dealing with sex and decency in advertising are largely restricted to statutes dealing with obscenity and sex discrimination in employment ads, and to prohibitions on advertising certain products (such as drugs and gambling). However, the British government also exercises control over what can be advertised in the broadcasting media through their licensing of broadcasting stations and even through censorship. According to the Advertising Codes of Practice issued by ASA in August 2010, there were several rules giving reference to sexual content in advertising (see Table 1.3).
### Table 1.3 ASA advertising Codes on Sexual Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertisements for children should not include sexual imagery and should not state or imply that children are sexual beings and/or that ownership or enjoyment of a product will enhance their sexuality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisements shall not be sexually provocative or suggestive or suggest any link between liquor and sexual attraction or performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisements should not employ sexual appeal in a manner which is exploitative and degrading of any individual or group of people in society to promote the sale of products or services. In particular people should not be portrayed in a manner which uses sexual appeal simply to draw attention to an unrelated product. Children must not be portrayed in a manner which treats them as objects of sexual appeal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisements should not suggest that consumption of the drink can lead to sexual, social, sporting or business success or popularity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ofrcom Codes and Sexual Content

The Broadcasting Code published by Ofcom came into effect in July 2005. According to Section One of the code, Ofcom has a duty to protect young people under the age of eighteen. This responsibility is shared with parents. Section two of the code states that Ofcom also has a duty to ensure that generally accepted standards are applied to the content of radio and television services to provide adequate protection from the inclusion of harmful or offensive material. In executing its duties, Ofcom seeks to ensure that sexual material in media formats are editorially justified and appropriately scheduled, and, where necessary, that access is restricted to adults.

### Goals of the Study

The popularity of using sexual appeals in advertising has become a serious issue in the last 50 years. The presentation of sex in commercials and public attitudes toward this issue vary according to country and cultural context. Boddewyn (1991) suggests that the availability of explicit content in advertising is indicative of cultural liberalism. Of course, cultural
differences are not the sole determinant of the appearance or disappearance of sexual content in advertising. Additional contributing factors are political freedom (as it applies to censorship), sexual liberation, and the dominant persuasive approach (Firth and Mueller 2003). The more democratic and protective of free speech a society is, and the more sexually liberated people are, the higher the chance that sexual content will be found in advertisements (Nelson & Peak, 2007: 372). The main goal of the present study is to examine how representations of sex in television advertising vary in different cultures by comparing Chinese and British television advertising. There are many differences in cultural values, social systems, media regulations and marketing and economic approaches between these two countries. China is considered one of the largest developing countries in the world which has made it a target market for manufacturers from around the world in recent decade, whereas the United Kingdom is a highly developed Western country and is one of the main exporters to the Chinese market. The overall research objectives were defined as follows:

1. **Fill the existing gap in Chinese research into sex in advertising**

   Compared to the British regulators of the 1990s and early 2000s (Independent Television Commission, Broadcasting Standards Commission, and the Radio Authority), which carried out a number of studies into the areas of sexual content in television advertisements, the study of sex-oriented commercials in China has been rare. One of the purposes of this research is to gain a comprehensive understanding of what ‘sex’ in advertising is, how it is represented in Chinese advertising, and how it works to affect audiences or even the whole of Chinese society.

2. **Describe sexual representation in commercials on Chinese and British television.**
This study will examine all types of sexual content, whether depicted in pictorial or verbal form, in Chinese and British television advertising. This also includes double entendre sexual references in commercials which represent a form of latent sexual content. The goal of this study is to draw a complete picture of sexual representations in advertising in China and Britain.

3. To understand the differences and similarities in how sex appeal is represented by channels in both countries.

Through a comparison between British and Chinese commercials, the differences and similarities that exist in these countries are outlined. This work contributes to the understanding of how sexual stimuli are represented differently by different channels and in different countries.

4. Draw a link between previous qualitative and quantitative studies in this area

This study draws upon previous research into public opinion about sexual content in television commercials to design a coding frame for content analysis. In previous research, both content analysis and audience research have been used, but rarely together. Content analysis focuses primarily on the format features and content of advertisements in a purely descriptive fashion. The measures that are used tend to be created by researchers but are sometimes used to infer how audiences might respond to advertisements. Other researchers have investigated how audiences react to sexual content in advertising. (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Alexandra & Judd 1978; Millwood-Hargrave, 1999; Cheng, 2002). This type of research has been used to measure public opinion towards advertisements and to measure the impact that advertisements may have on consumers. In the latter case, the mediating effects of the presence of sex in advertisements are assessed to determine whether audience impact is enhanced in any way by the use of sexual content. Audience
research sometimes gives clues about the specific audience effects of particular content or format features in advertisements and these features can be included in coding frames for content analysis purposes. In doing so, it may render content coding frames more powerful in terms of their ability to identify the presence of advertising attributes that have been empirically verified as having effects upon audiences. This study attempts to integrate these two different research approaches in the design of a coding frame to define the respective representations of sex in Chinese and British advertisements and to infer the audiences’ responses and the media effect which might occur.

5. To understand how gender stereotyping varies by cultural context

This research will also investigate the portrayal of men and women in Chinese and British television commercials that contain sexual depictions or references. This will include an analysis of the prevalence of males and females appearing in those advertisements which use sexual content, the roles they play and their ages, in addition to other attributes that would contribute to research gender stereotyping in sex-oriented advertisements. This could help to understand how gender stereotyping varies by cultural context.

As indicated previously, this study intends to investigate the similarities and differences of sex representation that exist between Chinese and British television commercials. The following chapter will provide a definition of what sex is in terms of television commercials.

Moreover, another concern about sex in television advertising is that it can cause offence to large number of audiences. Television advertising is freely available to anyone with a television set. Therefore, sexual content could be seen easily by anyone who tunes in. This experience might not just be a source of personal distaste to viewers, but may also cause them considerable embarrassment of they are watching with their children, parents,
or other people (Gunter, 2002: 52). Despite offence public taste, public concerns about sex in the media have centred a number of issues relating to impact on young people, influences on family values and effects on marriage as a social institution, the social and sexual implications for women, and the potential casual agency of such content in relation to the commission of sexual offences (Gunter, 2002). The concerns of general audiences are being addressed in this study as well.

**Various audiences for the research**

This thesis contributed to fulfilling the requirement of various audiences. The concerns on sexual content in television advertising from advertising regulators, television channels, advertisers, and common audiences were addressed.

The issue of sexuality in advertising is based on complex subjective and socially/culturally constructed roots and values. For the advertising regulators, it is too complicated to be addressed merely by controlling or regulating the frequency of the sexual appeal that is used. This thesis considers the amount, types, representations and effects of sexual appeals in television advertising in China and Britain. The findings of this research also could inform Chinese and British advertising regulators if there was any particular sexual content in advertising that might cause public offences in China and Britain but have not been explicitly addressed in regulations. The Chinese and British advertising regulators could adjust their television advertising codes on sexual content based on the findings of this research.

The television channels’ concern was also being addressed in this research. The mainstream channels have been criticised for a growing emphasis on sexual themes and wider use of nudity and increasingly explicitly simulated portrayal of sexual intercourse.
Concern about the sheer volume of sex in the media begs the question of how much sex is actually contained on a specific channel. The research can also tell the channels what kind of sexual content was presented in television advertising.

Advertising has become a very important global marketing strategy. In the context of global economic activity, many advertisers use sexual appeals to lure the consumer’s attention. Advertising is a cultural thing and the effectiveness and customers’ responses to ads were largely varied by their cultural context. It is important for managers to know whether they can use standard advertisements in each of the places where their brands are sold or whether they need to ‘localise’ the advertisements by modifying them to adapt to the local culture (Liu, et al. 2002). Consequently, when using sexual content in international advertising, it is important to figure out whether sex appeal can be adopted cross-nationally. The concerns of advertisers are being addressed in this study.

Another concern about sex in television advertising is that it can cause offence to a large number of audiences. Television advertising is freely available to anyone with a television set. Therefore, sexual content could be seen easily by anyone who tunes in. This experience might not just be a source of personal distaste to viewers, but may also cause them considerable embarrassment if they are watching with their children, parents, or other people (Gunter, 2002: 52). Despite offence in public taste, public concerns about sex in the media have centred on a number of issues relating to the impact on young people, influences on family values and effects on marriage as a social institution, the social and sexual implications for women, and the potential casual agency of such content in relation to the commission of sexual offences (Gunter, 2002). The concerns of general audiences are being addressed in this study as well.
Chapter Two

The Definition of Sex

This research will examine the use of sexual themes in television advertisements in Britain and China. In order to be able to do this it is necessary to define what ‘sex’ means in this context. This chapter will therefore explore this issue. Although, for a long time, sex was associated with disgrace and guilt, the use of sexual content in media has become more common in recent years. According to Heller (2002), sex in mass media during the early twentieth century was not as common as it is today. However, in recent history, sexual content has been one of the major themes covered by contemporary mass media (Gunter, 2002).

This chapter will give a definition for sex and its related gender roles. Due to the nature of this thesis, which is to compare sex in television advertising in China and Britain, sex and gender will be explored in the historical and cultural context of both countries. Finally, the definition of sex in television and sex in advertising will be investigated.

Sex and Sexuality

When examining sex in the media and its impacts on media audiences, it is important to be clear about what exactly is being studied. What exactly is meant by ‘sex’? And how will this concept be used in the contributions that follow later? The word ‘sex’ as it is being used in this thesis, refers not only to gender or sexual intercourse, it embraces far broader meanings. It could also be called ‘sexuality’, which refers to a complete expression of who a person is as a human being.

Sexuality is how a person experiences the erotic and expresses themself as a sexual being (Rathus et al., 2007). It is a configuration that includes values, feelings and human
relationships, as well as biological drives. Sexuality involves the ways in which a person defines themself, the definitions they make of others and the personal and cultural meaning that are attached to their interpersonal relationships (Peters, 1978). The term ‘sexuality’ also embraces cultural, political, legal and philosophical aspects. It may also refer to issues of morality, ethics, theology, spirituality or religion and how they relate to all things sexual.

Human sexuality is not simply imposed by instinct or stereotypical conducts, as it happens in animals, but it is influenced both by superior mental activity and by social, cultural, educational, and normative characteristics of those places where the subjects grow up and their personality developing (Boccadoro & Carulli, 2009:45).

Sexuality is also social; it can be understood as part of a person’s social life, restricted by people’s behaviour and social status. This focus defines sexuality within the context of society. In the social sphere, social issues such as politics, law, mass media, religion and social revolutions can all influence human sexuality.

Sex is one of the most complex human concepts, and it has been heavily scrutinized and studied throughout the modern period. A number of social scientists have contributed heavily to the concept of sex; three of the most influential were Sigmund Freud, Michel Foucault and Judith Butler.

Sigmund Freud, writing from the late nineteenth century though to the early decades of the twentieth century, suggested that sexuality is central and formative to the social; this theory views sexuality as the arena in which the subject is made (Freud, 1930). Freud (1930) argued that sexual drives exist and can be seen in children from birth, giving rise to infantile sexuality, and that sexual energy (libido) is the single most important motivating force in adult life. Freud gave sexual drives an importance and centrality in human life, human actions, and human behaviour (Cook, 2005). After Freud, sexuality began to be understood as an important part of the social life of humans, governed by implied
rules of behaviour and social status. Freud (1930) taught that sexuality is the raw material of drives and instincts that allows sociality, precisely though the organization of those drives into sexuality.

Michel Foucault published a series of studies in this field in the 1960s and 1970s, and his critical comments were invaluable. In his opinion, sex is not a trans-historical, transcultural, natural drive; it is, rather, a social construct with a history (Foucault, 1979). As such, what counts as ‘sex’ will vary considerably from group to group. In a famous quote from Foucault he wrote, ‘Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover; it is the name that can be given to a historical construct’ (Foucault, 1979:105-106).

Foucault’s theory advocated that sex should be studied in a historical cultural context. In addition to this, recent decades have seen an expansion in academic discussions of sexuality, sexual identity and sexual diversity. These more recent debates were introduced through the writing of Judith Butler, who published Gender Trouble in 1990, causing the debate about gender formation and sexual identity to shift and, as a result, a new area of discussion emerged. The core of Butler’s work is the concept of gender performativity, which considers gender as the effect of reiterated acting; for example, the masculine gender and heterosexual desire in male bodies is culturally constructed through the repetition of stylized acts in time, these stylized bodily acts, through their repetition, produce what we can consider to be ‘true gender’ (Butler, 1990).

Sex, although the most basic and natural thing in life, should not be understood simply in terms of its natural components. It can only be realized and given meaning through unconscious processes and via cultural forms (Weeks, 1995). There is no doubt that at a surprisingly deep level sexuality is culturally controlled. Human beings’ sexual
behaviours are influenced by cultural and social environments and could be traced historically. Sexuality is interaction embracing many terms, including body image, gender role, sexual orientation, eroticism, sexual activities and relationships. Hence, sexuality as a cultural and social construction should be studied in a cultural and historical context.

**History of Sexuality**

For a long time, sex has been associated with sin and guilt. Constraints and prohibitions on sexual behaviour have been woven into the fabric of human sexuality (Mason, 1995). Therefore there are still some implications of this for the reticence and restraint shown in our modern sexual culture.

Depictions of sexual nature are as old as civilization in history. There are numerous sexually-explicit paintings and sculptures from Ancient Greece, Rome, India and China. Sexual scenes and activities seem to be very important in ancient art. In that period people did not have a concept of pornography. The term ‘pornography’, as it is understood today, did not exist until the Victorian era. Ancient art simply reflects scenes from daily life, including the sexual activities. Early cultures often associated sexual activities with a super-mental state, which was reflected in their religions. In some Asian countries, such as Hinduism, Shinto and Taoism, all have the specific depiction of sex acts and spiritual power (Rawson, 1968). In Ancient Greek and Roman art, many masterpieces integrated erotic imagery with religious beliefs and cultural practices (Clarke, 2003:168). Foucault, stated that sexuality in the ancient age had been seen as ‘erotic art’, where sex is seen as art and as a special experience, not as something associated with sin and shame (Foucault, 1979).
Sexuality in British History

Middle Ages (476-1453)

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Medieval Europe started to examine the relationship between the excessive openness of a sexual culture and the strength of a country (McCarthy, 2004). They ascribed the decline of the empire to its sexually open-minded culture. Consequently, the rise of sever asceticism associated with theological thought, driven by the pursuit of national interests, predominated the whole of Europe in the Middle Ages. During this period, the power of the Vatican swept through the whole of Europe, including Britain, and significantly permeated into people's daily lives (Ragnau, 2010). In this age, sex was seen as a forbidden topic.

Sexuality became unmentionable, something impossible to speak about. Foucault identified a watershed in human history, between the Counter-Reformation and the Industrial Revolution, where the Catholic Church and individual states sought to control people's sexuality for the stability of the church and the benefit of the economy, respectively (Foucault 1979). Foucault (1979) also claimed there was a realignment of the Vatican's views on sexuality during this period in an attempt to make people feel the need to attend confession more often, thus increasing the power of the church.

Victorian Age (1837-1901)

The repression of sexuality peaked during the Victoria era, which could be seen as the darkest dawn in British sexuality history. The “Victorian” was a poorly-regarded cultural phase that started in 1837. It had doctrines of sexual restraint, perhaps hypocritically as this key element did not arise until after Queen Victoria’s death, although it did establish itself very quickly thereafter (Mason, 1995:8). Sex in that age was associated with guilt and inhibition. Most people believed that human sexuality came in only in one format: adult
heterosexuality within marriage for reproductive purposes. Except for sex in marriage, extra-marital, pre-marital and any other sorts of sexual behaviours were prohibited and considered as deviant, sick, anti-social, immoral, or criminal. Publications with any level of sexual content were banned. The society for the suppression of vice was established in London in 1802. It aimed to control the spread of immorality and to preserve young people from impure and licentious publications; un-cooperative dealers were brought to punishment, by hard labour and fines (Roberts, 1983).

Uniting most manifestations of this anti-sensual mentality was a belief in the power of environmental conditions over an individual’s inner nature - extending even to people’s sex drives (Mason, 1995). Although, Victoria’s reign put extremely high pressure on sexuality, Foucault (1979) stated that the repression, rather the social convention not to mention sexuality, created a discourse about it, thereby making sexuality ubiquitous.

During the latter decades of Victoria’s reign, the situation was changed. The period since 1880 saw enormous changes in sexual attitudes, behaviours and gender relations in British society (Mason, 1995; Hall, 2000; Williams, 2002). The high pressure caused by the prohibition of sexuality was gradually released and concerns of sexuality began to reach beyond the sexual activities between married couples, and another form of sex started to be noticed. Foucault (1979) pointed out that some ‘unnatural’ sexual behaviour, referring specifically to the sexuality of children, criminals, people with mental illnesses and gay people, started to concern the public. The focus was no longer only on the sexuality of married couples.

1960s and 1970s

The first of January 1960 did not see a sudden dawning of a new age of sexual freedom in Britain. The premonitory trend of sexual freedom actually began several years before the
Victorian era ended. The sexual revolution which occurred in the 1960s and 1970s swept the whole Western world (Allyn, 2000). The sexual revolution has often been defined as a transformation of sexual attitudes and mores that began with the advent of the birth control pill (Williams, 2002), which was introduced to Britain in 1961 (Cook, 2005).

Since that time, sex and reproduction became separated, largely challenging traditional values. The 1960s and 1970s have been seen as the period of reconditioning for the traditional antecedents, and of establishing new codes of sexual behaviour. British society experienced significant changes in social thought and codes of behaviour-related sexuality. Since the 1960s concerns about sexuality were completely outside the boundaries of marriages. Although British sexual reticence persisted, those in power perhaps underestimated the readiness of the public to discuss sexual issues (Hall, 2000). Sex was much more explicitly discussed in books, music, and other media formats. Sexual topics previously considered unsuitable for discussion, such as homosexuality, were openly talked about in British society; for example, in May 1960 the Homosexual Law Reform Society arranged its first public meeting.

The Last Three Decades

The trend toward ‘liberation’ continued into the new century. For example, the legal right to free birth controls was implemented. Due to the sexual health anxieties and panic caused by the emergence of AIDs in the 1980s, the UK government was finally persuaded of the necessity of a general media health education campaign (Hall, 2000). Another factor was that by the beginning of the 1980s there was a strong British feminist anti-pornography movement that made arguments that pornography was a cause of sexism. During the final decades of the twentieth century there seemed to be a growth in divorce and remarriage,
and cohabitation came gradually to be accepted by British society (Hall, 2000). Finally, the moral panic about child sexual abuse spread wider.

Sexuality and Gender

The term ‘gender’ refers to the ‘array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis; Gender is relational – gender roles and characteristics do not exist in isolation, but defined in relation to one other.’ (Health Canada, 2000:14). Gender is the social (as opposed to biological) aspect of being a man or women; society has traditionally insisted that there are only two ‘sexes’ - male and female - and only two corresponding ‘genders’ - masculine and feminine (Williams & Stein, 2002).

Traditional beliefs in both Britain and China consider gender as a natural characteristic - men are masculine and women are feminine. Feminist activism challenged the traditional definition of gender, which had a revolutionary impact on perceptions of what is natural (Parker & Aggleton, 1999). Feminist efforts focused on a critical review of theories which used reproduction to link gender with sexuality, thereby explaining the inevitability and naturalness of women’s subordination (Reiter, 1975; Rosaldo & Lamphere 1974; Moore, 1988). This theoretical re-examination led to general blame for biological determinism, particularly of the received knowledge about the biology of sex differences (Sayers, 1982; Lowe & Hubbard, 1983; Bleier, 1984; Fausto-Sterling, 1985).

In 1984, Rubin suggested a further deconstruction of the ‘sex/gender system’ into two separate domains in which sexuality and gender were recognized as distinct systems (Rubin, 1984). In this view, sexuality and gender are separate systems which are interwoven at many points. Although members of a culture will experience this interweaving as natural,
seamless and organic, the points of connection vary historically and cross-culturally (Parker & Aggleton; 1999:483).

Gender Roles in Britain

From the Middle Ages to the Victorian age there were very limited concessions to the rights of women. Married women could not own property, all property belonged to the husband in the family. Women could also not initiate divorce at that time. It was believed that men enjoyed much superiority over women. The double standards for men and women existed in many aspects of society. Women stayed out of many avenues of life, while men perpetuated the view of women as weaker. However, at the end of the Victorian age these rigid gender roles started to shift.

By the end of the 19th century, the women’s rights movement had achieved some progress. The conventional gender roles under which it was believed women should undertake all domestic duties were beginning to be challenged. Women’s education was starting to concern society (Perkin, 1995). Women had only a small place in public life, while the idea that men and women had distinctly separate roles was still accepted by entire society. In the 1880s, the social purity movement, stimulated by the injustices of the Contagious Diseases Acts, developed an attack on what it saw as the evils of the existing sexual system, embodied in the double moral stands which permitted sexual peccadilloes to men, while punishing the slightest deviation from chastity in women (Hall, 2000:36). In 1883, the Married Women’s Property Act (1882) finally established a reform to protect the married woman’s right to hold her own separate property (Hall, 2000).

Women’s roles in Britain were shifted greatly by World War One. As the War progressed in Europe, British women were pushed into entirely different roles. The
traditional house chore role of women was reformed, as women were much needed by the UK heavy industry at the time. The War opened up a wider range of positions to female workers and women became accustomed to their new-found economic independence. Millicent Fawcett, a leading feminist, said in 1918, ‘The war did offer women increased opportunities in the paid labour market – it found themselves and left them free.’ (Bourke, 2010). From 1914 to 1918, an estimated two million women replaced men in employment and the proportion of women in employment increased from 24% in July 1914 to 37% by November 1918 (Bourke, 2010).

The War did not only offer women increased opportunities in the paid labour market, it also lifted women’s political position. According to the law at that time, only men enjoyed elective rights, but the War changed this situation. In 1918, 8.5 million women were enfranchised, this accounted for 40% of all the women in Britain at that moment; in 1928 the number was boosted to 15 million women, or 53%, who enjoyed the right to vote (Bourke, 2010).

World War Two further accelerated women’s general rights, education and political status. The women involved in the battles sought equal rights as the men. After the Second World War, a movement called ‘feminism’ or ‘women’s liberation’ swept across Britain, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. These women wanted the same pay as men, equal rights in law and the freedom to plan their families. In Britain, a public groundswell of opinion in favour of legal equality had gained pace, partly through the extensive employment of women in what were traditional male roles during both world wars. In the 1960s, radical feminism first developed in the United States and Britain among a group of young women who became involved in a series of protest movements that challenged social
norms and traditional values (Cull et al., 2003:436). They viewed sexual relations as the main cause of inequality in society and advocated a broader rejection of traditional gender roles. Radical feminists launched their own magazines for women, such as *Spare Rib* in Britain, as an alternative to the male-dominated mainstream press (Cull et al., 2003). In 1975, the Sex Discrimination Act was preceded by much lobbying and pressure group activity (Hall, 2000). As a consequence, the 1980s saw the first and, to date, the only female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher.

**Sex in Ancient China**

For more than 2000 years, Chinese people have recorded information about the psychology and sociology of sex in a variety of genres; this can be traced back as far as the early sixth century B.C., to the *Shi Jing* (Book of Poetry), which has been claimed to be the oldest existing repository of Chinese verse, contains many poems and folk songs describing love and romance of people in that period. The depictions in *Shi Jing* show that in the early Zhou dynasty the attitude to sex is relatively positive. The romance and intimacy between men and women is praised in the book. Wen Yiduo (2008), one of the most famous Chinese litterateurs, stated that many of the poems contained in *Shi Jing* imply or depict the sexual act.

From the Zhou Dynasty (1050-256 B.C.) some Confucianism classics also contain depictions of the attitudes toward gender roles and sex. The *I Ching* (the Book of Change), which is one of oldest and most important philosophy texts, contains rich material about gender roles and sexual knowledge during the warring state period (4th century B.C.). In the feudal period of China there were many novels and much literature containing rich material about gender roles and attitudes toward sex.
Sexual Attitudes in the Religions of China

A truly intensive understanding of human sexuality must be based on an understanding of the embedded cultural context. Confucianism is the state religion of China and so it is very important to analyse attitudes toward sexuality in this religion which has a large impact on China’s social values.

Confucianism

Confucianism is China’s state religion. As the chief literate tradition of China, Confucianism is based on writings attributed to Confucius (Kongzi, or Master Kong, 551-479B.C.) who was the first great educator, philosopher and statesman of China. Confucianism is based on secular thoughts which are intimately combined with politics and ethics. Philosophical Confucianism was very successful as a political ideology used by Chinese dynasties for centuries.

Confucianism’s viewpoint on sex was not negative at the beginning. Early Confucianism had a relatively objective and reasonable attitude of sex. For one thing, it admitted the rationality of the existence of human desires, including sexual desires. The Li Ji (the Book of Rites), also known as the Classic of Rites, was one of the most important Confucian classics and the original text was believed to be finished by Confucius himself, but the copy now in general circulation was edited and reworked by various different scholars of the Han Dynasty. The Li Ji contains several remarks of Confucius which imply a positive attitude toward sex, and Confucian classics contain several comments which many Chinese are fond of quoting in support of people’s sexual desire and rights (Ruan, 1991). According to the Li Ji, Confucius said: ‘eating and sex between men and women are the basic human natural desire’. This remark clearly implies that Confucius appreciated that the sexual impulse is integral to human nature. In the works of Mencius, another major Confucian
classic, Gao Zi, who was an apprentice of Mencius, is quoted as saying ‘Eating food and having sex is the nature of human beings’.

On the other hand, early Confucianism held that people should refrain from acting on their desires and pursue them appropriately. Confucius believed that people should fear intemperate sexual intercourse and the aim of sex is fertility and offspring instead of sexual pleasure.

The Han dynasty began to use Confucianism to fulfil political needs. Confucianism evolved as a political ideology ‘New Confucianism’ or ‘Kongjiao’. As a tool of ideological control ‘New Confucianism’ distorted and exaggerated some of the doctrines of early Confucian values, especially in terms of its attitude to sex; ‘New Confucianism’ resorted to strict restraints on sexual activities through ideological control. From early Confucianism to New Confucianism, moderate doctrines evolved into asceticism.

According to Mencius, ‘Men and Women should not have immediate contact, this is etiquette’, while Confucius said in Li Ji, ‘Men and women should not sit together, should not use the same clothes hanger, should not use the same toilet articles’. New Confucianism used these remarks to strictly prohibit the freedom of interaction between men and women. The discourse of sex evolved from silence to denial. The upper-class family rituals specified in ‘New Confucianism’ declared the isolation and alienation between man and woman. It strictly prevented extramarital contact between members of the opposite sex. Distance between men and women inside a family was also insisted upon, even exchanging items was not allowed between family members of the opposite sex. The four centuries of the Han dynasty witnessed an increasing emphasis on the regulation of sexual relations and the concomitant ritualization of relations between males and females (Goldin, 2002:3).
In the Song dynasty (960-1279 A.D.), the suppression of sexuality became more rigid, especially among the upper class where women were imprisoned in a boudoir to prevent contact with other men. In the context of the prevalence of ‘New Confucianism’, sex was a taboo subject in the late imperial period in China (960-1911 A.D.).

**Buddhism and Taoism**

Buddhism and Taoism are the other great literate traditions in China. Buddhism originated in the sixth century B.C. in what is today Nepal, and was brought to China by Buddhist monks from India during the Han dynasty (150 A.D.). After Buddhism was introduced to China, it adapted and shaped values in Chinese society. Chinese Buddhism rejected extreme asceticism; for example, in Chinese Buddhism, marriage is a personal choice and has nothing to do with religion. Chinese Buddhism also holds a neutral attitude toward sex.

Besides Confucianism, Taoism is China’s other major indigenous religion. Taoism emphasizes the balance of Yin and Yang, which could be translated as femininity and masculinity. While other religions have used sexual rites in connection with fertility cults, Taoism is one of the few that has stressed the importance of using sexual techniques for individual benefit (Ruan, 1991). Its followers believe that any time a man and woman join in sexual intercourse, they are engaging in an activity that reflects and maintains the order of nature. However, since new Confucianism was established as the state religion and employed as the tool of ideological control since the Song dynasty, the impacts of Buddhism and Taoism in Chinese society have largely fallen.

**Homosexuality in Ancient China**

Early Western observers, such as the Jesuit Matthew Ricci, noted the acceptance of homosexuality in China in the 16th century (Spence, 1985). Ancient China was known to hold
a tolerant attitude toward homosexuality, and it was quite common among the social elites. Homosexuality has a long history in ancient China.

On the one hand, the major religions in China are traditionally interpreted as being against homosexuality when it interferes with the continuation of the family lineage. Confucians and Buddhism both hold that reproduction is the aim of sex. Furthermore, Taoism emphasizes the maintenance of the balance between Yin and Yang and male relationships are thought to obstruct the harmony of Yin and Yang and are believed to be imbalanced and destructive.

On the other hand, none of the major religions in China consider homosexuality as a sin, and so ancient China has a history of being tolerant to homosexuality. Homosexuality has been documented in China since ancient times. Literary sources which could prove homosexual behaviour and relationships can be traced back to the Zhou dynasty (Harriet, 1997). In the Han dynasty ‘foster catamite’ became the trend among the feudal nobles and socialites. Many Han emperors were openly bisexual. In the Song dynasty homosexuality was considered fashionable for both men and women. Several emperors reportedly kept male consorts and homosexuality was fairly common even into the 19th century, and many officers of the state seemed to make no hesitation in publically avowing it. In the 20th century the renowned scholar Kang Youwei even proposed same sex marriages (Liu, 1999).

Sex in the People’s Republic of China

In the 15 years after the People’s Republic of China was established, the principles of hard work, frugality, and collective enthusiasm for the ‘new China’ dominated images of marriage and family life (Harriet, 1997). Polygamy and prostitution, which had been traditionally accepted, were declared illegal and effectively eliminated. However, in a number of other respects the government adopted traditional norms of behaviour regarding sex, and
codified these into law in ways that conformed to Party ideology. Extremely high pressure was placed on pre-marital virginity and conjugal fidelity. Both fornication and adultery were labelled as ‘shameless’ and ‘degrading’ (Harriet, 1997).

Many sociologists suggested that from 1950 to the early 1960s, sex was a taboo subject in the context of a great upsurge of socialist production (Harriet, 1997). However, this argument ignores the considerable range of materials published on sex-related issues during this period. The magazine ‘Zhongguo funu’ (Women of China) and ‘Zhongguo qingnian’ (China Youth), published some short articles, often accompanied by readers’ letters, which discussed adolescent hygiene or contraception.

Some detailed biological aspects of sexual difference and reproduction were also published in the 1950s and early 1960s; for example, ‘The hymen and love’ and ‘Talking about the age of marriage from a physiological point of view’ (Li, 1956; Lin, 1957). The moral implications of sexuality were also examined. In 1956, the debate about sexual relationships outside of marriage was carried in a number of consecutive issues of ‘Zhongguo funu’. From 1950 to early 1960, some official journals provided a regular public forum for discussion about a wide range of sex-related questions. The view which is commonly promulgated by both Chinese and Western scholars that sex was a forbidden topic and materials relating to sex were strictly forbidden in China before the 1980s (Zha & Geng, 1992) are not comprehensive.

In the first decade of the ‘new China’, traditional sexual morals were reasserted, discourses on sex were not forbidden, but were restrained in limited areas. However, between 1966 and 1976, when the Cultural Revolution swept the whole of Chinese society, discourse on sex was strictly banned in Chinese society. The slightest suggestion of sexual interest was considered ideologically unsound.
Throughout the Cultural Revolution, any suggestion of sex in fiction, poetry or drama was enough to have the offending work removed from circulation and its author punished. Sex could not be mentioned in public. During this period the discourse on sex in Chinese society was silent, even based on denial. There was virtually no public discussion about sexuality in any form; even basic knowledge about contraceptive and reproductive needs was difficult to come by unless given by medical practitioners (Harriet, 1997).

During the Maoist decades in China, from 1949-1976, the public attitude to sex was very conservative. There were many constraints on sex-related discourse in public. Discussions about sex related to marriage, reproduction, personal health and hygiene, and sexual morals were allowed in the 1950s and early 1960s. However, sex-related topics and materials were strictly banned during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). In this period, extremely great constraints were placed on sex.

After the restrictions during the Cultural Revolution, sexual attitudes and behaviours changed greatly in China. Particularly after 1978, with the beginning of the economic reform, a great diversity of representations of sexuality emerged in an unprecedented way. Censorship and official control of the limits of acceptable intellectual and artistic endeavour were largely relaxed, and many of the presses which had been forced to interrupt their publication during the period of the Cultural Revolution were restarted and it became quite easy to find articles dealing with a wide range of matters, including sexual morality, sexual problems, sexually-transmitted diseases, and the joys and perils of romantic love and marriages, in magazines and newspapers. After the long silence, the issues of sexual behaviour in different age groups, the different characteristics of female and male sexuality, premarital sexual behaviour and homosexuality started to be discussed in public.
The 1980s witnessed a great liberalization of sexuality in Chinese society. Ideological control was greatly eased due to the economic reforms and open market. People have become more liberal and tolerant in sexual matters. Matters of love and sex are no longer treated either as the shameful expression of a warped mind or as evidence of bourgeois individualism which is detrimental to collective welfare. Pre-marital sexual intimacy is commonly depicted in media and is widely accepted. Sexy women in advertisements, romantic scenes with erotic imagery in film and sexual advice columns in local newspapers are all becoming common. The prevalence of romantic and erotic images in the Chinese media identifies one of the most evident changes in sexuality in China.

**Homosexuality in Urban China**

In contrast with the tolerance shown in the country’s dynastic history, before the 1980s, public discourse was totally silent about homosexuality in urban China. Some people even believed homosexuality did not exist in contemporary China. Public debate about homosexuality is very circumscribed and popular opinion condemns it as a sickness or a perversion. Since the 1980s, the topic of homosexuality has started to be included in public discourse. The first icebreaking work was initiated by Minyuan Zhang in 1981, when he published an article studying the homosexuality depicted in the Chinese literary classic ‘Dreams of the red chamber’.

In 1985, Fangfu Ruan published an article entitled ‘Homosexuality: a secret’, in this article, Ruan argued that homosexuality should be treated as a normal phenomenon. By the mid-1980s Chinese researchers had begun investigating same-sex relationships in China.

In 1990, investigations into 111 homosexual people were carried out by Xueqi Gu in Shanghai. In 1997 ‘buggery’ was removed from the criminal law, which meant that
homosexuality was decriminalized. In 2001, the Chinese classification of mental disorders formally removed homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses.

The Chinese media still hold negative attitudes toward homosexuality. In late April 2004, the SARFT initiated a campaign to remove violence and sexual content from the media. Programmes, scenes or language related to homosexual topics are considered to be going against the healthy way of life in China, and are banned.

**Gender Roles in Ancient China**

In ancient China, the misery caused by gender status could be seen in all affairs of life: foot binding, female infanticide, arranged marriages, polygamy and widows being kept by charity. For centuries, prominent male domination occupied China, except in a few primitive tribes deep in the mountains. In this long history, Chinese women stayed in a dependent and subordinate gender role.

**Foot Binding**

Foot binding is the typical example of the unequal gender roles which existed in ancient China. Beginning around the eleventh century, foot binding became a fashionable practice among the upper classes. Although its first adherents used it to indicate their high social rank, foot binding gradually spread throughout the culture. By the twelfth century, every social status, from rich to poor, practiced it. Foot binding became a tradition, and when a girl reached three or four years of age, her family would tightly wrap her feet to stop them growing. The toes would be tucked under the soles by a bandage which would be tightened each day. After this excruciating torture for years, the length of the feet would stop at three inches. As this practice became more and more popular in China, it became a pre-requisite for marriage. The fact that women were unable to get married without bound feet increased the pressure on parents to bind their daughters’ feet.
The physical effects of having bound feet are that the woman is forced to walk with all of her weight on her heels, and she would totter as she walked. This was considered as a sexual attraction and small feet came to be seen as a major erotic feature in China. It was believed that the way foot binding made a woman walk strengthened the vagina and made it narrower; it was also thought that the smaller feet meant the nerves were more concentrated and that made them a major erogenous zone (Wang, 2000). Poetry, writing and paintings from this period show a widespread infatuation with small feet.

Meanwhile, bound feet were also a symbol of chastity as like as chastity belt. Since their feet were bound, the women were largely constrained in their home and they were isolated from outside, it was believed to help to women keep their chastity and to make them easier to control. It was, therefore, no wonder that men were so adamant about their wives having bound feet.

The foot-binding tendency effectively reflects women’s misery and dependant status in China. Women were not able to journey far on their own and they were forced to be dependent on others, and thus they became more controllable. Along with the emergence of women’s progress and the development of democracy, foot binding was gradually considered brutality and to harm women’s rights. This decadent tradition finally was abandoned in the early twentieth century. In 1885, an organization against foot binding was formed in Shanghai and then spread to other major cities in China, and, in 1911, foot binding was officially outlawed.

Gender Roles in Chinese Religions

Gender could be seen as a cultural and social issue. Gender does not equate to sex; instead it refers to the social construction of femininities and masculinities (Butler, 1990). The
religious is a very important element having an impact on social constructions. The gender roles illustrated in the religions largely shape the gender roles in Chinese society.

Confucianism

In the three major religions in China, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, gender differences can be easily identified. It is indisputable that Confucianism endorses patriarchy and places women at the lower end of the patriarchal family. In fact, early Confucianism emphasized the complementarily of genders rather than domination and subordination. They believed that men and women have different social assignments. Women are naturally assigned to the inner, which means the private and domestic spheres, while men are assigned to the outer, which means the public and social spheres (Chan, 2000).

In other words, in a family, women should handle the domestic affairs, such as nurturing the children, cooking, weaving and other household work, while men should handle the public and social affairs, such as farming, hunting and commerce. However, the idea of the early Confucianism, that men are primarily in the outer and women in the inner did not establish women’s subordination role; although women were put at the lower end of the patriarchal family structure, they were not treated as men’s appendages. The early Confucian tradition conceived of women as moral equals of men, despite the charges of sexism and misogyny that have been voiced in modern times (Chan, 2000).

However, the explicit subordination of women in Confucianism started with the Han Confucian, Zhongshu Dong (179?-104? A.D.); the Han Confucianism classic ‘Yi Li’ established moral rules for women to obey; for example, it said that women should obey her father before marriage, her husband after marriage, and her sons in widowhood. Women should also have four virtues: morality, proper speech, modest manner and diligent work (Bao, 1979), showing the spiritual fettering of wifely submission and the virtues imposed on
women in this feudal society. Exemplary behaviour and uncomplaining obedience was expected.

**Buddhism and Taoism**

After Buddhism came to be practiced in China, compared to Confucianism it granted women more areas of empowerment. Women could go on pilgrimages to Buddhist temples, could retreat to nunneries, sometimes gave public lectures and could lead temple groups. After the Song dynasty (960-1276A.D.) was established, new Confucianism instead of Buddhism became the national religion. Women’s status fell into a dark age. Taoism embraces a positive attitude toward women and feminine qualities. Tao was considered as the ‘the mother of all things’. The harmony and balance of femininity and masculinity were highly regarded in Taoism. However, compared to Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism were most practiced in people of a lower social status. Hence, equality of gender was an ideal rather than the norm, and neither Taoism nor Buddhism was able to transform the lives of Chinese women as whole.

**Gender Roles in Urban China**

After the People’s Republic of China was established, Chinese Communist Party rules successfully laid the basis for women’s liberation through facilitating women’s participation in the social labour force. Following the standard Marxist approach, the CCP’s approach to ‘women-work’ was premised on the principle that economic independence through social employment was a condition for the attainment of gender equality (Evans, 2008).

During Mao’s decades, an artificial neutralization of gender difference was imposed which successfully increased women’s participation in social and political life. The essential femininity of women was denied and women were treated as a social labour force equal to men. Then, the end of Mao’s decades and the beginning of the market reforms facilitated
the renewed expression of natural gender differences. However, the market ‘deregulation’ of gender also led to a resurgence of old inequalities, which had been suppressed during the socialist era, and the production of new gender injustices as a spontaneous and inevitable consequence of the demands for economic efficiency and production (Evans, 2008).

Moreover, after the destruction of the cultural reforms, traditional values and culture staged a comeback. The traditional values, which emphasis an unequal hierarchy between men and women, significantly impacted Chinese society. Although the feminist movement in 1960s and 1970s spread to most countries in the world, the traditional cultural values maintained their dominant role in Chinese society.

In accordance with a mainstream analysis of gender differences in China, gender inequality continues to be seen in the imbalances between men and women as the consequence of social economic structures of unequal distribution of wealth and power. In other words, women still do not achieve equal access to education, material prosperity and work opportunities as men. The traditional cultural values and religions enhance the gender inequity in Chinese society. When compared to British society, the gender imbalance in Chinese society is even more obvious.

**Sex in Media**

The use of sexual content in the media has become more and more common in recent years. According to Heller (2002), sex in the mass media during the early twentieth century was not as common as today. However, in recent history, sexual content has been one of the major themes covered by contemporary mass media (Gunter, 2002). Sexual content circulates in a wide range of different media forms, from films, TV programmes, advertisements and magazines, to websites, video games and music videos. Along with the emergence and popularity of the rocketing number of sexual media outlets in people’s daily
lives, there have been a number of instances in which sexual content has become the primary focus of media research and public debate in recent years.

From early studies into sex on mainstream television in the United States in the mid-1970s (Franzblau et al., 1977; Fernandez-Collado, Greenberg et al., 1978), through the later reports on sexual music video and film (Baxter et al., 1985; Greeson & Williams, 1986; Sherman & Dominick, 1986), to current research on violence and sexual themes in video games (Lowery and DeFleur, 1995), sexual themes have consistently been at the centre of much media research from many various perspectives.

**What is Sex in the Media?**

After exploring the definitions of sex and the social and cultural context they fit within, other issues which needs to be examined are: what is sex in media? And, how has sex been defined across various media forms? It is worth bearing in mind that sexual content does not invariably equal erotica. It actually encompasses much more than this. Erotica has been defined as images that unambiguously depict adults in various stages of undress engaged in overt sexual activities, such as cunnilingus, fellatio, and intercourse (Lopez & George, 1995: 275). However, sexual content is defined by Harris (1994: p.206) as, ‘any representation that portrays or implies sexual interest, behaviour or motivation’.

Sexual depictions can appear in many forms and may comprise verbal references to sex, reports of sex, sexual innuendo, mild sexual behaviour, graphic sexual simulations, with or without nudity, and depictions of real sexual behaviour, including explicit petting, oral sex, and full sexual intercourse (Gunter, 2002:10). Not all sexual content can be considered as erotica or pornography, especially when used appropriately. For example, it is common to see advertisements in which physically attractive models are wearing tight-fitting clothing and showing flirty facial expressions or sexually-suggestive body postures which could be
defined within the category of sexual content, but are far from erotica. Thus, sexual content
is complicated and sophisticated and cannot be regarded simply as erotica and is worth
investigating across various media landscapes.

**What is Sex on Television?**

In an initial study in the 1970s, televised sexuality was identified as physical intimacy such as
kissing, embracing, flirting and intercourse (Franzblau, et al.; 1977). Throughout the 1980s,
analyses and studies of sexual content in television programming developed consistently,
and these studies turned to the matter of sexuality on prime-time television (Greenberg et
al., 1980; Sprafkin, 1981; Sapolsky, 1982).

In Sapolsky’s (1982) report on sexual acts on prime-time TV, an incident was
considered ‘sexual’ if it contained a depiction of sexual behaviour, a seductive display of the
body, or an explicit or implicit reference to intimate sexual behaviour, sexual organs, or sex-
related activities.

The 1990s witnessed an explosion of televised sexual content across cable channels
and countries. The emergence of cross-cultural studies shows that concerns of sexual
content in television are increasing worldwide. In this period, sexual content was defined as
visual or verbal incidents or reference to sexual activity (Bradley & Rick, 1996). In a more
recent sex in television research conducted by Kunkel et al. (2004) in the United States,
sexual content was defined as any depiction of sexual activity, sexually suggestive behaviour,
or talk about sexuality or sexual activity (Kunkel et al, 2004:7). This study also cited that
actions which could be considered as a sexual behaviour must convey a sense of potential or
likely sexual intimacy. For example, a kiss between friends and relatives could not be
counted as a sexual behaviour, while a passionate kiss between a couple involved in an
intimate romantic relationship could be. (Kunkel et al, 2004).
What is Sex in Advertising?

Since the 1800s, markets and advertisers have used sexy words and images to sell certain products. Along with the emergence and popularity of sexual advertisements, numerous studies have been carried out in this field. The American social scientist Byrne (1982) deemed that sexual advertisements are a type of advertising with ascribed sexual meaning. Courtney and Whipple (1983:p.103) defined sex in advertising as ‘sexuality in the form of nudity, sexual imagery, innuendo, and double entendre … employed as an advertising tool for a wide variety of products.’

As noted by Gould (1994), sex in advertising is typically visual (physically attractive models, depictions of sexual behaviour with partners or alone) but can also include verbal innuendo and explicit copy. In 2001, Reichert et al. cited that in the context of advertising, sex has generally been considered a tool of persuasion to draw attention to certain products or brands. By its very nature, advertising is a form of persuasion communication. (Thorson, 1990); as such, sex could be used as a persuasive message to promote products and brands. In 2003, Reichert and Lambiase pointed out that sex in advertising can be thought of as a sexual appeal that involves many factors and forms, such as nudity, physical attractiveness, sexual behaviour and double entendre (Reichert & Lambiase 2003). Whatever the presentation of the sex, the important underlying conceptual commonality is that the information evokes sexual thoughts and feelings in the viewer (Reichert & Lambiase 2003: p.234).

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the definition of sex and gender. Due to the historical and socio-cultural nature of sexuality and gender, this review has analysed how sexuality and gender have been represented within larger social relations in the context of Chinese and British
society. Historical explorations of gender and sexuality in China and British society have also been made in this chapter. Compared to Britain, modern Chinese society is much more conservative in terms of sexuality and related areas due to its cultural and historical influences. Gender inequality is more obvious in Chinese society as a result of the significant influence of Confucianism values.

This chapter has also defined ‘what is sex in media?’, ‘what is sex in television?’ and ‘what is sex in advertising?’, based on a review of previous studies. After defining the meaning of sexual content in television and advertising, the next chapter will explore the previous content analysis of representations of the sex in television and sex in advertising.
Chapter Three

The Representation of Sex in Advertising

This chapter reviews previous studies into sexual content on television and in advertising. This review is organized both historically and by the country of origin of the research. It not only focuses on the previous content analysis of sex in television advertising, but also looks at the studies of sex on television programme and gender role stereotyping studies which provide useful inputs into the methodology. It also helps to gain a wider picture of how researchers have previously studied sex in audio-visual media.

The review concentrates on areas where sex has becomes a key theme in media. Sex in media is a complicated and dynamic topic, whose diversity and significance deserve great attention. Thus, many scholars from different research traditions have committed themselves to this field. This far-ranging study, which varies in addressing concerns and meanings with regard to sex in media, could be roughly classified into two main research approaches: content analysis and audience research. This chapter will focus on previous content analyses conducted in this field. Based on a review of the relevant background literature, the research questions will be given at the end of this chapter.

Content Analysis and Mediated Sex

Content analysis has been advocated by many people in the sex in media research area (Franzblau et al., 1977; Silverman & Rubinstein, 1979; Greenberg et al, 1980; Sprafkin & Silverman 1981; Sapolsky, 1982; Kunkel et al., 2004). Many social scientists have analysed the sexual content in media through content analyses, which are seen to provide an objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Berelson, 1952). Usually, these content analysis studies involved drawing
representative samples of sexual content in media and using category rules to measure or reflect differences in sexual content. Content analysis in media sex studies normally examines the level of sexual content, the representation of sex, and gender role portrayals. In other words, content analysis usually aims to find out: ‘How much sex is shown?’ ‘How has sex been classified?’ ‘What characteristics of sexual content have been evaluated?’ and ‘How have men and women been portrayed in sexual scenes?’

Sex on Television

Television has become the dominant form of advertising in Britain since the 1960s and has also emerged as an important form in China. As the significance of television as an advertising medium grew, so did concerns about the nature of its advertising messages. Due to some harsh criticisms concerning the increasing amounts of sexually-oriented television programmes from audiences, many social scientists have studied the sexual portrayals on television through content analysis (Franzblau et al., 1977; Silverman & Rubinstein, 1979; Greenberg et al, 1980; Sprafkin & Silverman 1981; Sapolsky, 1982; Kunkel et al, 2004).

The methodology of a content analysis is relatively straightforward. In the context of sex on television study, researchers begin by developing a list of intimate behaviours, such as kissing, hugging, intimate touching, and sexual intercourse; researchers then collect samples from screen and count the number of incidents that match these pre-determined definitions (Bragg & Buckingham, 2002).

Early Studies

In Franzblau, Sprafkin and Rubinstein’s (1977) study, 61 programmes, representative of the prime-time 1975-1976 seasons, were recorded directly off the air between the hours of 8pm and 11pm from ABC, CBS and NBC; movies and specials were not included.

The coding sheet used by this study contained 13 categories of physical intimacy
which were: kissing, embracing, aggressive touching, non-aggressive touching, heterosexual intercourse, homosexual behaviour, rape and other sex crimes, flirting and seductiveness, innuendo with and without canned laughter, total innuendos, atypical sex roles and partner seeking. The sample was analysed in hourly blocks and was divided into four categories: situation comedies, variety shows, dramas and crime adventures.

The findings of this study revealed that the most common sexual behaviours that appeared on screen were kissing, embracing, aggressive touching and non–aggressive touching; otherwise, innuendo with or without canned laughter, flirting and seductiveness, atypical sex roles and partner seeking appeared infrequently (Franzblau et al., 1977). The most controversial acts, such as intercourse, rape, and homosexual behaviour, had virtually no behavioural appearance on the prime-time programmes analysed; only verbal references to rape and other sex crimes occurred, usually in the context of discussing crimes to be solved in dramas and crime adventure shows. There were only two acts of implied or explicit heterosexual intercourse in the 50 hours of programming examined.

The findings also indicated that physically-intimate behaviours were shown more frequently in the 8-9 pm time period than later in the evening and appeared most frequently in situation comedies and variety shows.

Moreover, the findings of Franzblau et al. (1977)’s study pointed out that physically intimate behaviours and references appear most frequently on situation comedies and variety shows supports the conventional notion that sex is a disturbing topic and is best handled humorously.

Another content analysis of sex on television during 1970s was carried out by Fernandez-Collado et al, 1978 ). Their research recorded 58 hours of programming from the 1976-1977 seasons. The findings indicated more than twice as many sexual acts occurring
between 9pm and 11pm (2.70 per hour) as between 8pm and 9pm (1.14 per hour). In addition, the most commonly occurring features in the context of sexual acts on these prime-time series were intercourse and long kissing.

Due to the obvious contradictions in these two studies, in 1980, Greenberg et al. re-examined the samples from these two studies. The results of their study coincided with the major findings from Fernandez-Collado et al. (1978) that the representation of sex-containing content appeared more frequently after 9 pm and the most regular sexual act was sexual intercourse (Greenberg, 1980).

The reason for the significant discrepancies found in these three studies might be due to the definitions of sexual behaviour, especially sexual intercourse. In Fernandez-Collado’s (1978) and Greenberg’s (1980) studies, intimate sexual behaviour was defined as each explicit, insinuated or endorsed acts of sexual behaviour. Any utterances and scenes which are subtle or euphemistic ways of referring to intercourse were coded intercourse. However, Franzblau et al.’s (1977) study did not clearly notice implicit references to sexual intercourse. They might only have coded explicit sexual intercourse and ignored the subtle or euphemistic references to sexual intercourse. This may account for some of the discrepancies between the three studies.

In 1979, Silverman et al. investigated 50 hours of prime-time programming from the 1977-1978 seasons. The findings also suggested fewer sexual acts before 9pm. Moreover, the findings of Silverman et al. (1979) revealed that, compared to the statistics from Fanzblau et al.’s (1978) findings, the frequency of flirtations or seductive behaviours quadrupled, sexual innuendos increased more than five-fold and the tendency to imply an act of sexual intercourse showed a dramatic increase over period. In 1981, Sprafkin and Silverman examined the 1978-1979 prime-time programming season. Their findings also
showed a dramatic growth in the frequency of the appearance of sexual acts compared to earlier research (Sprafkin & Silverman, 1981). In 1982, Sapolsky published ‘Sexual acts and references on prime-time television: A two-year look’ to expound the sex appeals in the 1978-1979 prime-time programmes.

The primary content analysis studies of sex on television were based on the end of the 1970’s prime-time television programmes in America. Due to some harsh criticisms of the increasing amount of sexually-oriented television programmes from American audiences, many social scientists analysed the television programming from 1975 to 1979. Despite differences in the coding procedures of these earlier studies, certain general conclusions emerge from them. First, there were no programmes containing detailed sexual intercourse or homosexuality. Secondly, most content analysis covered verbal references to sexual activity innuendo and the findings revealed most of the references to sexuality took the form of verbal innuendo. Finally, the context of sexual content could influence the level and amount of sexual acts; for example, situation comedies contain more sexual content than other types of programme. Sexual acts were more likely to happen in a humorous context. Moreover, there was significant growth in the sexual content on American screens in the last decades of the 1970s.

The methodology of a primary content analysis of media sex is relatively simple. The sample was normally drawn from late-1970s American television programmes between 8pm and 11pm and most of the coding sheets covered visual and verbal references to intimate sexual behaviours. (Franzblau et al., 1977; Fernandez-Collado et al., 1978; Silverman et al., 1979; Greenberg et al., 1980; Sprafkin & Silverman, 1981; Sapolsky, 1982). The codes of representation of sexual behaviour were relatively simple and straightforward in these early studies. The coding sheets generally included sexual behaviours range from
casual behaviours, such as hugging, to intensive sexual behaviours, such as intercourse; homosexuality and some extremely provocative elements, such as sex crimes and prostitution, were also examined in these early studies (Franzblau et al., 1977; Fernandez-Collado et al., 1978; Silverman et al., 1979; Fernandez-Collado et al., 1978; Silverman et al., 1979; Greenberg et al., 1980, Sprafkin & Silverman, 1981).

Other codes related to sexual behaviours that have been comprehensively examined in recent studies, such as the level of nudity, the context of sexual acts, the characters involved in sexual acts, and the related risks and responsibilities, were quite rare in early coding frames. It was also found that the early coding sheets did not clearly define sexual behaviour, especially in the definitions of metaphorical expressions of sexual appeals and sexual innuendo. Most early coding sheets lacked a particular distinction in the explicit and implicit use of sex appeals, especially the explicit depictions and subtle innuendoes of sexual intercourse which might cause inconsistency in the early studies.

Furthermore, the early coding sheets focussed more on visual references than verbal references. None of the early studies investigated the content and types of sex talk and other verbal references represented in programmes.

1980s

During the 1980s, the quantity and frequency of sexual content on television networks continued to increase. In 1986, Greenberg, et al. conducted a content analysis of the 19 prime-time fictional television series most watched by high school students. The findings indicated that the quantity of sexual acts in the 1985 sample were much higher than in previous studies using similar content categories (Greenberg et al., 1986). On average, the most common sex act was the long kiss, which was found nearly once per hour and the most frequent type of verbal reference involved unmarried intercourse. Homosexuality and
prostitution acts were identified once every two hours, with rape and petting being extremely rare acts. The findings indicated 37% of the sexual acts were visual, 70% of the sexual acts were long kisses, and 21% were intercourse. The majority of the sexual acts contained on prime-time television networks were verbal. In general, the per-hour rates of sexual acts in the 1985 sample of network television programming were significantly higher than in prior studies using similar content frames.

The findings showed that it is important to show the model’s face because imagery which cuts off the face and only focuses on body parts might cause negative feelings from audiences. Similarly, according to another previous study (Tisser-Desbordes & Manceau, 2002), audiences preferred to see imagery which included a women’s face.

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In the 1980s, the fear of AIDS and high rates of teenage pregnancy led to calls for sexual responsibility. Prime-time television featuring intimate sexual behaviours came under renewed criticism at a time when young men and women were being urged to refrain from sex because of the threat of AIDS and the high rate of teenage pregnancy (Sapolsky & Tabarlet, 1991). Therefore, the most significant development period of content analysis in 1980s was the newfound fear of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), particularly AIDS (Sapolsky & Tabarlet, 1991). Lowry and Towles (1988) employed a simplified version of an earlier coding frame (Silverman et al., 1979) to examine the sexual acts in 1987 prime-time television. To the scheme they added codes for pregnancy prevention, STD prevention, and STDs contracted. Their findings showed a total of 722 sexual incidents, only 13.5 references to pregnancy prevention, 18 references to STDs prevention and 13 dealt with AIDS (Lowry & Towles, 1988). The findings of Lowry and Towles (1988) also indicated two instances of explicit intercourse. The most common types of sexual activity in the 1985 sample were physical suggestiveness, erotic touching and intercourse. As with the earlier content analyses, most sexual behaviour involved unmarried characters.

In 1987, Sprafkin et al. conducted a content analysis of television, for the Planned Parenthood Federation of American, which agreed with previous studies that the most common references to sexual activity in television included innuendo, suggestiveness, kissing, and hugging. Verbal references to sexual intercourse exceeded one per hour, three times the rate of implied intercourse. References to sex education, STDs, birth control or abortion were extremely rare, which only made up 0.07% of all the sexual incidents.

In 1991, Sapolsky and Tabarlet conducted a comparative content analysis of sexual content on prime-time television in the seasons between 1979 and 1989. The
findings of their study showed a continuing trend of increasing television sex over the 10 years (Sapolsky & Tabarlet, 1991). One week of prime-time network television from 1989 was content analysed with a coding scheme previously used to examine sex on television in 1979 (Silverman et al., 1979) and found that sexual behaviour and language had not diminished over the 10 year period. In 1979, sexual behaviour or language occurred, on average, once every 5 minutes of prime-time television. While, in 1989, a sexual incident occurred every 4 minutes. This result indicated that there was a decline in suggestive sexual displays and non-criminal sexual acts, while sexual touching increased. Explicit depictions of sexual intercourse, not seen in the 1979 sample, were found in 1989 and issues of sexual safety, STDs and contraception are rarely addressed. As in previous studies, sex is most commonly presented in humorous formats.

The content analyses conducted in 1980s found an increasing trend in the amount of sexual content contained in prime-time television. In the 1980s studies, new coding categories were examined which included the risks and responsibilities of sexual acts; the roles of characters and the context of sexual acts. The fear of AIDS made abstinence, monogamy and safe sex the bywords of the 1980s (Sapolsky & Tabarlet, 1991:506), and the coding categories related to prevention of STDs were added to the coding frames. The findings indicated that the references to sexual risks and responsibilities were very rare in 1980s television programmes. (Sprafkin et al., 1987; Lowry & Towles, 1988; Sapolsky & Tabarlet, 1991)

The representation of sexual acts in the coding frames used in the 1980s study was more idiographic, and explicit depictions and innuendo were clearly distinguished. For example, in the coding frame used by Sapolsky and Tabarlet, references to sex intercourse were divided into implicit sexual intercourse and explicit sexual intercourse.
Moreover, the context of sexual acts and the role of characters were examined. The programme types, the setting of the sexual acts, and the age and gender of the characters involved in the sexual acts were also investigated (Greenberg et al., 1986). The researchers examined whether sex happened in serious or humour context. In Greenberg et al.’s (1986) study. The findings showed that only in situation comedies were sexual acts cast in a humorous context -- in 47% of the acts in that genre (Greenberg et al., 1986). 45% of the sexual activities occurred in bedrooms, 23% occurred in workplaces and 19% occurred in restaurants. Bedrooms dominated as the setting for sexual behaviours. For prime-time series, 43% of the sexual acts were on-going, 41% had already happened and 17% were future plans; there were no fantasy sequences.

**Recent Studies**

In the 1990s, the amount of sex has been found to continue to increase, and the references to sex were investigated more specifically. As one of the most recent and authoritative studies in this field, Kunkel et al. commenced a biennial study for the Kaiser Family Foundation. The purpose of this study was to investigate the content and context of sexual messages that appear during ‘Family Hour’ (7pm-9pm) (Kunkel et al., 1996). For the purposes of measuring sexual dialogue, topics of discussion concerning sexual interests, reproductive issues (such as contraception for abortion), sexually-transmitted diseases, expert sexual advice, sex crimes and sexual activities were coded.

The findings of Kunkel et al.’s (1996) research revealed a large increase in sexual content. Unlike most of the studies that examine television content at only a single point in time, this study applied identical measures to programmes sampled from 1976, 1986 and 1996. The findings indicated that the depiction of sexual content in prime-time programming increased consistently between 1976 and 1996. Talk about sex and the
depiction of sexually activities are both quite common in the 1996 television programmes from 8pm to 11pm. The amount of sexual interactions in 1996 was up 118% from 1986 and 270% from 1976. The depiction of sexual behaviours multiplied nearly five-fold from 1.1 interactions per hour in 1976 to 5.4 interactions per hour in 1996. The most common behaviour were physical flirting and kissing, which account for more than 80% of all sexual behaviours.

The findings show that 15 instances of sexual intercourse were depicted or implied across a sample of 84 hours of programmes, representing 3% of all sexual behaviours in the sample of 1996, in contrast with no instances of sexual intercourse found in either the 1976 and 1986 samples.

Messages about the risk and responsibility associated with sex received only modest attention in the 1996 programmes. Only 9% of all scenes involving sexual content (either talk or behaviour) mentioned or depicted the consequent risks and responsibilities, such as protection from sexual diseases, risks of unwanted pregnancy or use of condoms.

Furthermore, Kunkel et al. (2004) explicitly defined a measurement unit for their study into sexual interaction. The study expatiated what should be coded as a sexual interaction. This gave the coder a clear clue about how to code the sexual content in television.

In 2004, Kunkel et al. investigated the validity of the television industry’s labelling of sensitive programme content following the advent of the V-chip television ratings system which covers programmes from 10 of the most popular channels, including broadcast network, independent broadcast, basic cable, and premium cable channels in America. The content of television was investigated for the nature and level of portrayals of violence, sexual behaviour, sexual talk and adult language. The findings of the content analysis were
compared to the ratings applied to the programme to evaluate the accuracy of the ratings judgements. The results indicated that the age-based ratings (TV-G, TV-PG, TV-14 and TV-MA) reasonably reflected the content of television programmes (Kunkel et al., 2004).

Kunkel et al. employed the measurement framework used in their earlier work (Kunkel et al., 1996). The type of sexual behaviour was measured using a range of sex categories that begins with physical flirting (behaviour meant to arouse or promote sexual interest) and including passionate kissing, intimate touching, sexual intercourse strongly implied and sexual intercourse depicted. Sex talks were divided into four distinct categories: comments about sexual action and interests, talk toward sex, expert advice and other. The findings pointed out that, to be considered as a sexual behaviour, actions had to convey a sense of potential or likely sexual intimacy. Moreover, sexual dialogues and behaviour were judged for the extent of the ‘scene focus on sex’, and the ‘degree of explicitness’ of scenes that include sexual content was examined. The categories for coding explicitness included suggestive dress (attire alone reflecting a strong effort to flaunt one’s sexuality); characters beginning to disrobe, discreet nudity (characters were known to be nude, but no private parts of the body were shown), partial nudity (limited exposure of normally private parts of the body); and full frontal nudity (Kunkel et al., 2004:118).

The measurement framework used in Kunkel et al.’s (2004) study was quite reasonable. First, a definition of sexual behaviour and sexual dialogues were specifically defined, which provided the coder with clear clues about what should be coded as sexual behaviour. Secondly, the categories of coding sheets were relatively comprehensive. The coding frames covered a series of visual and verbal codes related to sexual behaviours and dialogues. Thirdly, the degree of explicitness of sexual scenes was investigated, which provided evidence of the level of sexual appeals contained in each sexual act. The degree of
explicitness is the important variable when examining the level of sexual content of television programmes.

A recent study into sex shown during prime-time used a coding frame that was more comprehensive. The definition of sex sense was particularly strongly defined. Apart from detailed visual and verbal variables, further variables have also been identified in recent research, such as the relationship and roles between the participants and whether sex risk/responsibility are mentioned (Bragg & Buckingham, 2002). ‘Context’ is another important variable that was measured in a recent study, which may be defined as place (such as bar or bedroom), or whether the behaviour is serious or humorous, or presented as positive or negative (Bragg & Buckingham, 2002). A study conducted by Bragg and Buckingham in 2002 pointed out that many sexual acts are presented in humorous contexts on screens.

The Common Weaknesses

Some common weaknesses emerged from previous studies of sex on television. First, many previous content studies, especially the early studies in this field, used limited or problematic definitions of sexual content on television. A significant recent study carried out by Kunkel et al. (1996) defined sexual content as any depiction of sexual activity, sexually suggestive behaviour, or talk about sexuality or sexual activity. The actions which could be considered as a sexual behaviour must convey a sense of potential or a likelihood of sexual intimacy. The depiction of sexual content includes visual and verbal explicit and implicit references to sexual activities. Kunkel et al.’s (1996) study offered a comprehensive and exact definition of sexual content on television. However, some previous studies in this field ignore the utterances and scenes that subtly present sexual activities; they only investigated
explicit physical behaviour in scenes; for example, Franzblau et al.’s (1977) study of sexual content only examined physically intimate behaviour.

In a study carried out by Sprafkin and Silverman (1981), sexual content was defined as physically intimate and sexual behaviours. A limited definition of sexual content might omit some euphemistic references to sexual activities, such as scenes without any depiction of physical sexual behaviours but which, however, imply sexual content through double entendre. Moreover, those studies that narrowly defined sexual content as physically intimate behaviour normally ignored verbal references to sex on television (Franzblau et al., 1977; Fernandez-Collado et al., 1978; Silverman et al., 1979; Greenberg et al., 1980).

Secondly, previous content analysis studies have used limited units of analysis. The basic measurement unit of most previous studies was the mean frequency per hour that sexual content is seen, heard or implied. (Franzblau et al., 1977; Fernandez-Collado et al., 1978; Silverman et al., 1979; Greenberg et al., 1980; Sprafkin & Silverman, 1981; Sapolsky, 1982). This measurement unit is simple and can be easily used by coders and it also provides an unbiased examination that is not influenced by dramatic structures (such as a ‘scene’), or by the length of the programme; however, this unit of analysis fails to measure the length of each sexual scene. Obviously, scenes which contain a 20-second-shot of kissing convey much more sexual information than those containing a one-second quick flash of kissing. This could bias the result of the amount and level of sexual content in programmes.

Thirdly, the coding frames in previous content analysis studies have been narrowly defined and failed to incorporate attributes of sexual activity that might be important in terms of triggering specific reactions. Many previous studies only developed simple lists of intimate behaviours, such as kissing, hugging, intimate touching, and sexual intercourse, in order to study the sexual content on television (Franzblau et al., 1977; Fernandez-Collado et
al., 1978; Silverman et al., 1979; Greenberg et al., 1980; Sprafkin & Silverman, 1981; Sapolsky, 1982). Furthermore, none of the coding frames used in previous studies were informed by reviews of audience research. Audience researchers investigate how audiences react to sexual content on television and this can sometimes give clues about the specific audience effects of particular content or format features on television. Previous content analysis studies failed to use these clues to design the coding frames and then infer the corresponding audience reactions.

**Sex in Soap Operas**

In addition to studies of sex on prime-time television programmes, after 1980, some studies went more specific and focused on the sexual acts in soap operas (Greenberg et al., 1981; Lowry et al., 1981; Greenberg & D’Alessio, 1985; Olson, 1994). The measurement frames used in studies about sex on soap operas were very similar to the studies into sex on prime-time television. Research in this field showed that references to sex in soaps were primarily made through verbal exchanges, and the most favoured location for these references was the living room (Greenberg et al., 1981; Lowry et al., 1981; Greenberg & D’Alessio, 1985; Olson, 1994). Focusing specifically on afternoon soap operas, Greenberg et al. (1981) pointed out that soap operas have more sexual content than prime-time television, while the types of representations of sex differed.

The study carried out by Lowry, Love and Kirby (1981) investigated the soap operas from the 1979 seasons found an average of more than six sexual behaviours per hour. As with previous studies, the findings indicated more than three instances of sexual behaviour involving unmarried couples for every instance involving a married couple.

Lowry and Towels (1988) replicated the 1979 research into sexual behaviours in soaps and found a significant increase in sexual acts between unmarried partners; their rate
of sexual behaviour per hour in 1987 was 7.4, compared to 6.6 per hour in 1979.

In the 1990s, Greenberg and his colleague furthered their work on sex in soaps. This study investigated the most popular serialised dramas among teenagers in the United States. The study found that an average of 3.7 sexual acts occurred per hour of soap opera, and the most prominent sexual act was intercourse, which accounted for 62% of all the coded sexual activities and occurred 2.29 times per hour; unmarried intercourse was twice as frequent as married intercourse. The second most popular sexual act was long kissing, averaging just under one act per episode. Together, these two activities accounted for 88% of all coding. Thus, prostitution, rape, and petting were very infrequent, and homosexuality was nil. Among the 110 coded acts, around 70% were verbal (Greenberg & Buerkel-Rothfuss, 1993).

The most favoured locations of sexual acts were the living room (31%), outdoors (19%), the bedroom (13%), at work (9%) and a wide variety of unique locales (28%), such as cars and restaurants. 39% of the sexual activities identified had happened earlier, 35% were occurring at the time, 16% were anticipated in the future, and 10% consisted of fantasies (Greenberg & Buerkel-Rothfuss, 1993).

Sexual Content in Other Media Formats

Since the 1980s there has been an explosion of sexual content studies across media formats and countries. Social scientists started to use content analysis to examine sexual content, not only in a television context, but also in other media outlets, such as MTV, film, and print advertisements. Analyses of sexual messages in MTV and film employed similar procedures.

Content Analysis of Sex in Magazines

In 1980, Malamuth and Spinner compared the two best-selling erotic magazines, Playboy and Penthouse, for five years, and examined the pictures and cartoons contained in these two magazines. The findings indicated there was an increase in sexually violent pictorials in
both magazines over the 5 years (Malamuth & Spinner, 1980).

In 1985, Winick investigated 430 different sexually explicit magazines sold in an adult bookstore in New York City. The findings suggested 35% of all pages related to women in various degrees of undress and involved in sexual behaviours (Winick, 1985).

In 1986, Scott analysed 6 mass circulation magazines, Reader’s Digest, McCall’s, Life, Time, Newsweek and the Saturday Evening Post for three decades, from 1950 to 1980. All articles in the first four issues from the beginning of each decade were analysed in the study. The quantity of sexual references increased 84% from 1950 to 1960, 16% from 1960 to 1970 and another 68% from 1970 to 1980. These findings indicate that in 1950s, there was an average of 17 references to sex per 100 pages, while in 1980 there was an average of 88 references to sex per 100 pages, or nearly one sexual reference per page (Scott, 1986).

**Content Analysis of Sex in Movies**

Content analysis of the most popular movies in the United States in 1959, 1969 and 1979 demonstrated a trend towards increasing explicitness in depictions of sexual themes, but the themes themselves remained stable (Gunter, 2002:40). Since movies made for cinemas are frequently shown on television, R-rated films could be watched by children and teenagers on cable channels (Yang & Linz, 1990); therefore, some studies have conducted research into sex in R-rated movies.

In 1986, Greenberg investigated 16 R-rated films known to have been popular among adolescents over the previous three years. The findings showed that 9 of the 16 films had been seen by 53-77% of the ninth and tenth graders surveyed; six of the remainder had been seen by 35-46% of the sample (Greenberg et al., 1986). The study found 280 coded sexual acts in the 16 films, or an average of 17.5 per film; on average, 10.8 sexual acts occurred per film hour. Sexual intercourse between unmarried partners was predominant in
all the sexual acts. There were eight unmarried sexual intercourse acts per film, or 46% of all the sexual activity found. All the films contained at least one reference to sexual intercourse. Some extremely sensitive/provocative elements were found in the sample, such as prostitution, which was found an average of three times per film, and homosexuality, which was found in six films.

A majority of the sexual activities were verbal, 36% of them had some visual component and there were more sexual acts initiated by male characters than female. The majority of sexual activities were presented in a serious context; 13% of the visual acts were humorous, as were 28% of the verbal acts. 54% sexual acts were current, 29% were reports of past activities, 14% were future plans and 2% were fantasy/dream situations. Behaviours concurrent with sexual activity were accompanied by background music in 70% of the visual incidents. The most popular location for these acts was the bedroom (25%) and second was the living room (11%); this differs with the studies of sex in soaps that found the most popular location for sexual behaviour was the living room.

Content Analysis of Sex on MTV

Only a limited number of studies have been conducted in which the prevalence of sexual content in music videos has been measured. In one survey of MTV videos that was conducted by Baxter in 1985, for example, researchers drew a random sample of 62 videos from music videos aired on MTV during a week. Then, based on previous analyses of television content, they established the coding instruments, including visual abstraction, sexual behaviour, suggestive dances, violence and crime.

The findings indicated that nearly 60% of the videos sampled contained sexual themes. However, this study was limited by restricted the method used to detect the presence of sexual content in music videos and did not provide measures of how much sexual material
individual video productions contained; even so, it did provide a breakdown of the types of
sexual behaviour identified (Gunter, 2002, p.51). 31% of sexual content was signalled by
devicative clothing, 31% embraces, 27% sexual dancing, 21% other sexually suggestive
movements, 15% scenes of dating or courting, 11% kissing, 11% males chasing females and
vice versa, and 8% using a musical instrument in a sexually suggestive manner.

Around same time, another study conducted by Sherman and Dominick in 1986
found that sexual intimacy existed in more than three quarters of the music videos
examined. Visible sexual activity consisted mostly of touching, kissing, hugging and flirting.
The findings indicated that around half of all the women featured were dressed
provocatively and tended to be displayed as sex objects.

**Content Analysis of Sex on Television in Britain**

The majority of sex in media research has been conducted in the United States. However, in
the last two decades, England and other countries started to investigate sexual content in
their own media outlets. In Britain, since 1990, substantial studies have been conducted by
the BSC (Broadcasting Standards Council) to study sexual activity and nudity on British
television. The content analysis used by the BSC was similar methodology to that used in the
US studies and involved the coding of 227 programmes and 524 advertisements. The sample
was drawn from the four main UK television channels (BBC1, BBC2, ITV and Channel Four)
between 6pm and midnight.

The findings revealed that in a total of 227 programmes and 524 advertisements
there were 57 scenes of sexual activity. The most common sexual behaviour appearing on
screen was kissing, which was found in over half the scenes (53%) and almost one in four
scenes (23%) presented sexual intercourse; other scenes were pre-coital (11%) or post-coital
(9%), and there were two scenes (4%) in which sex was implied though sound without the
image. Although, more than one third of the relationships in which sexual activity occurred were established relationships, only 9% of sexual activities happened between married couples. This result coincides with the results of studies conducted in previous American studies, which found that most sexual activities happened between unmarried partners. There was no evidence of homosexuality in the sample; all the sexual activities portrayed were heterosexual.

**Content Analysis of Sex in Advertising**

Most of the research into sex in advertising, like studies into sex on television, has derived from the United States. The earliest research about sex in advertising began in the United States in the 1960s when researchers using social science methods attempted to understand the role of sex in advertising for consumer behaviour. In the early studies, researchers only tried to understand exactly how seductive women images influenced the selling of brands and products (Steadman, 1969; Trytten, 1973; Alexander & Judd, 1978). Early studies of sex in advertising focused on whether sexual images contained in advertising enhanced brand recall. Sexual content in those early studies was classified as sexy images of women undressing. Detailed content analysis on the features and representation of sex in advertisement emerged in the 1980s. Most content analysis in advertising focused on television and print commercials. In general, the measurement approaches used in studies of advertisements mirrored the techniques used in studies of programmes and videos. In the context of sex in advertising research, researchers begin by developing coding sheets containing the level of nudity or types of intimate behaviours to study the sexual content used in advertising.

In 1985, a content analysis of 806 television advertisements from 1982 and 1983 was conducted by Soley and Reid in United States. The samples were coded as sexual/non-sexual
and for the type of sexual activities portrayed. It was found that over 33% advertisements contained sexual elements. Among the three television networks, NBC most frequently used sexual appeals when advertising their programmes (Soley & Reid, 1985). The methodology in this study was quite simple: advertisements were coded as either sexual or nonsexual based on their content. However, this study was restricted in its analysis due to a lack of a particular definition to distinguish between sexual and nonsexual materials.

One year later, Soley and Kurzbard compared the dress of adult models in magazine advertisements in 1964 and 1984. In the study, all advertisements containing adult models were coded for the degree of dress/undress of the portrayed models, using the categories developed by Reid et al. (1984). The levels of nudity were coded as demure, seductive, partially clad and nude. The findings revealed that nudity was more prevalent in magazine advertisements in 1984 than in 1964. They found that 31% of women and 6% of men dressed in revealing clothes in magazine advertisements in 1964. Two decades later, 35% women and 14% were dressed sexually in magazine advertising (Soley & Kurzbard, 1986).

Physical contact between male and female characters was also coded in this study. The sub-categories of physical intimacy were: (1) displaying simple contact such as holding hands; (2) more intimate contact, including kissing, embracing, playful ‘wrestling’, where the arm of at least one model was around body of the other; and (3) imagery which contained sexual intercourse. The findings indicated that the most frequent types of male/female contact in 1964 and 1984 adverts were embracing, touching and other contact more intimate than holding hands. The 1984 adverts showed higher levels of physical contact compared to 1964.
In addition, the content of the headlines of all the advertisements were coded as verbal references. This data showed that when sexual elements are present they are more likely to be visual than verbal, and that this tendency has increased over time.

This measurement framework in this content analysis is relatively comprehensive and reasonable. First, the study gave a definition of the different extents of nudity and physical contact between male and female characters. Secondly, the coding sheets covered both visual and verbal references to sex content. The levels of nudity and types of physical contact as visual references were examined in the study. The use of the content of the headlines as verbal references was also investigated. Thirdly, the gender differences were focused on in this study; the sample in this research was divided into men’s magazines, women’s magazines and general interest magazines. The sex of the model involving physical contact and nudity was also investigated and the findings coincided with gender stereotyping studies; female models were more likely to be portrayed as suggestively clad, partially clad or nude than male models.

In 1998, Lin analysed 505 coding units sampled from 8 pm to 11 pm on the major American broadcast networks and attempted to examine how sexual appeals employed by male and female models were utilized in United States television commercials. The variables in this content analysis included body shape, clothing references, physical contact, sexiness, physical attractiveness and verbal innuendo. The racial backgrounds of models were also covered. The findings indicated 12% of models appear in some state of undress, and 8% involved sexual behaviour. These findings indicate that while both male and female models were depicted as equal sensual beings, females were presented as sex objects more often than males.
This study clearly defined what type of content in advertising was coded as sexual appeals. The coding categories covered many different matters. The characters in the advertising were coded based on age, gender, body shape, and the extent to which their clothing was revealing. Sexual behaviours were coded into three dimensions. The subcategories were (1) physical innuendo, including flirting, dressing, undressing, bathing or swimming; (2) verbal innuendo; (3) physical contact, including hand-holding, fondling, embracing, kissing or implied sexual physical activity. The physical attractiveness of the model was also coded. The model was coded under ‘not attractive’, ‘attractive’ and ‘very attractive’. The model was also examined to determine if he or she was a sexual object in the advertisement. The coding sheet used in this study provided a comprehensive analysis of sex in television advertising.

However, this study was limited in some areas. First, this study simply coded sexual behaviours with different intimacy/sexual levels under physical innuendo and physical contact; it did not record exactly what type of sexual behaviour was portrayed in the commercial. Therefore, the findings could not reflect the level of sexual content represented in advertising. Secondly, the holding hands category was coded as physical contact. However, in the author’s opinion, the holding hands behaviour may not always contain sexual appeal. This might cause some non-sexual imagery to be coded as sexual content. Thirdly, the ‘attractiveness’ variable is quite objective and hard to catalogue. This might cause dissension among the coders and influence the reliability of the study.

In 1999, Reichert et al. published a paper entitled ‘Cheesecake and Beefcake: No Matter How You Slice It, Sexual Explicitness in Advertising Continues to Increase’, which reported on a study of sexual content and gender portrayals in advertising by assessing images of women and men in magazine adverts in 1983 and 1993. The findings showed that
both genders were portrayed more explicitly and in more sexually intimate contact in 1993 than in 1983; images of men were also more explicit in the 1993 sample. This study primarily focused on the increasing trend of men being portrayed as sexual objects in advertising.

In 2003, Reichert collected over 2,863 ads from six American consumer magazines from between 1992 and 1998. These advertisements were coded for dress and interpersonal interaction. The model's clothing was classified as not sexual or sexual according to the amount and style of clothing. These coding categories were developed from a classification scheme used in a previous study (Soley & Reid, 1986). When at least one female and male model were present, sexual interaction contained in advertising was classified as nonsexual (no contact or holding hands) or sexual content (kissing or more). The results suggested that advertisements targeted at young people were 65% more likely to portray revealing dressed models and 128% more likely to represent sexual behaviours than those aimed at mature adults (Reichert, 2003). In the ads for young adults, female models were 3.7 times more likely to be portrayed sexually than male models.

It is worth pointing out that in Reichert’s study hand holding was coded as nonsexual interaction, which is inconsistent with the study carried out by Lin (1998). In the author’s opinion, it is hard to convey sexual information through hand holding behaviour and so it is more reasonable to code hand holding as nonsexual behaviour.

This study was limited by not examining verbal references to sex. In certain cases, the advertising did not show nude models or sexual acts, but the headline contained sexual words; the coding schemes could not capture the sexual content contained in this type of advertising. Moreover, the coding sheet failed to code the imagery and headline contained
innuendo and double entendre to sex. As a result, the narrow focus on sexy imagery precludes subtle sexual messages to be captured.

In 2004, Reichert and Carpenter analysed the magazine advertisements from 1983 to 2003. The findings indicated there was a general increasing trend in sexual dress and intimate contact from 1983 to 2003, and the female models were more explicitly dressed in 2003 (49%) than in 1993 (40%); in addition, sexual content was more explicit and prevalent in women’s and men’s magazines compared to newsweeklies from 1983 to 2003. For instance, 78% of women in ads in men’s magazines were sexually attired (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004).

This study employed the coding scheme used by Soley and Reid (1988) to code the level of explicitness of the model, sexual interactions were coded based on the level of physical contact between the models and were classified into four categories: (1) no contact, (2) simple contact (such as holding hands), (3) intimate contact (such as kissing and embracing) and (4) very intimate contact (such as depiction or suggestion of sexual intercourse or behaviour). The behaviour with each category becomes more sexually explicit from Level 1 through to Level 4.

This study coded nudity and physical contact into different sexual level. It provided an accurate indication of the sexual content level of advertisements, but it may be too simplistic to generalize the sexual meaning of each of the different levels. Examination of verbal references and double entendre are also lacking in this study. Sexual meaning only could be captured when it is represented by a sexual image. This study was also limited to using the level of nudity to rate the level of sexual content.
The Common Weaknesses

Some common weaknesses have emerged in these previous studies of sex in advertising. At first, previous content studies on sex in advertising have used limited or problematic definitions of sexual content in advertising. Particularly in early studies on sex in print advertising, sexual appeals in advertising were narrowly defined as sexy imagery of seductive female models (Steadman, 1969; Trytten, 1973; Alexander & Judd, 1978). In these studies, sexual appeals only could be captured when they were represented by a sexual female image. These studies were also limited to only using the level of nudity to scale the level of sexual content.

In 1985, a study conducted by Soley and Reid on sex in advertising started to define sexual content as physical contact between the male and female characters. However the definition used in this study was restricted by the fact that it did not make a distinction between sexual and non-sexual physical contact between characters. According to the Kunkel et al. (1996), potential or likely sexual intimacy was the criteria used to judge the sexual or nonsexual content. This study was therefore limited to defining hand holding behaviour as sexual content, when it is hardly likely to convey sexual intimacy.

Secondly, previous content analysis has used limited units of analysis. The basic measurement unit of most previous studies was the number of sexually-themed advertisements (Soley & Reid, 1985; Lin, 1998; Reichert, 1999; Reichert, 2003; Reichert, 2004). This unit of analysis is most suitable for examining print advertising which normally contains imagery of single sexual act or behaviour whereas it is possible for more than one sexual scene or interaction to be contained in one television commercial, and so it would not be possible to capture the nature and types of each sexual act featured in advertising by using the number of sexually-themed advertisements as analysis unit.
Thirdly, the coding frames in previous content analysis studies were narrowly defined and failed to incorporate attributes of sexual activity that might be important in terms of triggering specific reactions. Apart from Soley and Kurzbard’s (1986) study, the coding frames used in previous studies failed to incorporate verbal references to sex. Moreover, none of the coding frames used in previous studies were informed by reviews of audience research. The previous public surveys revealed specific audience effects and attitudes caused by particular content or format features in advertising. Previous content analysis failed to utilize these clues to design the coding frames and then infer the corresponding audience reactions.

Finally, it should be noted that previous research has used limited samples of television output. The sample in the study on sex on television carried out by Lin (1998) was composed of one-week of prime-time commercials. This prime-time sample could not reflect whether the sexual appeals featured before or after 9pm on screens. Previous audience research has found that 9pm is regarded as an important time boundary that could influence the audience’s attitude toward sexual content. Sexual content showing after 9pm seems to be accepted more easily by audiences (ITC, 1995). In Britain, scheduling restrictions are placed on broadcasters in regard to the inclusion of certain types of content in television. Before 9pm no program on the mainstream terrestrial channels may be broadcast that are unsuitable for children (Under 16 years) (ITC, 1998). In Britain, this represents a critical watershed after which restrictions of broadcast content are gradually relaxed as it is presumed that the children’s audiences will rapidly decline after this hour.
Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Sex in Ads

Some studies have been conducted to analyse advertisements from a single country, while other researchers have investigated the similarities and differences of advertisements from two or more countries. These comparative research methods have long been used in this field to identify, analyse and explain similarities and differences of sex in advertising across societies do have some merits. Comparative research can lead to fresh, exciting insights and a deeper understanding of sex in advertising that are of central concern in different countries. They can lead to the identification of gaps in knowledge and may point to possible directions that could be followed about which the researcher may not previously have been aware. They could also help to sharpen the focus of analysis of the subject under study by suggesting new perspectives and areas of interest (Hantrais, 1996).

Comparative research was conducted in an attempt to identify and illuminate similarities and differences, not only in the observed characteristics of particular institutions, systems or practices, but also in the search for possible explanations in terms of national likeness and unlikeness (Hantrais, 1996).

A number of cross-cultural comparison studies of sexual content in advertising emerged in the early 1990s. Social scientists have observed an increase in the amount of sexual content in advertising worldwide and have criticized media imperialism for disseminating overt, westernized sexuality (Nelson & Paek, 2007). Some researchers started to explore sexuality in advertising across multiple countries.

Biswas and Carlet (1992) conducted a cross-cultural comparison study of print advertisements from the United States and France in terms of emotional appeals, information content, and uses of humour and sex. Sex appeals in advertisements were evaluated by the judges who participated in the survey. The judges were required to identify
whether an advertisement used sex appeal and, if so, whether the sex appeal was depicted pictorially or verbally. The judges also identified whether there was nudity in the advertisements and whether the setting was romantic or non-romantic.

The findings revealed that sexual appeals were depicted in advertisements in both countries, but that French advertisements contained more sex appeals than American. As to the type of models portrayed in advertising, 8.1% of the French advertisements using sex appeal contained only males, 72.6% only females, and 6.5% both male and female models; whereas, 75% of the American advertisements using sex appeal had only female models, 4.17% had only male models, and 12.5% used both male and female models. Only 1.6% French advertisements with sexual appeal used nudity. Finally, 44.8% of the advertisements used a romantic setting to depict the sexual appeals, compared to 16% in American commercials (Biswas & Carlet, 1992:73).

The use of sex appeals in advertising was evaluated by the judges who participated in the survey. The advertisements were coded by two judges. Advertisements from both countries were coded by a native coder to reduce misunderstandings caused by cultural differences. This study lacked a specific definition of sex appeals and systemic coding sheets. All advertisements were coded according to the subjective judgement of the coders. Due to different cultural backgrounds, the American and French coders might have different opinions about what material should be coded as sexual appeals and nudity. A cross-cultural study needs to provide a specific definition and coding categories to reduce disagreements caused by cultural differences.

In 1996, Piron and Young compared nudity within German and U.S. women’s magazine advertisements in 1986, 1989, and 1992. They noted that, although a shift in the use of showing flesh was observed over time, from the use of partially clad models (showing
bare body parts) to suggestively clad (such as open blouses and tight clothing), these images actually increased the depiction of women as sex objects. (Piron & Young, 1996:10) German advertisements contained less nudity than U.S. advertisements, even when the local editions of Vogue magazine were compared. This study simply compared the level of nudity used in German and U.S. women’s magazines. The measurement framework for this study was straightforward and could be used easily by the coders.

In 1997, Cheng compared Chinese and US television commercials and reported that Chinese women wore less sexually suggestive clothing than their US counterparts did. This article analysed the gender roles portrayed in a total of 667 Chinese and US television commercials from 1996. The results suggested that in both countries advertising contained more men in occupational roles and more women in decorative situations. Chinese television advertisements were found to contain more gender stereotyping than American television advertisements. In addition, gender-role portrayals were also found to have much to do with the product categories being advertised (Cheng, 1997).

This study compared gender roles in television advertising under the Eastern and Western cultures by recording each model’s gender, occupational role, age, race, dress and the product categories they were trying to promote. The coding sheets used in this study were quite comprehensive.

A recent study of cross-country boundaries research was conducted by Nelson and Paek in 2007. They examined the degrees of sexuality in advertising within Cosmopolitan magazine across seven countries (Brazil, China, France, India, South Korea, Thailand, and the United States). Their findings showed that even within a transnational Western magazine, degrees of sexuality were various. The presence of Western models, sexual freedom values, and a less authoritarian political culture contributed to greater sexuality in magazine
advertising (Nelson & Paek, 2007). This study was also concerned with the differences which exist in the way that women have been portrayed cross-culturally. It is worth pointing out that at the date this study was conducted, Chinese advertisements showed much lower degrees of sexuality than other countries did, and there was a high contrast between domestic and international models in terms of the level of nudity (Nelson & Paek, 2005).

Developed from a previous coding scheme (Prion & Young, 1996), Nelson and Paek defined nudity as an independent variable for the degrees of sexuality measure. This scale examined degrees of nudity in an ordinal fashion on a 5-level scale that ranges from 0 = ‘no sexual appeal/fully clothed’ to 4 = ‘nudity with bare bodies, wearing translucent under apparel or lingerie, poses where the model wears only a towel’ (Nelson & Paek, 2007: p.376).

This study was limited, in that it restricted its analysis to the level of sexuality by only examining the level of explicitness. The study ignored the nature of sexual behaviour portrayed in advertising which could influence the level of sexuality as much as nudity.

Most of the previous content analysis research looked at the amount and nature of sexual content in television and print commercials. In assessing the nature of the sexual content on television advertising, researchers collected a block of advertisements from specific channels in a specific period and analysed whether the visual and verbal messages contained sexual appeals. Magazine researchers normally collected sexy images from specific magazines then examined the images and languages with reference to sexuality. There were three main common goals across all the existing studies, to examine the level of sexual content, the type of sexual representation and gender issues in sexual advertising.

**The Level of Sex**

How much sex has been shown in advertising? The dominant method of examining the level of sexual content in television commercials is to develop a coding sheet which contains a list
of physical and intimate behaviours, which contain sexual meaning, such as kissing, intimate touching and intercourse, and then to count the number of instances of these verbal and visual sex appeals. In the study of magazine advertisements, many researchers have examined the level of explicitness of the sexual imagery and nudity by recording the amount of sexual behaviour and the amount of clothes; the level of nudity being used as the standard measure for the degree of sexuality. The nudity scale was developed and used extensively from very early studies to the most recent (for example, Alexander 1978; Reichert & Carpenter, 2004; Nelson & Paek, 2005).

Two central trends have emerged from this literature. Both television and magazine advertising content have grown more sexually-explicit over time and contain more nudity. For example, a recent content analysis of 2,545 ads drawn from 36 issues of sex magazines conducted by Reichert et al. in 1999 showed that 40% of the female models were dressed provocatively in 1993 in contrast with 28% in 1983. Meanwhile, in 1993, 53% of magazine advertisements contained sexual behaviour between male and female models, which was the case for only 21% of advertisements in 1983 (Reichert, 2003a).

Secondly, the magazine advertisements tended to contain more nudity and sexual content than television advertisements. Unlike magazines, television is subject to indecency restrictions, due to its ubiquitous reach (Lin, 1997). As well as an increasing trend in television advertising, magazine advertisements have been found to have become much sexier between the 1960s and 1980s (Schorin & Vanden Bergh, 1985; Soley and Kurzhard, 1986; Soley and Reid, 1988; Sullivan and O’Connor, 1998).

The Nature of Sexual Content

Which characteristics of sexual content have been evaluated? Courtney and Whipple (1983) suggested that many factors need to be considered in gender or sex on television studies,
including verbal and visual references, and the context of the scene also needs to be investigated. The same consideration should be applied to sex in advertising studies. Previous studies coded a number of common factors of sexual content in television and magazine advertising, including: sexual content (kissing, hugging, sexual intercourse); visual references (nudity and other visual factors such as setting, and context); and verbal references (headline, sex talks, and voice-overs).

This is inconsistent with the results of a sex on television study that found sexual content was mainly portrayed as verbal references. The content analyses of sex in advertising revealed that the vast majority of sexual content in advertising placed an emphasis on visual representations of people (Biswas et al., 1992; Soley & Kurzbard, 1986). For example, a recent analysis of sex in advertising showed that visual aspects of commercials were overwhelmingly described (Reichert & Ramirez, 2000). Sexual language and verbal references to sexual activities have apparent been less analysed in magazine and television advertising (Lin, 1998; Soley & Reid, 1985; Walker, 2000). Moreover, in the field of sex in advertising studies, especially research into magazine advertisements, researchers used the amount of clothing as an operationalization of sexual content (Steadman, 1969; Alexander & Judd, 1978; Weller et al., 1979). Soley and Reid (1988) identified the levels of nudity as demure, suggestive, partially and nude in their study, which has been utilized by many researchers. As a type of sexual information offered in advertising (Reichert, 2003), nudity has been evaluated in most previous studies.

**Women as Sex Objects**

What types of people are involved in the sexual activities? Previous studies have consistently pointed out gender differences in the way that female and male characters
were dressed and portrayed in advertisements. Adverts which contained sexual content were criticised for portraying women as sex objects.

In comparison to their male counterparts, female models are more frequently shown as suggestively clad, nude and sexualized in both television and print advertisements. For example, according to Reichert’s (2003) study, sexy female models are approximately 3.7 times more likely than sexy male models to appear in advertising. An analysis of the gender role in magazines conducted by Krassas et al. (2001) showed a strong tendency to define women primarily by their looks and bodies, along with giving representations of women as being sexually available.

The prevalence of the portrayal of sexy women in the media has aroused strong public concerns about using women’s sexual activities as the main criterion of their attractiveness and about the depiction of women as sexual objects waiting to please men’s sexual desires (Peter & Valkenburg, 2007). The notion of women as sex objects will be further explained in the following paragraph which is focused on gender stereotyping in media.

**Gender Role Stereotyping on Screen**

In addition, there is extensive related literature on gender role stereotype studies in the media, especially in the sexual media. In contrast to content analysis studies which focus on the levels and features of sexual content in media, some social scientists have investigated gender-role stereotyping on television and in other media.

Gender-role stereotyping is about the fixed patterns of men and women portrayed in mass media (Courtney & Whipple, 1983). It concerns the manner in which men and women are depicted within specific contexts and settings. Gender role stereotyping embraces a wide range of beliefs and attitudes about masculinity and femininity that can be
traced back to the mid-1950s. In 1954, Head initially focused on gender role portrayals in American television drama and reported that gender stereotyping was common on screen (Head, 1954).

Following Head’s study, many further studies were conducted in this field in America and European countries. The findings indicated that women tend to be shown as much less professional as men and in inferior roles to men in the media (McNeil, 1975; Butler & Paisley, 1980; Tuchman, Daniels & Benet, 1978). Since the 1990s, some Eastern countries have also started to investigate the woman’s role in mass media. In 2003, Japanese researcher Arima examined portrayals of men and women in television advertising in Japan. The author reported that women were significantly more likely than men to appear as "attention-getters", which she defined as when models wore revealing clothing and close-up camera angles focused on their eyes and breasts (Arima, 2003). In the same year, Indian researcher Karan (2003) examined images of women in women's magazines in India. She reported that White or Western models were more often placed in the sex kitten/sensual role in advertisements than their Indian counterparts (Karan, 2003).

The majority of gender role studies have focused on women’s roles on screen, but some researchers have examined sex-role stereotyping in other media outlets, such as film, magazine advertisements, internet, and video games. A typical example is Goffman’s (1979) gender study of magazine advertisements. After examining almost 500 US advertisements, Goffman (1979) initiated the earliest examination of advertising visuals and interpretations of what they convey for gender relations and meanings. He cited that poses and body positions could create or reinforce gender stereotypes. This study has been has been criticized on methodological grounds for making exploratory conceptualizations (Sirakaya & Sonmez; 2000) and for using deliberate rather than random sampling (Kang, 1997). However,
the measurement framework used in this study offered the advantage of exploring less obvious, subtler elements of the advertisements (Nelson & Paek, 2007).

It is worth pointing out that gender stereotyping study in the media does not only cross media formats, but also traverses countries. A series of cross-cultural comparison studies has been conducted by social scientists over last 10 years. Some researchers compared gender stereotyping content in media outlets in different Western countries. For instance, Furnham and Schofield (2000) compared gender stereotyping in Danish and French advertising.

Other social scientists have compared gender-role stereotyping in the context of Eastern and Western cultural backgrounds. For instance, Cheng (1997) compared Chinese and US television commercials and reported that Chinese women appeared to show less provocative nudity than their US counterparts. In 2001, Bresnahan et al. investigated the changing gender roles in prime-time commercial research in Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan and United States. Similarly, another comparison work on Western and Asian models in Singapore, Taiwan, and the US was conducted by Frith et al. in 2005. These previous cross-cultural content analytic studies in this field often draw a link between gender stereotyping level and cultural value differences. The findings suggested that that gender stereotyping in Eastern media has been studied to a greater extent than in their Western counterparts (Bresnahan et al., 2001; Firth et al., 2005)

The stereotyping of gender roles and sex traits by the media might be expected to characterise representations of sexual behaviour (Gunter, 2002). In the context of sexual media, gender stereotyping could be addressed as a subordinate position and a dominant position between male and female in sexual situations. For example, according to a studied carried out by Sapolsky and Tabarlet in 1991, in interactions between men and women, the
male predominates as the initiator. The results indicated that male characters were found to initiate two-thirds of sexual acts and conversations in prime-time television in 1989. However, in the 1979 sample, both sexes had been found to be equally likely to initiate sexual acts.

Another study conducted by Silverman et al. (1979) claimed that females accounted for a greater ratio of kissing, hugging, and affectionate touching, and of implied sexual intercourse than would have been expected on the basis of their overall representation. In a later examination conducted in Britain, males were found to be much more likely than females to engage in extramarital affairs, while males and females were equally likely to make a first-time approach to a member of the opposite sex (Millwood-Hargrave, 1992).

Another illustration of gender stereotyping in media is the observation that women are routinely presented as sexual objects in media outlets (Courtney & Whipple, 1983). The media treat women as objects, primarily as sex objects, who are to be admired, manipulated and used by men (Gunter, 2002; p.111). The prevalence of representations of women as sex objects in the mass media have been criticized for reaffirming the traditional male social predominance and reducing the women’s role, and for belittling the women’s movement itself as a playful prank. (Manca & Manca, 1994).

**Gender Representation in Television Advertising**

Because sex-containing advertisements often contain overt sexual and gender ideology, gender stereotyping in such advertisements has been a source of increasing concern for many years. Over the past three decades, many studies have been conducted to examine the ways in which men and women are depicted in television advertisements and how various stereotypes differ from country to country and change over time (McArthur & Resko, 1975; Manstead & McCulloch, 1981; Dambrot et al., 1988; Gunter, 1995).
One research issue in this field is the ratio of women shown in advertising in contrast with men and researchers have tried to prove the inequality of portrayals of females in advertising. This type of study focuses on gender stereotyping in advertising and tries to investigate whether women are less represented in television commercials in contrast with men. In other words, these studies focus on the frequency of female roles in television advertising. In general the findings indicated that there were more male characters portrayed in television advertising. Advertisements utilize male actors to provide voice-overs more often than female actors (Manstead & McCulloch, 1981; Smith, 1994). In a British study, Manstead & McCulloch (1981) found that 94% of voice-overs in television advertising were male. Furnham and Bitar (1993)’s study also confirmed that males were more likely to appear as voice-overs than females.

Other researchers have investigated the occupational roles women play in television adverts. For example, these studies tried to figure out whether women more often portrayed as housewives or supporting roles, and whether women are presented in the advertisements as being brainless sex objects. In general, the findings indicate that women have tended to be shown in much less professional and inferior roles than men in mass media (McNeil, 1975; Tuchman et al. 1978; Butler & Paisley, 1980). In 1975, MaArthur and Resko (1975) examined gender roles in American television commercials of the time. The coding sheets of this study successfully suggested seven coding categories for the central characters in advertising such as 1) Frequency of male and female character; 2) Basis for the credibility of male and female central characters; 3) Role of male and female central characters; 4) Location of male and female central characters; 5) Arguments given by male and female central characters; 6) Rewards offered or reaped by male and female central characters; 7) Product type associated with male and female central characters. The coding
sheet contained these variable measures that provided a detailed and comprehensive examination of the gender role of central characters. The coding sheet used in this study have formed the basis of nearly all subsequent research and have been widely employed by following research including cross-cultural studies of gender roles in television advertising (Hurtz and Durkin, 1997; Neto and Pinto, 1998; Furnham and Thomson, 1999).

Moreover, some other variables have been added to coding sheet in recent gender role stereotyping in television advertising study, such as camera techniques, music and ethnicity of central figures. In 2003, Japanese researcher Arima examined portrayals of men and women in television advertising in Japan. The author reported that women were significantly more likely than men to appear as "attention-getters", which she defined as when models wore revealing clothing and close-up camera angles focused on their eyes and breasts (Arima, 2003). The special camera techniques used in these advertising to emphasize female body figures to enhance sexual meanings of the scenes and contribute to the notion that women as ‘sex objects’. A study on gender role presentation on children television advertising carried out by Furnham et al. (1997) concerned the ethnicity of central figures. The findings showed that majority British and American television advertising targeting the children used White male and female models, and was followed by Black characters. Asian and Hispanic figures were quite rare in television advertising. Furnham et al. (1997)’s study also added music variable in coding frame. The finding showed that music was present in a clear majority of advertisements on children’s weekend television. Some researchers have pointed out that music can be used as an element to enhance consumers’ memory of adverts and the advertised products (Stewart et al., 1990). Music is an element that could play an important role in television adverts.
Cross-cultural Study of Gender Role Stereotyping in Television Advertising

Some studies have focused on the changes in gender stereotypes over time and across cultures in television advertising. A study carried out by Ferrante and Kingsley (1998) examined the portrayal of women in American television advertising over a fifteen year period. They compared the changes that occurred in many codes, such as the gender of voice-overs, the gender of characters appearing on screen, the occupation of the characters and the settings. The findings revealed that the portrayed occupations of male and female characters have undergone significant changes since 1972. Women have appeared in a wider variety of roles rather than doing house chores over time.

In 1993, Furnham and Bitar examined the portrayals of men and women in British television commercials and compared the results across cultures with previous investigations done in America, Britain, Canada and Italy. The results of this study indicated that in British television advertising females are more often portrayed in a dependent role with males in an interview/narrator role; females also portrayed much more frequently in the home and are younger; in addition, there were no significant differences in the product types (Furnham and Bitar, 1993). The findings showed that compared to previous content analysis of British television advertising (Manstead & McCulloch, 1981), gender stereotyping was more or less constant; however, the gender stereotyping in British advertising was weaker than in Italy and was comparable to North America.

The coding categories used in this study were comprehensive, including gender, mode of presentation, credibility, role, location, age, argument, reward type, product type, background and end comment. However, the comparison results of this study are limited to the disunion of the coding sheets. Apart from the study conducted in Italy, the studies
compared used different coding sheets and this could influence the results of the comparison.

In 1997, Cheng compared Chinese and US television commercials and reported that Chinese women show significantly less flesh than American women in television advertising. In 2001, Mary et al. compared the gender roles in television advertisements in Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan and the United States. These two cross-cultural content analysis studies compared gender role stereotyping in television advertising within Eastern and Western cultures. The findings showed that gender stereotyping is more prevalent in Eastern television advertising than in its Western counterparts.

The recent cross-culture comparisons conducted by Furnham and Paltzer (2010), updated the review by considering 30 studies in over 20 Eastern and Western countries, based on the McArughur and Resko (1975) content categories. After examined over 8,000 advertisements, the findings indicated that national and cultural differences influenced the level and nature of gender stereotypes in television advertising. The findings also indicated there was more gender role stereotyping in Asian television advertising compared to European and American television commercials. However, there were some common limitations to the cross-cultural comparison studies.

Furnham and Mak (1999) pointed out three limitations on cultural comparison studies. The first limitation is getting channel equivalence based on similar viewing figures, target audience and philosophy. The countries examined each have a number of national and international channels, and different channels are aimed at different audiences and so might air different products. This might influence the way gender is portrayed. The second limitation is sample equivalence. Commercials vary according to the time of day, due to the different target customers having different viewing patterns. Thus, cross-cultural differences
of gender stereotyping in television advertising could be easily caused by differences in the channels and times chosen, rather than by actual cultural differences. Thirdly, the studies were limited by the problem of coding sheets. Although most studies employed McArthur and Resko’s (1975) coding sheet, many of the studies added and deleted coding categories for their own purposes. The comparison between studies therefore did not use exactly the same coding sheet might affect the results. All these limitations mean that it is difficult to attribute any difference to culture rather than to methodological differences (Furnham & Mark, 1999).

Conclusion

The Chapter Three covered ground in several academic areas including gender, sex, different media channels, cross-cultural considerations etc. In order to make the discussion more coherent, Diagram 3.1 is added to illustrate how the different literature affects the present study. It would be a contribution in itself to see how these overlap and how they highlight the gaps in existing knowledge. This would also help to provide a context for the study. This initial discussion of the literature will be revisited in Chapter 10, with the gaps in knowledge completed and new areas for research identified.
Diagram 3.1 How the different literature affects the present study

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**Research Questions**

Previous parts of this chapter provided a review of the literature related to sexual content on television and in advertising. Additionally, Chapter one provided a background to historical issues surrounding sex and gender in British and Chinese society. All these reviews were used as theoretical background to produce a comprehensive analysis of the sexual content of Chinese and British television adverts.

The review of previous content analysis studies in this chapter was designed to help understand a number of key aspects of the study of the representation of sex in advertising (and in other non-advertising content). A number of questions have been explored, such as ‘How has sex been measured in a quantitative fashion?’ and ‘How much sex is shown?’
As we have already seen, the amount of sex the media actually contain has been widely investigated by previous research in this field. This subject has also aroused wide public concern and has been investigated by many audience researchers (Franzblau et al., 1977; Sprafkin & Sliverman, 1981, Fernadez-Collado et al., 1978; Kunkel, 1996). Consequently, the research needs to examine the amount of sexual content in advertising.

The literature review of previous content analysis studies also focused on ‘how sex has been classified and what characteristics of sexual content have been evaluated?’ This included identifying the different types of sexual behaviour, the settings or contexts in which sex occurs, and the types of on-screen actors involved in sexual behaviour. The types of sexual depictions that occur in television advertisements would be examined in this thesis.

Many previous studies in advertising have concerned the relationship between the type of product categories and sexual content in advertising (Boddewyn & Kunz, 1991; Kilbourne & Wunderlich, 1979). In addition, according to previous audience research, the product type is a very important element of reference for audiences’ acceptance of televised sexual content. Consequently, this analysis aims to examine whether sexual themes were more likely to occur in adverts associated with specific product ranges than in others. Moreover, evidence of sexual representations in television advertisements that might cause public offence and breach advertising standard codes will also be explored in this study.

Previous cross-national comparison work, especially studies comparing advertising in Western and Eastern cultural contexts, has offered more insights into the differences in the way sex is used in advertising in different parts of the world (Nelson & Paek, 2007; Cheng, 1997). It has not only indicated that nudity and sexual content in advertising cross countries’ boundaries and could be analysed in a worldwide context, but it also shows how sexual
content is presented differently in cultural and national contexts (Nelson & Paek, 2005; Cheng, 1997). There are many differences in cultural values, social systems, media regulation between China and Britain. The comparison between sex in television adverts in Chinese and British will break new ground. As such there are a number of broad-based research questions that can be posed about the possible differences between them.

This study aims to investigate the representations of sex in Chinese and British television advertisements. The representations of sex include the level and amount of sexual content, the type of sexual depictions and the product type which appears in television advertising. For the first time, a cross-cultural comparison will be made between the sex in television advertising in China and Britain.

Consequently, the researcher has generated the following research questions.

RQ1. How much sex occurs in TV advertisements in Britain?

RQ2. How much sex occurs in TV advertisements in China?

RQ3. What kinds of sexual depictions occur in TV advertisements in Britain?

RQ4. What kinds of sexual depictions occur in TV advertisements in China?

RQ5. What kinds of products is sex most often associated with in TV advertisements in Britain?

RQ6. What kinds of products is sex most often associated with in TV advertisements in China?

RQ7. Is there any evidence of sex in TV advertisements that contravenes codes of practice in Britain?

RQ8. Is there any evidence of sex in TV advertisements that contravenes codes of practice in China?
RQ9. Is there any evidence of sexual representations in TV advertisements that might cause public offence in Britain?

RQ10. Is there any evidence of sexual representations in TV advertisements that might cause public offence in China?

RQ11. What are the key differences in the use of sex in TV advertising in Britain and China?

One of the goals of this study is, through an examination of some audience studies, to determine how viewers articulate their opinions about sex on television and in advertising and to use these findings to inform the design of the coding frame. The next chapter will review audience research on sex on television and advertising.
Chapter Four

Audiences and Sex in Advertising

Aside from content analysis, some research has derived its measures of sexual content in the media from audience research in which members of the audience (or readership) are questioned about their opinions concerning sexual content in the media. Self-completed questionnaires, individual face-to-face interviews, interventionist experiments, and focus groups were used in these studies to investigate the audience’s attitudes and responses to sexual content in media productions and publications. This study tries to employ these attitudes and responses by reviewing previous audience research to inform the design of the coding frame.

Researchers adopting this perspective have considered a wide range of sexual content in advertisements, including the emotional impact of sexy advertisements; the influence of sex on brand recognition and recall; whether sex sells; the gender differences between audience’s responses; and the possible harms of using sex in advertising, especially in regard to young audiences and the perpetuation of female stereotypes. Briefly speaking, audience research can be divided into public opinion surveys and advertising effect research.

This chapter will investigate whether the depictions of sex in the media are acceptable to the public, and will explore in greater depth the opinions that ordinary people hold about different types of sexual representation on screens by reviewing previous audience research. This chapter will also outline the effects of media portrayals of sexual scenes and the theories that attempt to explain these immediate reactions or long-term effects.
Public Opinion about Sex in the Media

Many studies have explored public opinion about sex in media. These studies have examined the public’s opinion about whether there is too much sex in media outlets and attitudes towards different kind of sexual portrayal (Gunter, 2002). The key issue in previous public opinion studies is examining public opinion and responses about the amount and level of sex shown on screen. In other words, measuring tolerance and the acceptability to the public of sexual content on screen is the main goal of public opinion study.

Public Tolerance and Acceptability

In the United States, since Steiner’s 1960 study of public opinion about sex on screen, many researchers have voiced concerns about sexual content on television. Many public opinion polls have reported the dissatisfaction with the extent of sex in television programmes. Studies in this field have revealed audience responses toward the significantly increasing amounts of sexually-oriented television content. In particular, at the end of the 1970s, due to harsh criticisms from audiences, unprecedented attention was paid to the 1977-1978 broadcasting seasons.

The anxiety about showing sexual content on screen in front of young audiences has been emphasized by some studies. In 1981, Sprafkin et al. showed 15 randomly chosen prime-time television programmes from the 1977 season, which had been objectively analysed for the presence of physically intimate and sexual content, to 660 audiences. The adult audiences were asked to rate the amount of sex in the programme and whether the content was suitable for adults, teenagers and children. The findings indicated that more than half respondents rated 10 sexual topics (abortion, necking or petting, homosexuality, transsexualism, prostitution, rape, extramarital sex, premarital sex, child molestation, and striptease) as unsuitable for children (Sprafkin et al., 1981). The findings also suggested that
many adults had considered the potential negative effects of such content on child viewers. Similarly, another study carried out by Greenberg et al. (1980) expressed the same audience anxiety that television could encourage young viewers to participate in sexual activities earlier than they would otherwise.

In Britain, public polls about sex on television can be tracked over many years. Andrea Millwood-Hargrave carried out surveys to examine British audience opinion about sex on screen from 1991 to 1998. The findings showed that in 1991, 54% of British audiences claimed that the amount of sex shown on television was about right, 41% of viewers said there was too much sex on television and only 5% of them felt there was too little. In 1998, British viewers showed more tolerance about sexual content on screen. There was a gradual decrease in the percentage of British viewers (36%) who felt there was too much sex on television and more viewers (7%) felt there was too little (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Acceptance of Sexual Content on Television in Britain

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too Much</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>About Right</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Too little</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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</table>

(Source: Millwood-Hargrave, 1992)

Millwood-Hargrave’s study then looked closely at the variables that affect the acceptability of the portrayals of sexual activities on television. It pointed out that the age and gender of audience, programme genre, time of transmission, and viewing context could all affect the audience’s opinions (Millwood-Hargrave, 1992).

Unlike previous studies that had found the key difference in attitudes and opinions of audience to depend on the gender; Millwood found age to be the prime variable in public opinion survey. She divided respondents into 5 groups according to their age, and reported
that people aged 65+ (76%) were much more likely to think there was too much sex on television than viewers in general (36%).

Millwood-Hargrave’s (1999) survey showed that opponents (24%) felt that the depiction of sex on television was offensive and pointed at television’s negative effects on the young should some scenes be shown, such as rape, but almost three out of four British viewers said that they did not usually feel offended when watching sexual content. 41% of viewers questioned said sex on television was necessary, and even more viewers (58%) thought sex was a part of everyday life (Millwood-Hargrave, 1992).

Millwood-Hargrave’s (1992) findings also indicated that majority of the British audience (78%) felt that people have the right to watch sexual content on television; 61% of the respondents in this survey rejected the notion that sex on television is offensive, while the rest of the viewers did find it offensive. Another concern of this study was to examine people’s opinions about the possible side effects of sexual content on screen. 56% of people interviewed in this survey worried that showing sex on screen could encourage young people to experiment with sex at an early age, and almost half of the respondents (48%) thought that sexual content on television encouraged immoral behaviour, while the other 52% rejected this opinion (Millwood-Hargrave, 1992).

Millwood-Hargrave’s study provided a systematic measurement of public opinion based on statistically representative samples of the viewing population. It serves as a measure of the relative importance of sex as a television-related issue in the public’s consciousness; however, this study does not specify in precise terms what kind of sexual content is being referred to (Gunter, 2000). The study restricted itself from linking the audience’s opinion to specific sexual material. It only examined the general opinion from
the audience towards sexual content instead of pinning down what kind of sexual material could arouse what kinds of attitudes from audiences.

The ITC (Independent Television Commission) has conducted an annual survey of public opinion in Britain since the 1970s to try to find out if viewers have been offended and what may find acceptable in television programmes. In its annual report for 1998, the findings indicated that 5% of audiences had expressed concern about nudity on the BBC’s two national terrestrial channels, Channel4 and ITV. 20% of audiences reported they had seen programmes on television over the past year that had contained an unacceptable amount of sex or nudity and 24% said they had switched off the television due to the programmes containing too much sex or violence (ITC, 1998).

The findings from the 2003 report indicated that the nature of the offensive material has been consistent over the years. Bad language headed the list in the 1970s, followed by sex and violence. By the 1980s, violence had overtaken sex as a source of offence on ITV, and in 1993 the same happened on Channel 4. By the end of the 1990s sex was the cause of more complaints from British viewers about drama and entertainment on commercial television in Britain than any other single category of content, including violence and bad language. This trend has continued since 2000 (ITC 2003).

In France, several surveys were carried out in 1988 and 1989 to examine the public attitude towards sex and violence on television. One study carried out by Ipsos and Le Point in 1988 collected 800 French adults’ opinions about sex on screen. The findings revealed that in 1988, a majority of audiences (63%) displayed an antipathetic attitude when asked to express an opinion about the programming of an X-rated film at 8:30 pm on television. Another opinion poll, published a few months later, confirmed the choice of a ‘Watershed’ fixed at around 10:00 pm or 10:30 pm. Most audiences show their tolerance of appropriate
sexual content without non graphic representations of sexual intercourse on small screen. Only 5% of viewers thought that it should be banned (Hurard, 1992).

**Sexual Content and Public Offense**

Based the data from previous American and British public opinion surveys, Gunter and Stipp (1992) reported that different types of sexual content have different levels of acceptability. Some types of sexual content might cause public offense. In a British survey of causes of offence on television, 46% of respondents indicated that they had been offended by some sexual content scenes they had seen on screen in the past year (ITC, 2003).

In Millwood-Hargrave’s survey, respondents were asked to choose some items they personally would not like to see on television. The findings showed that, 13% of viewers would not want to see frontal male nudity on screen, 16% of them would not want to see frontal female nudity, 34% could not accept explicit sexual intercourse, 10% showed objections to scenes implying sexual content, and fewer than 30% showed tolerance for homosexual behaviour been men; More than six in ten (62%) claimed that they would find scenes containing any physical contact between gay men offensive. Approximately, 60% of viewers thought television should never show sexual crimes, such as women being raped by men.

In addition, the findings of the ITC (2003) showed that in 2002 complaints about sexual portrayal rose to 223 from 120 in 2000. Among these complaints, 170 viewers complained about gay kissing in a drama, “The Bill”. This indicates that homosexuality on screen was the hardest thing for British audiences to accept. Therefore, homosexuality headed the list of items which could not be accepted by British audiences, followed by sexual crimes. Explicit scenes of sexual intercourse could be accepted by some audiences, and scenes implying sexual content and moderate nudity were largely accepted by British audiences.
Opinions about Sex in Advertising

Interest in the way the public responds to sex in advertising stems from concerns about the commercial effectiveness of advertisements and the audiences’ acceptance of sexual content used in commercials. Public polls focused on the commercial effectiveness of advertising have normally examined consumers’ attitudes towards sexual content of advertising and attempt to scale the commercial effectiveness of sex appeals in commercials. Most public opinion surveys in this field were conducted in United States. These studies showed sexual content as an important attention-getting characteristic, but failed to relate it to a cognitive acceptance of the message of the advertisement. In other words, the use of overt sexual appeals can effectively grab an audience’s attention, however, it less effective than the use of non-sexual appeals with respect to recall, advertising and brand evaluation (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Alexandra & Judd, 1978).

Some research focused on people’s general attitudes and responses to advertising containing sexual content. Research conducted by Baker and Churchill showed that consumers rated advertisements showing a member of the opposite sex higher than those showing a member of their own sex (Baker & Churchill, 1977). A study carried out by Severn et al. in 1990 indicated the role of visually explicit sexual stimuli in the processing of verbal information into a persuasive message, and the resulting effect on traditional outcome measures of recall, attitudes and behavioural intentions, as well as higher-order cognitive response measures. Developed from previous studies that only focused on visual matters (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Alexandra & Judd, 1978), this study also included verbal references in the measurement framework. An extensive review of advertising communication literature (Belch et al., 1987) noted that the effectiveness of using sexual imagery in advertising seems to vary depending upon the dependent measure used, the product
advertised, and the gender of the receiver. For example, research on the use of nudity as an advertising appeal indicates that although nudity may increase attention (Baker, 1961) it is less effective than non-sexual illustrations in achieving brand recall. Steadman (1969) concluded that the attention paid to the sexual illustration detracted from paying attention to the brand name. In experimental treatments using demure, seductive and nude models, Peterson and Kerin (1977) found that the treatment ad using the nude model was judged least appealing, the product lowest in quality, and the company least reputable. Similar results showing the negative effect of nudity on advertising effectiveness have been reported by Alexander and Judd (1978) whose research showed that American consumers show distaste for television advertisements for some products, such as jeans and pantyhose, which contain too much sexual content (Warwick & Miller, 1981). However, both male and females are likely to view controversial sexual advertisements as more entertaining and interesting (Severn et al., 1990).

Bello, Pitts and Etzel (1983) conducted an experiment utilizing television commercials and programmes to examine the effect of controversial sexual content on the communication effectiveness of advertising messages. Three measures of communication effectiveness were used: interest in the commercial, effect toward the product, and purchase intention. The results indicated that both males and females found a sexually-controversial commercial more interesting than a non-controversial substitute. Studies in this field focus on the audience’s opinions and attitudes toward advertising. Tinkham and Reid (1988) suggested that there is greater product recall where there is a ‘natural’ congruity between the product and sexual appeal.

Another principal concern in public opinion surveys about sex in advertising is whether consumers felt offended by certain sexual advertisements. In the context of television
advertising, although audiences can be quite open-minded about the use of treatments with sexual overtones, their judgments about what is or is not acceptable are tempered by the perceived appropriateness of the style of advertisement for the product in question, the time it is transmitted and the type of channel on which it is shown (Gunter, 2002:206).

**Which Kinds of Mediated Sexual Representations are Accepted in British Society?**

A significant body of public opinion research has been conducted by the IBA (Independent Broadcasting Authority) in the United Kingdom over the last 30 years to track what the public found acceptable in advertising on television. A national survey of UK viewers in 1980 laid down benchmark opinion data on sources of embarrassment to the public in television advertising. Despite concerns among regulators and critics writing in the national press that most people would find advertisements that featured sexual matters or promoted products for personal hygiene deeply offensive, a systematic analysis of public opinion indicated that only a minority of viewers voiced real concerns.

In Britain, Wober (1980) carried out a national public opinion surveys to figure out what kind of sexy advertisement would be accepted by British audiences. In contrast to the British press, which reported that most people would find advertisements that featured sexual matters or promoted products for personal hygiene deeply offensive (Gunter, 2002), the findings showed only 16% of audiences admitted that they had been offended by advertisements. The greatest source of these offensive advertisements was related to nudity or sexual content. The majority of the audience (70%) said they would not feel embarrassed by watching sanitary protection products on screen. 28% of the audiences expressed some annoyance at television advertising; the most annoyance came from the way television treated women as sex symbols, rather than that there were too many sexual appeals.
In a later survey carried out by IBA in 1988, more than 1,100 UK television viewers were asked if they had ever been offended by television advertisements. They were also required to distinguish between advertising on the two main commercial television channels, ITV and Channel 4. This work investigated not only the public acceptance of sexual content in advertising in Britain society, but also public opinion towards the advertising of products that were associated directly or indirectly with sexual materials (IBA, 1988). The results showed that fewer than one in ten (8%) viewers expressed that they had been offended by advertising on ITV, and only 4% of the audience had felt offended when watching television advertising on Channel 4. 2% of ITV viewers and 1% of Channel 4 viewers thought showing sanitary protection products in television commercials was offensive. Most audiences expressed the view that they did not think AIDS, contraceptives or condom advertisements would cause offence (IBA, 1988).

In the 1980s, Gunter and Wober conducted a series of opinion polls which focused on the relationship between public acceptability of sexual content and different commercial types. The responses to a question about whether different forms of advertising should be allowed are shown in Table 4.2. It can be seen that there was widespread support for advertisements of personal beauty stuff (such as deodorants and underwear) and health treatments and services (such as family planning clinics, pregnancy advice services, syringes for diabetics, contraceptive and sanitary products) from British audiences. However, less than half of people could accept advertisements for undertakers/funeral services and marriage/dating agents. The majority of British viewers felt uncomfortable when faced by advertisements for homosexual advice services and other homosexuality-related products (Gunter & Wober, 1990)
Table 4.2 Acceptance of Different Types of Advertising on Television in Britain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deodorants</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwear</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family planning clinics</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnancy advice services</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syringes for diabetics</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraceptive</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>78/70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary napkins/tampons</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertakers/funeral services</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage/dating agencies</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual advice services</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual magazines</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gunter and Wober, 1990

Early in 1994, an advertisement for Neutralia shower gel became the first on UK television to feature a women’s nipple, causing public debates and concern. In response, the ITC (Independent Television Commission) concluded that the material was not inherently unsuitable for transmission after 9pm, but decided that research was needed into the issue of nudity in advertising to provide clarification for similar advertisements that might be submitted in the future.

The research comprised focus groups and in-depth interviews to investigate audiences’ attitude toward different degrees of nudity in advertising. The research found that nudity was regarded as more acceptable when it was relevant to the product and appeared after 9 pm. The survey claimed that nudity became more offensive when it was combined with sexual intercourse. It also examined views on which parts of the body should be exposed. The exposure of naked female breasts caused some concern, but side views were regarded as less problematic for some viewers. Exposure of genitals was generally considered as unacceptable for either sex. The data from the focus groups revealed that suggestive and partial nudity could be accepted by audiences at any time, semi-nude and back nude could
be accepted after 9pm, while full-frontal nudity and sexual intercourse, either implied or explicit, were completely unacceptable to the audience (ITC 1995).

Beetles and Harries (2004) carried out a focus group survey to examine consumer attitudes towards female nudity in advertising in a United Kingdom context. This study made contributions to academic research of female nudity in advertising in the key areas of the ‘composition’, congruence and gender reading. The data from the focus groups showed that neither male nor female British consumers could accept total nudity in advertising. These results were inconsistent with a previous study carried out in the US which suggested that men are more receptive to total female nudity than women and that women are more receptive to suggestively clad men (Simpson et al. 1996). The notion of the composition of the imagery of female body was suggested in this study. The findings showed that it is important to show the model’s face because imagery which cuts off the face and only focuses on body parts might cause negative feelings from audiences. Similarly, according to another previous study (Tisser-Desbordes & Manceau, 2002), audiences preferred to see imagery which included a women’s face.

In addition, this study found that the congruency of the product and the sexual content was a key area in audience response. The audience seems to find it much easier to accept commercials which have a direct and clear congruency between the product and sexual content.

The evidence of previous public surveys showed that British audiences could not accept explicit sexual intercourse scenes in television commercials. Partially nudity (wearing underwear) could be accepted by any time, topless and back or side nude could be only accepted after 9pm while frontal nudity in television commercials is regarded as totally inappropriate in any time. In addition, the majority of British viewers felt uncomfortable
when they faced with advertising that contained homosexual content or promoted homosexuality-related products or services. On the other hand, advertisements for contraceptive and AIDS could be accepted by most British audiences. The homosexuality here is related exclusively to men. As is indicated by published opinion surveys, an audience might feel offended if they cannot find congruence between the sexual content and the product, such as showing nudity in a breakfast cereal commercial.

**What Kind of Mediated Sexual Representations are Accepted in Chinese Society?**

In comparison with the UK, there have been much fewer public opinion surveys on sexy television commercials in China. The only substantial studies that have been located are those conducted by Cheng in Hong Kong in 2002 and by Fam and Waller in 2003. Cheng’s survey used a questionnaire which aimed to identify what kind of advertisements consumers find offensive. From the focus group, commercials about contraceptive products were considered as much more offensive than ads about female and male underwear. This study also pointed out that whether an audience will feel offended by advertising depended on the appeal rather than the product itself (Cheng, 2002).

In comparison with British viewers, Chinese audiences showed a much stricter attitude toward nudity in television commercial. The majority of the Chinese audience found any nudity in commercials very offensive. However, advertising which contained sexual connotations was accepted by a majority of viewers. Male viewers expressed more tolerance than females toward nudity and sexual connotations. The finding also indicated that the audience’s acceptance of sexual content in television commercials also depended on product congruence, and the individual opinions of viewers (Cheng, 2002).

In the survey conducted by Fam and Waller (2003), people from Malaysia, China and Taiwan expressed their opinion of advertisements relating to controversial
products/services. The findings indicated Chinese audiences found advertisements for addictive products, including cigarettes, alcohol and gambling, highly offensive; advertisements for gender/sex related products (including underwear, contraceptives, and hygiene products) and health care products (weight-loss programmes, charities, and sexual diseases) were found moderately offensive by Chinese consumers. The top three reasons causing public offence in China were indecent language, anti-social behaviour and racist images (Fam & Waller, 2003).

**Individual Differences in Responses to Sexual Content**

Public opinion surveys merely reflect the personal views of media consumers (Gunter, 2002). Individual differences, such as gender, age and cultural background, can also mediate public opinion about sexual content on screen. Apart from Millwood-Hargrave’s study, which primarily examined age differences, most studies considered gender differences to be the main variable in viewers’ attitudes toward sexual content in media.

**Gender Differences**

Gender differences exist in the way an advert is read and understood. In 1991, Stern offered a gender view of sex in advertising and indicated that there may be distinctly different ‘readings’ by men and women of the same piece of advertising literature. In 1997, Showalter advanced the androcentric theory. He pointed out that advertising could be defined as either androcentric (male-centred) or gynocentric (female-centred). Gunter (2002) developed this concept further within media sex research. He pointed out that gender differences should be considered as the most important factor which influences how people read and react to sexual content.

Gender differences lead to different tastes and attitudes in relation to sexual content that may exist between male and female viewers. In 1992, Cowan pointed out that women
dislike sex scenes with violence or those in which women are shown in submissive roles. In 1994, based on his previous research, Cowan claimed that men show a greater liking for sex scenes with female subordination themes in which male sexual gratification is the primary concern, whereas women prefer sex scenes in which the man and women are equals and the sexual behaviour grows out of a loving relationship (Cowan, 1994). In 2002, Gunter claimed that women prefer soft erotica over hard-core material, whereas men often show the opposite tastes. In 2004, Pope et al. included gender as an independent variable of influence on consumers’ attitudes toward provocative advertisements. Like Gunter (2002), their results suggested that people prefer generally mildly erotic advertisements, and that women may be more responsive to mild erotic appeals than men (Pope et al., 2004).

Importantly for the further research, previous sexual advertising research (Cowan, 1994; Gunter, 2002; Pope et al., 2004) which had a gender focus suggested that when studying advertising material, both authorial intentions and reader response needs to include both sexes.

**Age Differences**

Another important element affecting the way people view advertising is age difference. Johnson and Satow’s (1978) findings showed that older women have been found to be more offended than younger women by overt sexual material in advertising, whereas younger women were more concerned about sexual innuendo, especially when it could also be considered sexist. Vezina and Paul (1997) claimed that age and gender are variables that affect the evaluation of advertisements. Criticism of more provocative advertisements tended to come from older respondents and more men approved of suggestive advertisements containing sexual information (Vezina & Paul, 1977). The public polls carried out by ITC (2003) also suggested that viewers aged 55 and over were much more likely than
younger viewers to be offended by advertisements for sanitary protection products and contraceptive products (ITC, 2003).

**Cultural Differences**

Michel Foucault, who has been acknowledged as one of the most prominent philosophers in France in the 1970s and 1980s, argued that sexuality is a social and cultural issue. Building on Foucault’s theory, Valverde (1985) claimed that sexuality is not a ‘natural’ thing, but is constrained by social and cultural issues. It is not difficult to discover that what is sexually attractive to humans differs across particular cultures or regions, which clearly demonstrates that sexuality is constrained by cultural and social issues. The standard criteria of ‘what sexy means’ are not only based on individual’s taste but also shaped by local cultural sanction. Therefore, people from different cultural backgrounds have distinct tastes and opinions of sexual content. To summarise, it could be argued that people’s sexuality is more appropriate considered as a cultural issue, because people’s opinions and acceptance of sexual content are largely shaped and constrained by the culture standards and values in their society.

For instance, people who come from different countries express various attitudes about nudity image in advertising. In the US, some public opinion surveys show that some people say they do not like sex in advertisements and will boycott products that feature sexuality in their advertising (Fetto, 2001). However, in continental European countries, such as Denmark, Germany, Italy and France, consumers generally do not have a problem with nudity in advertisements (Frith & Mueller, 2003). In fact, according to a focus group survey carried out by Tissier-Desbordes and Manceau (2002), French women typically regard female nudity and sexuality as aesthetic rather than sexist. Meanwhile, British
audiences showed an even stricter attitude toward female nudity than their American contemporaries (ITC, 2003).

Conversely, due to their traditional social and cultural values, countries in Asia and the Middle East tend to be more conservative than the US and Europe with respect to nudity (Frith & Mueller, 2003).

**Limitations of Public Opinion Polls**

Some common limitations occur in all the public polls. First, there is a sample limitation as there were differences in the forms of sample collection. People who attended opinion surveys were restricted by age, gender and cultural differences, and some studies even exclusively used college students for convenience. The individual differences in the respondents limited the results of the findings. To overcome this restriction in this research, the sample should represent a wide group of people with different genders, sexualities and ages (Beetles & Harris, 2004).

Another limitation faced by public opinion surveys is that the opinion profiles they yield can not only change from one point in time to the next, but, more significantly, can vary with the type of question asked (Gunter, 2002). Gunter and Stipp (1992) compared the results of American and British public opinion survey data and demonstrated how attitudes towards sex on television can vary widely within the same survey in response to differently-framed questions. In a British national survey, 57% of respondents indicated that they had been offended by something they had seen on screen in the past year. However, when respondents were asked to name any material they would not like to see on the television, only 18% mentioned sex scenes; finally, a third open question asked respondents what should never be shown on television, and only 14% respondents responded that sex scenes should never be shown on screen. Thus, respondents were more likely to mention sexual
scenes in the context of sources of offences, than with regard to things they would not like to see or that should be never shown (Gunter & Stipp, 1992).

**Media Effects**

The existing audience/consumer effects research differs in that it attempts to find out whether the presence of sex in advertising enhances the impact of advertising which employed sexual appeals. ‘Impact’ in this sense has been measured in different ways. Some researchers focused on sexy advertising’s marketing effectiveness, while other researchers analysed the effects of advertising in social and cultural contexts.

**Does Sex Sell?**

Marketing researchers try to investigate reactions of individuals to certain sexual appeals in advertising and expect to reveal how sexual stimuli evoke reactions in individuals, and how these reactions may influence people’s purchasing behaviours. This type of study often examines whether marketing effectiveness of sexual advertising is improved by comparing audiences’ attentions between sexual and non-sexual advertising. In other words, these studies try to find whether sex sells. The impact of sexual appeals on brand name recall and attitude toward brand are also major topics in this kind of research.

The goal of a commercial is to promote products or services in an effective manner to attract the most people. If an advertisement cannot grab people’s attention, then it cannot affect their likelihood to buy that product. Thus, advertisers seek to make their commercials noticeable to their audiences.

The evidence shows that with sexy illustrations advertising can effectively grab consumers’ attention and improve recall of the commercial message. Sexual appeals have been shown to be more attention-getting, likeable, dynamic and more likely to increase a
consumer’s interest in the topic than nonsexual appeals (Gunter, 2002). However, sexual
appeals that are attention grabbing can also fail to enhance brand recall and brand loyalty of
advertising. Many studies found that brand recall from non-sex-containing advertising is
higher than that from adverts that do contain sexual content (Steadman 1969; Alexander &
Judd, 1978; Courtney & Whipple, 1983).

The interrelationship between consumers and advertising can also be considered to
impact commercial effectiveness, such as gender difference in consumer responses and the
product-content congruence of advertising. Men and women show distinct differences in
their responses. Compared with women, men showed more tolerance of sexual content and
their attitudes toward sexual advertising itself and brands it was promoting were more
positive than women. In addition, people were more likely to accept products when they
could see clear congruence between the products and the sexual content (Gunter, 2002).

Theories about Sex in Media

Social scientists who have investigated the effects of media portrayals of sexual appeals
have produced a number of explanations for the effects they have on viewers (Gunter,
2002). Theories about advertising effectiveness emphasize two distinct routes of attitude
change (Petty & Cacioppo 1981). Some theories attempt to persuade audiences by a central
route, whereas others follow a peripheral route. The central route theory views attitude
change as resulting from a person's diligent consideration of information that he or she feels
is central to the true merits of a particular attitudinal position, such as arousal theory and
cultivation theory (Petty & Cacioppo 1981). A second group of theoretical approaches to
persuasion emphasizes a more peripheral route to attitude change. Attitude changes that
occur via the peripheral route do not occur because an individual has personally considered
the pros and cons of the issue, but because the attitude issue or object is associated with
positive or negative cues or because the person makes a simple inference about the advocated position based on various simple cues in the persuasion context (Petty & Cacioppo 1981). The self-objectification theory follows the peripheral route to persuade audiences.

Arousal Theory

The concept of arousal theory contributes to the understanding of the effects of sexual appeals on consumer attention and recall. Arousal, usually defined as a degree of tension in the body, is a physical state which gives rise to the attention paid to its role in the consumer’s decision-making process (Howard, 1977:136). In the context of sexually-oriented stimuli, arousal caused by such stimuli can be thought to relate directly to attention toward the particular advertisement and may be mediated by the consumer’s innate motivational state (Wilson & Moore, 1979). The arousal can be investigated by verbal self-reports of individuals or by physiological measures, such as penile tumescence (Eccles et al., 1988; Malamuth & Check, 1980; Schaefer & Colgan, 1977), vaginal changes (Sintchak & , 1975) and thermography (Abramson et al., 1981). According to arousal theory, effective sexual appeals in advertisement might be expected to cause these physiological responses.

Wilson and Moore explained the impact of environmental stimulation by a sexually-oriented advertisement by an equilibrium model in which a consumer is initially in an equilibrium emotion with regard to sex. When a consumer is exposed to a sensory input (such as sexual appeal) the disequilibrium emotion may be created due to the incoming cue that is associated with an innate motive (sexual activity). Psychological and, perhaps, physiological tension produced by the disequilibrium may then cause increased cognitive activity towards the advertising (Wilson & Moore, 1979).
The central part of the arousal model is increased cognitive activity caused by a disequilibrium emotion. Advertising which does not contain the sexual appeals may not be able to cause disequilibrium and so drive the same degree of arousal as sexually-oriented advertising. However, a previous study revealed the degree of arousal is not necessarily highly correlated with the degree of explicitness of the media content (Bancroft & Mathews, 1971); in some cases less explicit sexual content can cause a higher degree of arousal than more explicit content.

The previous study could not prove a direct relationship between increased attention of advertising and positive consumer attitudes and purchase behaviour. This means a sexual appeal could increase arousal but fail to increase brand recall and loyalty (Steadman, 1969; Alexander & Judd, 1978; Courtney & Whipple, 1983). In particular, using sexual content with no logical relation to the product may mean that the arousal actually inhibits the impact of irrelevant information (Howard, 1977).

Moreover, according to Zillmann (1978, 1979, 1982), exposure to sexual content increased sympathetic activity as an accompaniment to more specific genital responses and, after sexual stimulation, residues of the slowly dissipating nonspecific sympathetic excitation from sexual arousal are likely to intensify these experiences and drive the hostile and aggressive actions stimulated by them.

Cultivation Theory

According to the cultivation theory, a consistent diet of television can influence viewer’s conceptions of social reality, such that heavy viewer’s beliefs about the real world are formed by the images of television (Gerbner et al., 1978). Cultivation theory posits that the messages contained on television can influence people’s conceptions of social reality. Television advertising offers abundant messages that serve as a social mirror. Thus, we can
use cultivation theory to better understand and interpret the indirect effects of sexual advertising on people’s conceptual constructions. Operating within a cultivation effects model, there are numerous studies that have focused on advertising’s effects.

Within a cultivation effects model, exposure to television advertising which contains consistent sexual scenes and unrealistic beautiful models could contribute to viewers’, especially young people’s, beliefs about the nature of sexual-related behaviours in the real world. A typical indication that perceptions of sex-related attributes could be influenced by television advertising was derived from an experimental study by Tan (1979). In this study, Tan found that teenage girls who were fed a heavy dose of beauty product commercials emphasising female beauty, were more likely to believe that being beautiful is an important female attribute than a control group of girls who viewed advertising without beauty message (Tan, 1999). Meantime, many beauty product commercials which contained highly attractive models used sexual appeal to sell products. The findings showed that those girls who were fed advertising which focused on the sexual characters of female were more likely to consider sex appeal attributes as an especially important element in attracting the opposite sex (Tan, 1999).

**Self-Objectification Theory**

Self-objectification theory is relevant because it provides further insights into the potential impact of sexual advertising on how a person perceives and values themselves. Self-objectification theory posits that people are more likely to internalize a third-person’s perspective of their bodies (Fredrickson et al., 1998). In this theory, it is postulated that people are likely to view themselves as an object and to judge their bodies based on external cultural physical standards. Advertising which could be defined as ‘a mirror of society’ plays an important role in forming society’s standards (Kacen & Nelson, 2002).
Sexual advertisements which contain ideal body images have become among the primary source of these physical standards. These adverts have contributed to the view of the ‘body as an object’ (Hendriks, 2002). Self-objectification occurs when an individual has strongly internalized the societal sexual standards, creating a persistent fixation on appearance. Advertising often contains unattainable standards of thinness and female beauty (Kilbourne, 1999; Silverstein et al., 1986) activating women’s (and potentially men’s) concerns and insecurities about their bodies, and thereby increasing body dissatisfaction.

Previous studies indicated that women are more likely than men to experience the trait of self-objectification (Miner-Rubino et al., 2002). Based on objectification theory, a study added men as the subject of self-satisfaction research. The results showed that sexual advertising also influenced body perceptions among men. The study, carried out by Lavine et al. (1999), showed that sexy advertisements may increase men’s awareness of, and concern about, their own bodies, and thus increase body dissatisfaction among men.

Ill Effects of Sex in Advertising

Compared to the positive findings from the majority of marketing research studies, socio-cultural research of sexual content in advertising has tended to emphasise some negative-effects of individual and whole society. Using the media effect theory as a basis, extensive research has demonstrated the negative results of advertisements full of highly attractive models and overt sexual content.

As mentioned previously, advertising which is full of idealised female body images presents social standards for women. Such advertising has been accused of objectifying women by treating them as commodities, and it is claimed that these portrayals can in turn influence women’s self-esteem and self-satisfaction. Alexandra Hendriks (2002) examined the effects of the ideal body images on females’ perceptions of and satisfaction with their
own bodies. To accomplish this purpose, she applied a media effects model to better understand the process of idealized body image impact on women’s body satisfaction. This study suggested that because the ideal of female beauty is so narrowly defined by the current media; women who admire the cultural thin ideal may reduce their body satisfaction (Hendricks, 2002).

Social scientists point out that engaging in a high amount of self-objectification is thought to place women at increased risk of mental health problems, such as body dissatisfaction and depression (Hendricks 2002; Bresnahan et al., 1997). Moreover, ill effects may also stem from the majority of sexual advertising that portrays women as sexual objects. Feminists criticize sexual advertising for always portraying women as being sexual objects, reaffirming the traditional male social dominance and decreasing the women’s role (Manca, 1994). It could be argued that women are misrepresented in sexual advertising. In these forms of advertising, women are portrayed as flirtatious and seductive, but that does not accurately reflect the roles and activities that women actually perform in society (Budgeon, 2003).

Another criticism is that sex in mass media, and especially on television, might disturb the development of a healthy attitude to sexuality among young people. According to the cultivation theory, the mass media play an important role in the process of young people’s sexual identity construction and sexual socialization. The knowledge from media contributes to forming the foundations for their attitudes towards sex and could impact their subsequent sexual behaviour throughout their lives. Despite the plethora of new technologies that have become available, television is still considered to play a dominant role in young people’s media diet (Comstock and Scharrer, 2007).
Societal concerns about the influence of sexual content on television on young people’s social beliefs, attitudes and sexual behaviour, which inevitably involves public health issues, has grown increasingly frequent and prominent in recent years (Kunkel et al., 2003). Some research shows that sexual content on television may serve as an important source of sex education for young people. Sutton et al. (2002) stated that television is an important source of information about birth control, contraception and pregnancy prevention that helps teens and adolescents learn about responsible sexual behaviour and sexual health. For example, some adolescents are known to have been taught how to use condoms from condom advertisements on screen (Sutton et al., 2002).

The Teen Media Project, a five-year project funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and conducted by researchers Jane Brown, Carolina Pardun and Kelly L’Engle of the University of North Carolina has found that both African American and white young females and African American young males believe that the media tells them they should use condoms. Unfortunately, white males are less likely to notice that media delivering this message of using condoms. However, this finding still proves that media outlets send sexual health messages to an impressionable audience. Even though some evidence shows the impact that media have in promoting and teaching safe sexual intercourse to protect themselves, some media outlets, which contain overt sexual messages, have been criticized as playing an important role in the early initiation of sexual intercourse by teens.

Bryant and Rockwell (1994) conducted an experiment in this area and found that adolescents who only viewed television high in sexual content rated descriptions of casual sexual encounters less negatively than teens who had not viewed any sexual content. Their
findings show that there are some correlations between the steady increase in sexual content on television and the decreasing age at which teens lose their virginity over the years.
Chapter Five

Research Methodology

This study set out to describe and compare sexual content appearing in Chinese and British television adverts. The output of the most popular (defined in terms of published viewing figures) channels in China, (CCTV1 and CCTV2) and the two main commercial channels in Britain (Channel4 and ITV1) were used to represent these two countries. In addition, due to the pyramidal structure of Chinese media system, this thesis also drew a sample from the city-level television station Wenzhou television station (WTV) as a complement to the national-level sample in China.

Given the nature of my project, content analysis was selected as the research technique to describe the sexual content of these adverts and infer deeper meanings or relationships among different variables. Content analysis has been utilized by scholars as a research tool since World War Two (Wimmer & Dominick, 1997). The first large-scale content analysis was employed in an effort to extract information from propaganda messages produced by the US government in the 1940s. Thereafter, content analysis has been used comprehensively across a range of different subject areas. In the field of mass communication research, content analysis has been the fastest-growing technique over the past 20 years (Neuendorf, 2002).

The wide use of this methodology among media scholars is due to its ability to produce quantifiable data out of any verbal or non-verbal form of communication, be it written or spoken messages, photographs, or motion pictures (Neuendorf, 2002). In addition, as a systematic research tool, content analysis is widely considered among social scientists to achieve a high level of objectivity (Bereleson, 1952; Signorielli & Healy, 1994;
Definition of Content Analysis

Content analysis is a fundamental methodology in the social sciences for studying the content of communications. Different social scientists and scholars have offered various definitions of content analysis. Berelson (1952:18) defined content analysis as a ‘research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.’ Holsti (1996:5) defined content analysis as, ‘any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages.’ Carney (1972:52) argued that content analysis is the general purpose technique for posing questions to a ‘communication’ in order to ‘get findings which can be substantiated.’

Krippendorff (2004) claimed that content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. Stempel (1981:78) defined it as ‘a formal system for doing something that we all do informally rather frequently, drawing conclusions from observations of content.’ Weber (1990:24) suggested that ‘Content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text.’ Neuendorf (2002) offered a more comprehensive definition of content analysis in which he touched on the other crucial aspects of the technique. He points out ‘Content analysis is a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity-intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented.’ (Neuendorf, 2002:10)
By reviewing these definitions from over the last 50 years, it is apparent that content analysis has emerged as a method which is specifically intended for the study of messages from specific content. As to what kind of messages should be drawn, Holsti (1969) offers six basic paradigms: ‘who says what, to whom, why, to what extent and with what effect?’ As can be noticed from previous definitions of content analysis, some consistent elements of content analysis exist, namely being objective, systematic and quantitative.

‘Objective’ in this context means that judgments are not influenced by personal feelings or opinions. It means that different analysts could use the methodology on the same content and get same results. The procedure of analysis is precisely defined so results will not change with different analysts.

‘Systematic’ means that, first, the content and sample selection must follow proper procedures; secondly, categories are set up properly so that all relevant content is analysed; finally, the analysis is designed to secure data relevant to a specific research question or hypothesis.

‘Quantitative’ simply means the recording of numerical values or the frequencies at which the various defined types of content occur.

Besides being objective, systematic and quantitative, reliability is often described as another essential characteristic of content analysis. Without acceptable levels of reliability, content analysis measurements are meaningless. Wimmer and Dominick (1997) claimed that reliability plays an essential role in determining the objectivity of any content analysis. They pointed out that ‘reliability is present when repeated measurement of the same material results in similar decisions or conclusions’ (Wimmer & Dominick, 1997:237). Neuendorf (2002) suggested that when human coders are used in content analysis, reliability translates to ‘inter-coder reliability’, which is defined as a measure of the extent
to which independent judges make the same coding decisions in evaluating the characteristics of messages (Neuendorf, 2002: 122).

**Reasons for Selecting Content Analysis**

This research opted to employ content analysis for a number of reasons. As mentioned previously, one of the goals of this study was to describe the sexual content of television adverts appearing on Chinese and British television. Then a deeper-level analysis would be conducted to discover covert relationships and meanings existing within various aspects of sexual content in adverts. By definition, therefore, content analysis is the best research tool to achieve the goals of this study. First, it is the only research method that could convert the content of mass communications into quantifiable data, which by itself is considered an essential part of this research. In other words, content analysis could be used to determine the frequency of all the variables analysed in this research. In addition, the next step in this study would be to use the output from the first analysis to determine relationships existing among variables, and the meanings which could be concluded from the presence or absence of certain variables. Also, it needs to attain a level of standardisation of measurement to facilitate more precise comparisons between adverts in the two different countries. The objective and systematic natures of content analysis adapt well to cross-cultural comparison work.

**Previous Research on Media and Sex Using Content Analysis**

As mentioned in earlier chapters, the growing amount of sexual content in media has attracted the attention of many social scientists. Scrutinizing the literature on sexual content in the most popular mass media revealed that many researchers had investigated how much sex is shown and what kinds of sexual content prevail on screen. The next section will describe the paradigm and procedure of using content analysis in recent sex on
television studies, sex in advertising studies, and gender representation on television adverts research.

**Research Methods Used in Previous Research**

In the context of sex on television, researchers normally began by developing a coding scheme that contains a list of intimate behaviours such as kissing, hugging, intimate touching, and sexual intercourse to investigate the sexual content appearing on television (for example, Franzblau et al., 1977; Silverman & Rubinstein, 1979; Greenberg et al, 1980; Sprafkin & Silverman 1981; Kunkel et al., 2004). In recent content studies, the coding schemes usually cover verbal references as well as visual references (e.g. Sprafkin et al., 1987; Sapolsky & Tabarlet, 1991; Kunkel et al., 1996; Kunkel et al., 2004).

Apart from visual and verbal references, further variables have also been covered in coding schemes in recent research, such as the relationship between and roles of the participants, and if sex risk/responsibility is mentioned (Bragg & Buckingham, 2002). ‘Context’ as another important variable which was measured in a recent study, which may be defined as place (bar, bedroom, etc), or whether the behaviour is serious or humorous, presented as positive or negative (Bragg & Buckingham, 2002). After developing the coding scheme, analysts collected samples of television programmes and calculated the frequencies of incidents in them that match these pre-designed definitions. Then they analysed the covert relationships and meanings based on the presence or absence of certain variables.

**Research Methods Used in Previous Research on Sex in Advertising**

The methodology of content analysis of sex in advertising generally mirrors the techniques used in studies of programmes and videos. Major studies on sex in advertising have tended to choose print adverts in magazines as research samples. In one recent study, sexual
content in magazine advertisements was coded for dress and interpersonal interaction (Reichert, 2003a). The model’s clothing was classified as not sexual or sexual according to the amount and style of clothing. When at least one female and male model were present, their interaction was identified as either nonsexual (no contact or holding hands) or sexual contact (kissing, hugging, or more). In recent content analysis on sex in television commercials (Lin, 1998), the variables included body shape, clothing reference, physical contact, sexiness, physical attractiveness and verbal innuendo. The racial background of the models was also recorded. In the field of sex in advertising, product types and gender variables were also measured in most studies (Soley & Reid, 1985; Soley & Kurzbard, 1986; Lin, 1998; Reichert, 1999; Reichert, 2003b).

**Previous Research Used in the Study of Gender Role Stereotyping**

It should be pointed out that nearly all the content-analytic studies on gender role in television advertising have followed the McArthur and Resko (1975) categories, not for theoretical, but for comparative reasons. McArthur and Resko (1975) examined the gender roles in American television commercials of the time. The coding sheets of this study suggested a number of coding categories for the central characters in the advertising. This formed the basis of nearly all subsequent research and is largely employed by following research, including cross-cultural studies of the gender role in television advertising.

The coding categories of this research appear clear and comprehensive and provide a picture of sex-role stereotyping in television advertisements. The central visual and voice-over figures were coded and analysed independently of one another. In addition, the separation of visual and voice-over data eliminated the need for forcing voice-over coding into categories (such as role and location), designed to describe the characteristics of visual central figures. The features of central figures (the main characters) in adverts were
comprehensively examined, including their gender, age, occupation role, and ethnicity. The setting and product categories have been included in most recent research as well.

Limitations of Previous Research

It is worth reiterating that, as was mentioned in earlier chapters, there were some common limitations in the previous research on sex on television and sex in advertising. Previous content studies used limited or problematic definitions of sexual content, limited units of analysis and coding frames which were narrowly defined and failed to incorporate attributes of sexual activity that might be important in terms of triggering specific reactions in the audiences.

In addition, previous studies used limited samples of television advertising output. This study tries to overcome these limitations by precisely defining the definition of sexual content, using two kinds of unit for different purpose of analysis and designing a coding frame informed by previous audience research. Moreover, as 9pm is generally regarded as an important time boundary that could influence the audience’s attitude toward sexual content, the samples in this study were collected from 6pm to 11pm.

Research Samples

The aim of this research is to analyse sexual appeals manifested in television advertisements in Mainland China and the United Kingdom. Three two-week samples were videotaped from Chinese television networks and two two-week samples were drawn from British television networks. The weeks chosen were selected in a random way, and product types of advertisements might vary according to the season of the year. The samples in Britain were collected during winter time, therefore, might contain less nudity and sexual appeals than they did in summer season.
Chinese Advertising Samples

Commercial breaks are shown on Chinese television throughout the day. The most popular spots for advertisers, and the most expensive of the daily commercials breaks, are the commercial breaks which appear before and after the evening news bulletin on CCTV1. This research selected the sample from two biggest national channels in China CCTV1 and CCTV2. According to the statistics revealed by SARFT in 2010, the audience share of CCTV1 and CCTV2 in 2007 was 10.52% and 4.51%, these two television channels achieved biggest audience viewing figures in China (SARFT, 2010). As mentioned before, Chinese television network has pyramidal structure. The television channels in China including national-level, provincial-level, city-level and country-level. In order to try to reflect this pyramidal structure of Chinese media system, a sample was also drawn from a city-level television station, Wenzhou television station (WTV), to better represent Chinese adverts.

First of all, three two-week samples were randomly drawn from three Chinese television channels CCTV1, CCTV2 and WTV from 6pm to 11pm. Due to 9pm was regarded as the important time boundary for previous sex on prime-time television research. For this reason, Sample should be collected before 9pm and after.

The research sample comprised: CCTV1 (1 November 2007 to 14 November 2007), CCTV2 (15 November 2007 to 28 November 2007), WTV (9 December 2007 to 22 December 2007) (see table 5.1).

After determining the sample dates, the researcher videotaped the television commercials aired on those dates from CCTV1, CCTV2, and WTV between 6pm and 11pm. On CCTV1, the most expensive commercials are shown before the evening news bulletin and between the evening news and nightly Chinese drama, which follows the evening news bulletin immediately. In general, the evening news bulletin starts at 7pm every night, and is
almost always preceded by a commercial break, which features an average of 5 adverts. An average of 8 adverts appeared in the commercial breaks that follow the evening news and precede the Chinese teleplays. Other commercials are aired in breaks in two teleplays or interposed. The rest of the adverts were aired in the breaks of teleplays and during the teleplays. According to the advertising codes published by SARFT, it is not permitted for CCTV1 to show any commercials during the nightly news bulletin. Moreover, during one teleplay (around 45 minutes), it is only allowed to broadcast advertisements for less than 2.5 minutes.

Table 5.1 TV Advertisement Samples for Britain and China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ads No</th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCTV1</td>
<td>CCTV2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/11/2007</td>
<td>1,198</td>
<td>1,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/11/2007</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/11/2007</td>
<td>22/12/2007</td>
<td>749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>6pm – 11pm</td>
<td>6pm - 11pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 1,198 commercials were recorded from CCTV1 in the selected two weeks of the sample, 1,092 commercials were recorded from CCTV2, and 796 commercials were recorded from WTV, and the adverts which contained any kind of sexual content were analysed in this study. In total 3,086 commercials from Chinese channels, 749 of them were original advertisements and the rest 2,347 were repeat advertisements. Incomplete adverts for any brand or service were eliminated from the sample to ensure the objectivity of the sampling procedure. As one purpose of this study is investigate the amount and distribution of sexual content in adverts, different versions of commercials and repeated adverts for the same product or service were still taken as part of the sample.

British Advertising Sample
As the two of the biggest British independent television channels according to its audience share, Channle4 and ITV1 were chosen as the British sample. According to the viewing figures revealed by BABR (Broadcasters’ audience research board) in 2010 the annual audience share of ITV reached 17% and the audience share of Channel 4 reached 6.2%. These two channels had a lead in British independent television networks (BABR, 2011). The number of commercials appearing on Channel4 was greater than its Chinese counterpart CCTV1 and CCTV2. The number of commercial breaks and commercial minutes broadcasters in British television networks are permitted to take in any programme are regulated by Ofcom. Within this programme’s 130 minutes slot a maximum seven commercial breaks were permitted. Channel4 also showed more advertisements than ITV1 during this selected period of the day. The same procedure employed to draw the sample of adverts from Chinese channels was repeated to draw the samples from Channel4 and ITV1.

Two two-week samples were randomly drawn from two British television channels Channel4 and ITV1, between 6pm to 11pm. Due to different audience responses were divided at 9pm in British audience research, the sample should include before 9pm and after. The research sample comprised: Channel 4 (1 July 2008 to 14 July 2008) and ITV1 (16 July 2008 to 29 July 2008) (see table 5.1).

A total of 1,358 commercials were recorded from Channel4 and 1,047 commercials were recorded from ITV1 from the respective two-week samples. In total 2405 commercials from British channels, 927 of them were original advertisements and the rest 1478 were repeat advertisements. Incomplete adverts for any brand or service were eliminated from the sample to ensure the objectivity of the sampling procedure.

Again, adverts which contained any kind of sexual appeals were analysed. Incomplete adverts for any brand or service were eliminated from the sample to ensure the objectivity
of the sampling procedure. Different versions of commercials and repeated adverts for the same product or service were included in the sample.

**Units of Analysis**

After determining the research sample, the next essential feature to determine is the unit of analysis, or the things that will be counted or measured in the research. Wimmer and Dominick (1997) defined the unit of analysis as the smallest element of a content analysis, but also one of the most important.

As mentioned before, previous content analysis studies in this field have common limitations in their units of analysis. The basic measure unit of most previous studies on sex in advertising was the quantity of sexually-oriented advertising (for example Soley & Reid, 1985; Lin, 1998; Reichert et al., 1999; Reichert, 2003a; Reichert & Carpenter, 2004). However, this unit of analysis fails to capture the specific nature and type of each act or incidence of sexual behaviour portrayed in television advertising when a television commercial contains more than one sexual behavioural act.

For the purposes of this study, the sample will be coded differently based on two types of unit. The first one is the quantity of sexually-oriented advertising; the other unit is sexual interaction. These two units of analysis will be employed for different purposes in the analysis.

In order to eliminate the weaknesses of previous content analysis studies, sexual interaction was chosen as one of the basic measurements for this study. Dale Kunkel (1996) first used sexual interaction as an analysis unit to measure sexual content on television.

An interaction is a talk or behavioural exchange typically involving two or more characters. Reciprocal talk or behaviour from one character to another who initiated the sequence is considered part of the same original interaction. An interaction endures so long as it continues within the same scene and maintains the same interaction as primary participants. An interaction ends when no further exchange involving sexuality (either talk or behaviour) occurs between the same characters or when the scene shifts (Kunkel, 1996, p.26).
This study used sexual interaction as one of the basic units of measurement to determine sexual content in adverts; when sexual content was not between characters, it was represented as individual behaviour. Sexual interaction between a character and the audience would also be considered as a unit of measurement; for example, a woman making eye contact with the audience and then suggestively licking her lips within the same scene and conveying the same sexual filtration would be coded as one interaction that involved physical flirting. The sexual interaction in this study includes all verbal and visual references to sexual activities in television advertising.

**Defining Sexual Content**

As mentioned before, early content studies on sex in advertising have used limited or problematic definitions of sexual content in advertising. Some studies were restricted by defining sexual content as sexy imagery of seductive female models (for example, Steadman, 1969; Trytten, 1973; Alexander & Judd, 1978). Some studies failed to make distinctions between sexual and non-sexual physical contact between characters (for example, Lin, 1998).

Recent content analysis studies defined sexual content as any depiction of talk or behaviour that involves sexuality, sexual suggestiveness, or sexual activities or relationships (Kunkel et al., 1996; Reichert & Lambiase, 2003). Using this definition, any advert which contains comment or portrayals that involve sexuality, sexual suggestiveness, or sexual activities or relationships would be included and analysed in this study. Both verbal and visual references to sex were investigated. Sexual content in this study encompasses the full range of sex-containing content, from only containing a hint of sexual suggestion by means of double entendre to applying images of blatant nudity or depicting sexual intercourse. It
includes any verbal and visual representation that depicts or conveys a sense of potential of sexual intimacy, interest or motivation, which may not strictly lead to the consummation of sexual intercourse.

The sexual content in adverts was coded in four main areas in this study: sexual acts, sexual nudity, gender roles and other variables which make reference to sex. To qualify as a sexual act, a scene must contain at least potential or likely sexual meanings (Kunkel et al., 1996). For this reason, friendly kissing and touching between friends and relatives were not included. Sexual nudity is about people revealing their body in adverts in a sexual manner. The voice-over containing sexual meaning or sex talk in adverts constitute the verbal variable. In addition, other allusions and references to objects that have sexual meaning by meanings of double entendre were defined as well as sexual content and were analysed in the study.

The definition of sexual content plays an essential role in this study; according to the definition, adverts were selected which contained any kinds of sexual content from recoded samples and defined those as sex-containing adverts. Then, the coding scheme was employed to analyse these sex-containing adverts.

**Coding Scheme Used to Analyse Sexual Content**

This study drew upon the coding systems of previous content analysis studies of sex in advertising and also utilised research from public opinion surveys about sex in advertising and content attributes identified by relevant media effects research. Previous audience research has sometimes given clues about the specific audience attitudes toward particular content or format features in advertisements. These features can be included in coding frames for content analysis purposes. This study mainly used the findings from previous
focus groups and interviews conducted in Britain (ITC, 1995) and audience opinion research conducted in Hong Kong (Cheng, 2002) to design categories and features for the coding frame. Doing so rendered the content coding frames more powerful in terms of their ability to identify the presence of advertising attributes that have been empirically verified as having effects upon audiences.

To facilitate comparisons of data between the two countries, the coding sheet covered verbal references as well as visual references. Both heterosexual and homosexual behaviours were included. Throughout the entire study, sexual acts, nudity, gender roles, and other references, including verbal references, were divided into distinct part and were reported separately.

The coding sheet composed of six parts: codes for general feature of adverts; codes for sexual acts; codes for visual references to sex; codes for verbal references to sex; code of practice related codes; and other codes. Codes for general features of adverts referred to the general characters of adverts, such as time, length, and channel. Codes for sexual acts ranged from a lower threshold of physical flirting to overtly depicted sex intercourse. Codes for practice related codes were used to investigate the features of characters in adverts, such as the gender, age, ethnicity and occupation of the lead characters. Code of visual references focused on nudity and setting/location during sexual acts in adverts. Codes for verbal references included sex talk between characters and voice-overs containing sexual meanings. Apart from these, other variables were covered in coding scheme in this research, such as the camera/lighting technique and whether music was used in the advert to enhance the sexual meaning. ‘Context’ is another important variable which was measured in this study, which is defined as whether the sexual acts happened in serious or humorous situations.
Codes for General Features of Adverts

This scheme focused on the general features of television commercials appearing in Chinese and British television, such as the amount of advertising and the length of advertisements. General feature analysis was used in the current study to provide a full description of Chinese and British television adverts and to determine the amount and level of sexual content that contained within Chinese and British television adverts.

To find out the similarities and differences between Chinese and British advertising related to sex, five features were examined: (1) Number of adverts; (2) Length of adverts (in seconds); (3) Channel on which the adverts aired; (4) Time of day of the adverts; (5) Type of products.

1. Number of adverts

This category was used to identify the number of adverts containing sexual content that appeared on television. For example, the first recorded advertising found to contain sexual content was coded as 1; the second was identified as 2; and so on.

2. Length of adverts

This category was added to the coding scheme to code the length of sex-containing adverts in seconds. For example, if the period of a sexual advert was 20 seconds, it would be coded as 20.

3. Channel of adverts

This category was added to the coding scheme to find out where the sexual adverts come from. Adverts from Chinese and British television were recorded from 5 channels, the sub-categories used were: (1) Channel 4; (2) ITV 1; (3) CCTV 1; (4) CCTV 4; (5) WTV.

4. Time of day
This category was used to identify the airing time of adverts in both countries. All adverts were recorded from 6pm to 11 pm in both countries. 9pm was regarded as the important time boundary for sex on prime-time television research in Britain. In the 1990s, the Independent Television Commission (ITC) conducted a series focus groups and in-depth interviews to investigate audiences’ attitudes toward different degrees of nudity in advertising. The findings show that nudity was regarded as more acceptable when it appeared after 9pm. The data from the focus groups reveal that suggestive and partial nudity seems to be accepted by audiences at any time, semi-nudity and back nudity could be accepted after 9pm, while full-frontal nude and sexual intercourse imply or explicit scenes were unacceptable at any time (ITC,1995). The different audience responses were divided at 9pm in British audience research, and showed that it does make a difference whether the sexual content appeared before 9pm or after. For this reason, two sub-categories were used: (1) Before 9pm.; (2) After 9pm

5. The advertised product categories

This category identified which product categories were featured in both Chinese and British television commercials. This analysis was designed to show that the use of sex varies by product category. Comparisons were made between Chinese and British adverts with reference to the product types that applied sexual appeals in their advertisements. Most researchers have included the product category in their coding scheme when they were investigating sexual appeals in advertising. Conventional wisdom suggests that sex is more likely to appear in adverts in which there is a reasonable link between it and the advertised product (Reichert, 2002). In addition, product type is a very important element with reference to audiences’ acceptance of televised sexual content. According to previous audience research conducted by ITC, consumers are more accepting of sexual content in
advertising when they see a clear congruence between the sexual content and the products. It is also possible to determine the relationship between sexual content and products types in Chinese and British television adverts.

In order to better present the product types appearing on both countries, the researcher viewed all the sex-containing adverts appearing in both Chinese and British samples and clustered similar products into specific categories. A total of 14 product categories were created to represent all the sex-containing adverts which appeared in both the Chinese and British samples. Table 5.2 shows the product categories used for this analysis.

Table 5.2 Product Categories

| 1. Beauty and personal-care products | 8. Motoring |
| 2. Fashion | 9. Services (e.g. financial, banking and insurance) |
| 3. Underwear | 10. Travel |
| 5. CD/Music | 12. Movies |
| 7. Food and Beverage | 14. Others |

Codes for Sexual Acts

The lower threshold for sexual content measured in this study was physical flirting, acts implying sex with products and sexual bathing/undressing. Physical flirting refers to a behavioural action such as a woman licking her lips provocatively while gazing intently at a man in a bar; acts which implied sex with products refers to a sexy female model suggestively eating chocolate or ice-cream on screen. Sexual bathing/undressing is about people displaying their bodies in a revealing manner, associated with an essential source of sexual information. It almost goes without saying that nudity is used to evoke people’s sexual interest.
Other higher level behavioural categories include sexual activities between two characters, including kissing on the mouth, sexual touching/caring, kissing on body, sexual intercourse strongly implied, and sexual intercourse depicted. Moreover, verbal references to sexual acts were also examined here; the sub-categories were sex talk (implied) and sex talk (depicted). Sex talk (implied) refers to comments or suggestions which allude to sexual activities by means of double entendre by the lead characters in commercials. Sex talk (depicted) means detailed comments or suggestions with regard to sexual activities made by lead characters.

Sexual acts are about sexually provocative behavioural displays on adverts. A ‘sexual act’ was defined as a visual or verbal incident or reference to sexual activity within a scene (Greenberg et al., 1993). Sexual acts and nudity are two of the main characteristics of sexual content which have been investigated in previous studies. This aspect of the research focused on analysing the level and representation of sexual acts. Three categories were included as follows: (1) Duration of sexual acts (in seconds); (2) Number of sexual acts (3) Type of sexual acts.

1. Duration of sexual content (in seconds)
This category was added to the coding scheme to code the duration of sexual content in seconds. The duration of scenes containing sex-related content within in an advertisement would be coded. For example, an advertisement containing a five seconds scene featuring sexual appeal, then the duration of sexual content would be coded as 5. The duration of sexual content has never been examined in both sex on television and sex in advertising research. This analysis could actually influence the amount of the sex in media outlets and the attitude toward sexual content from audiences was examined in this study.

2. Number of sexual acts
Based on the measurement framework, the number of sexual acts depends on how many sexual interactions are portrayed in each advert. For example, kissing and sex talk between characters within the same scene were coded as two sexual acts. Kissing and touching between characters within the same scene were coded as two sexual acts. Several kisses between two characters in the same scene were coded as one sexual act, while two kisses in different scenes were coded as two sexual acts. It is important to keep in mind, the measurement unit of sexual interaction. The number of sexual acts observed inevitably understated the actual amount of many activities that are examined. For example, some study may think of a kiss as a distinct behaviour, but in this coding scheme 10 kisses between two characters that occur within a single interaction would be counted as one sexual act. As mentioned before, when sexual acts were woven into adverts as individual behaviour, the numbers of sexual interactions between the model and the audience would be counted. For example, the model making eye contact with an audience several times in the same scene were coded as one sexual interaction with reference to physical flirting. However, if the eye contacts were portrayed in two different scenes, they would be counted as two sexual interactions.

3. Type of sexual acts

The sexual act is a central variable in analyses of sexual media content. In this study, sexual act is analysed according to its explicitness and arrayed according to the levels of sexual intimacy. The lower threshold for sexual content measured in this study was physical flirting, which refers to a behavioural action such as a woman licking her lips provocatively while gazing intently at a man in a bar; implied sex with products, such as a women eating ice-cream suggestively, and sexual undressing. Other behaviour categories included actual sexual activities happening between characters, such as kissing on the mouth, sexual
touching/caring, kissing on the body, sexual undressing, sexual intercourse strongly implied, and sexual intercourse depicted. The sexual acts in this study also include verbal references to sex: sex talks (implied) and sex talks (depicted).

A. Physical flirting

Physical flirting can be woven into adverts in two ways, as individual behaviour or interpersonal interaction. When physical flirting in adverts is portrayed as individual behaviour, it is about models behaving sexually in adverts by making eye contact, flirting, and moving provocatively to communicate sexual interest with the viewer, or simply attempting to elicit sexual arousal. The normal presentations of individual physical flirting include the model making eye contact with audience to try to evoke some sexual interests, the model using suggestive body language to convey sexual meaning (such as a female model lying down in an open position), and the model showing a suggestive facial expression on screen (such as a half-opened mouth).

When physical flirting is woven into adverts in the interpersonal interaction way, it is normally described as intersexual admiration or appeal. For example, in a beer advert, a man drinking beer and looking at a woman in a sexual way, or in suit adverts, after the man puts on a nice suit, a woman give him a sexually-admiring glance.

B. Implied sex with products

This category refers to the sexual acts which imply sexual information with the products, such as a women suggestively eating an ice-cream or using a lipstick.

C. Sexual undressing

Sexual undressing is about people revealing their bodies, associated with an essential source of sexual information. It almost goes without saying that nudity is used to evoke people’s sexual interest.
D. Kissing and touching/caressing

As mentioned before, an incident that is considered a sexual act must, to a greater or lesser degree, convey sexual meaning or motivation. For this reason, kissing and touching/caressing scenes that were coded must happen between two characters with a discernible romantic relationship. A greeting kiss and friendly touching between friends and relatives were excluded. The action of kissing was divided into kiss on body and kiss on mouth.

E. Sexual intercourse

A distinction was made between sexual intercourse implied and sexual intercourse depicted. To be considered as sexual intercourse, scenes must portray at least some portion of the physical part, such as a man and woman writhing underneath bed sheets. Sexual intercourse implied is when an adjacent scene obviously communicates the unseen action, such as a couple walking toward a bed.

F. Sex talk (implied) and sex talk (detailed)

These categories refer to the verbal references to sex. Sex talk (implied) refers to suggestions or comments that implied sexual information between characters in advertising. Sex talk (detailed) refers to suggestions or comments which gave detailed depictions of sexual activities between characters in advertising.

The sub-categories were as following: (1) Physical flirting; (2) Implied sex with products; (3) Sexual undressing/bathing; (4) Kissing on mouth; (5) Sexual touching/caressing; (6) Sexual intercourse implied; (7) Sexuality intercourse depicted; (8) Sex talk implied; (9) Sex talk detailed; (10) Other.

**Codes for Visual References to Sex**
This analysis contributed to investigating the visual variables in adverts. This scheme focused on two categories: nudity and setting.

1. Nudity

The Oxford English Dictionary (1997) defines ‘nude’ as ‘naked, unclothed’ and naked as ‘unclothed, nude, defenceless, bare, and uncovered’. It is usually closely relative to sexuality, but means more than that. Nudity can occur in both sexual and non-sexual ways. Previous studies in this field failed to distinguish between sexual nudity and non-sexual nudity. Given the nature of the study, only sexual nudity should be included. There were three primary standards used in this study to distinguish between sexual and non-sexual nudity: intimacy, attractiveness, and context.

**Intimacy**

Intimacy refers to sexual nudity that conveys intimate and provocative meaning. For example, in images of a goddess or a man in ancient Greece, for whom a lack of clothing is their usual condition, there is no sexual suggestiveness presumed. Likewise, scenes of naked infants definitely do not contain sexual meaning. Sexual nudity is one where someone, such as a contemporary businessman, usually wears clothing, such that their lack of it in a scene implies sexual activity or suggestiveness.

**Attractiveness**

According to psychologist David Buss (1994), physical attractiveness among humans is a trait that is central for predicting interpersonal attraction and mate selection. Apparently, physical attractiveness plays a central role in sexual interest and desire. For this reason, sexual or non-sexual nudity also depends on the attractiveness of the model. For example, images in the adverts for the Italian clothing firm ‘No-l-ia’ featuring the totally naked body of an anorexic woman were identified as non-sexual. However, in body lotion adverts the
images of an active model who was partially exposing her perfect body parts and desirable bare skin were defined as sexual nudity.

**Context**

People are not simply naked without context. Whether their nudity is sexual or not also depends on whether it occurs in a context that tries to create sexual meaning and evoke sexual arousal. The context could be sexualized by many factors. According to the focus group conducted by Beetles et al. in 2005, high heels placed the image in a context that made the image sexualized. Apparently, the using of suggestive props and dress that are stereotypically considered sexy in daily life helps to represent sexual context. The use of camera and lighting techniques, setting, and music also contribute to the creation of a sexual context.

A typical example of non-sexual nudity is the image of bare breasts in a breast cancer education programme, which could not be defined as sexual nudity because the context of this image is far from conveying sexual meanings and interests. Normally, this kind of non-sexual nudity is portrayed without any sexy poses, suggestive settings and props, and special camera and lighting technique. However, a topless image in a fashion advert which uses a lying-down pose, high heels, tight jeans and half-lighting to create a sexual context would definitely be identified as sexual nudity.

Nudity in this research is not only a state of wearing no clothing. It refers to a physically attractive model wearing significantly and suggestively less clothing, and provocatively exposing their bare skin or intimate parts with a sexual context. The level of nudity depicted in television advertising has been examined by many previous studies (LaTour, 2006; Lin, 1998).
The sub-categories of nudity were drawn from the audience opinion research conducted by ITC (1995). It was coded for degrees of explicitness: (1) No nudity; (2) Partial nudity (wearing underwear), which refers to a model wearing underwear (such as a woman in bikini, a man in shorts), but also included a female model naked from the waist up and using a pose or her hands to cover her breasts; (3) Partial nudity (topless-front), which is a female model naked from the waist up from a front view and with the nipples exposed; (4) Nude (behind/side), which is the model showing a full nude from behind or from a side view, it refers to models only using hands and pose to cover sexual organs; and (5) Nude (frontal), which is the most extreme form of images of nudity, meaning the model is presented from the front and with the sexual organs exposed.

2. Setting

This category is widely used in gender representation schemes (McArhur & Resko, 1975; Furnham, 2000; Ferrante et al., 1988; Lovdal, 1989). The current scheme lists 9 sub-categories to determine where exactly the sexual acts and nudity were taking place. The options are (1) Bedroom; (2) Bathroom; (3) Living room; (4) Occupational setting; (5) Leisure (including bar, restaurant); (6) Fantasy; (7) Other (including outdoor) and (8) undetermined.

Code of Practice-Related Codes

The portrayal of practice-related codes in research focused on the gender, age, ethnicity, occupation and body type of the both sexual initiator and the recipient in adverts. The sexual initiator is somebody who actively launches the sexual behaviour. The recipient is somebody who receives the sexual behaviour. For example, in a suit advert where a man wearing a smart suit receives an admiring gaze from a woman, the woman who initiates the sexual act of physical flirting would be coded as the sexual initiator, and the man who was
admired would be coded as the sexual recipient. Any people portrayed in a central role in adverts, visually, vocally or both, and involved in sexual acts were included.

The gender, age, ethnicity, role categories have been employed by most researchers trying to investigate how men and women were depicted in adverts (McArthur & Resko, 1975; Furnham & Schofield, 1986; Lovdal, 1989; Gunter, 1995; Furnham & Mak, 1999). In addition, because sexual acts can be woven into adverts in two ways, as individual behaviour or interpersonal interaction (Reichert & Lambiasse, 2003), the categories of no sex initiator or no sex recipient were also added to the coding frames.

1. Gender

The ‘gender’ category is one of the key categories in gender role studies. All researchers in this area have included this category in their coding schemes. This study used the gender category to determine the link between gender and sexual acts, gender and age, gender and product types. The genders were categorized as (1) Male; (2) Female; (3) Undetermined (4) No sexual initiator (recipient).

2. Age

Most researchers have used the age category in their schemes to determine whether sexual acts were trigged by younger or older actors on screen. Coders estimated the age groups of actors appearing in the adverts: (1) Child (up to 12); (2) Teenager (13-19); (3) Young adult (20-35); (4) Middle aged adult (36-65); (5) Over 65; (6) Undetermined; (7) no sexual initiator (recipient).

3. Occupation role

The role played by characters in advertising has been of great interest to the vast majority of researchers who have analysed gender representation in advertising. (McArthur & Resko, 1975; Livingstone & Green, 1986; Ferrante et al., 1998). The actors involved in sexual acts in
adverts were classified according to the role they appeared to play in everyday life. The categories were: (1) Professional (such as doctor or lawyer); (2) Celebrity; (3) House chores, including parent, partner/spouse and home-maker; (4) Decorative role without other functional occupation; (5) Other; (6) No sexual initiator (recipient).

4. Ethnicity

The ethnicity category was added to measure the relationship between the ethnicity of models and sexual acts on screen. This category was also created to compare the number of native and foreign actors appearing in adverts which contained sexual content in China and Britain. The sub-categories were: (1) White; (2) Black; (3) Asian; (4) Other; (5) No sexual initiator (recipient).

5. Body type

The body type of the character was appraised on a 3-point scale physically depicting both male and female model types from (1) Thin; (2) Average; (3) Overweight (4) Athletic (5) No sexual initiator (recipient) (modified from Signorelli et al., 1994).

Verbal References and Other Codes

Verbal references refer to the voice-over containing sexual meanings. This category was used to examine whether voice-overs used in Chinese and British adverts contained sexual meanings and, if so, the type of sexual meanings. The sub-categories were: (1) Mention the word ‘sex’/comment about sex directly, which refers to the voice-over containing the word ‘sex’ or comment directly on sexual activities; (2) Allude to sex by means of double entendre, which means the voice-over implied sexual meanings, such as using the words ‘seduce’ and ‘attractive’ to try to arouse people’s sexual associations; (3) Other; (4) Did not convey sexual meanings.

Other Codes
Aside from simply containing sexual content, sexual information could also be subtly implied in adverts. This kind of sexual content that could also trigger sexual thoughts is less tangible and more oblique compared to other erotic behaviour. Reichert and Lambiase (2003) defined this kind of allusion or reference to objects and events that have sexual meaning by means of double entendre. In addition, factors which enhance or contribute to sexual meaning, such as music, lighting, and camera techniques, were also included in other codes.

1. Double entendre

Double entendre is about investigating images and words that subtly refer to sex or trigger sexual thoughts by means of double entendre. It can be explained as allusions and implications that refer to sexual meaning. Instead of depictions of nudity or erotic behaviour, double entendre helps to invoke sexual thoughts. Sexual content forms in the mind’s view, not in the ad. (Reichert & Lambiase, 2003:24). This category was coded as: (1) Double entendre in visual references, such as the imagery of a banana used in condom advertising; (2) Double entendre in verbal references, for example, in a male sexual health care products advertising a wife suggestively said her husband felt ‘good’ and she felt ‘good’ too; (3) Others; (4) No double entendre.

2. Music

Music is one of the non-verbal forms of communication in television advertising that has investigated by many researchers (Haley et al., 1984). Appelbaum and Halliburton (1993) claimed that music often transmits emotions better than words. Advertisers use several non-verbal elements that help to create a favourable mood for the advertised products among the audience. Some researchers have pointed out that music can be used as an element to enhance consumers’ memory of adverts and the advertised products (Stewart et al., 1990).
Other researchers have investigated the differences in using music in television adverts under various cultural backgrounds. Lin (1993), for example, found that Japanese television adverts emphasized the use of songs instead of music more often than their American counterparts, where music was used more often than songs. Music is an element that could play an important role in television adverts. Music was chosen to be part of this coding scheme, because it could enhance or contribute to sexual meaning.

This analysis was added to figure out whether there was background music used during sexual acts, and what kind of music was employed. The sub-categories were as follows: (1) Light music; (2) Hip-hop; (3) Pop; (4) Other; (5) No music.

3. Camera/lighting technique
This category was used to determine whether particular camera/lighting techniques were used to enhance or contribute to sexual meaning during sexual acts and, if so, what kinds of camera techniques were used. The Japanese researcher Arima (2003) pointed out that, in Japanese adverts, when commercials featured women as ‘attention-getters’, the close shot technique was used to outlined the women’s eyes and breasts. Special camera and lighting techniques could also emphasize the sexy body figure and enhance sexual information. The sub-categories were as follows: (1) Particular technique, including close shot, up/down, side angles, etc.; (2) No particular technique.

4. Humour
This analysis was added to investigate the ‘context’ of sexual acts in advertising. This was chosen to determine whether the situation during the sexual acts were humorous or serious. A study conducted by Bragg and Buckingham in 2002 pointed out that many sexual acts are presented in humour contexts on screens. There were four sub-categories: (1) Verbal, the sex talk between characters seemed intended to be humorous; (2) Visual, the sexual
behaviour of the actors was portrayed in a humorous fashion; (3) Both; (4) Undetermined; (5) No humour.

5. Homosexuality

This analysis was added to determine whether adverts and products were related to homosexuality. According to consumer opinion research in both countries, most audiences found adverts related to homosexuality offensive. The sub-categories were: (1) Sexual acts referencing homosexuality; (2) Product types related to homosexuality, such as adverts for homosexual magazines and services; (3) No homosexuality.

Coding Reliability

Coding reliability is a very important factor in content analysis. It provides information about the extent of the objectivity of the researcher, the research procedure and the coding sheet. Budd et al. (1967: 66) defined reliability as ‘repeatability with consistency of results’. Wimmer and Dominick (1997) claimed that reliability refers to the level of agreement among independent coders in repeated experiments and plays an important role in determining the objectivity of any content analysis.

To enhance the reliability level for the coding sheet used in this study, the research samples from Chinese and British television networks were recorded on video tape to enable coders to review the adverts as many times as they needed. This reduced coders’ reliance on their ability to observe and decode different variables at the same time. Before the coding process, the coders were asked to get familiar with the detailed coding sheet to make sure they understood the range and meaning of every category. In addition, the entire coding process was pilot tested to measure the percentage of agreement between coders across all key measures. To avoid misunderstanding caused by cultural differences, a
Chinese student was selected to help conduct the pilot-testing of the Chinese sample and a British student for the British adverts.

**Reliability Tests for Chinese TV Adverts**

The research began with a reliability test for the coding of sexual content representations in Chinese television adverts. A sub-sample of 100 adverts from Chinese television was analysed by both the author and the Chinese coder. An elaborate codebook of rules and examples for coding was developed at the outset of the first project to guide the content judgments.

Whenever discrepancies appeared, after the tests were completed the researcher and the other coder resolved discrepancies by watching the adverts together and discussing the points of agreement until an agreement was reached.

Reliability was assessed at two distinct levels: agreement on identifying sex-containing adverts and agreement on the codes used to describe the sexual content identified. For identifying decisions, the two coders independently observed a total of 100 random samples of Chinese adverts to distinguish sex-containing adverts from them. The test indicated that the coder and the researcher achieved a 98% level of agreement, with only two disagreements in defining sex-containing adverts. After discussion, agreement was achieved between two coders. Six of the Chinese advertisements were identified as containing sexual appeals. Then the two coders catalogued the presence of each of the 29 information cues listed in the coding scheme to examine the sexual adverts identified in the last step.

Next, a total of 174 independent codes were made of the sexual content of Chinese television adverts. This test indicated that the coder and the researcher achieved a 95% level of agreement, with only 9 disagreements. For identifying types of sexual content, the
level of agreement was 95%. Agreement on codes of visual references to sex ranged from 90% to 100%, and agreement on practice related variables ranged from 89% to 100%. Agreement on verbal and other codes respectively ranged from 88% to 100% and 93% to 100%. Overall, given the large number of codes involved and the complexity of the coding tasks, the reliability analyses establish strong confidence in the consistency of the data reported in the studies.

**Reliability Tests for British TV Adverts**

A sub-sample of 100 adverts from British television was analysed by the author and the British coder. Two coders independently observed a total of 100 random samples of British adverts to distinguish sex-containing adverts from them. The test indicated that the coder and the researcher achieved a 97% level of agreement, with three disagreements in defining sexually related advert. After discussion agreement was achieved between two coders and 14 advertisements were identified to contain sexual appeals in British television networks. Then the two coders catalogued the presence of each of the 29 information cues listed in the coding scheme to examine the British sexual adverts identified from the last step.

Next a total of 406 independent codes were made of the sexual content of British television adverts. This test indicated that the coder and the researcher achieved a 93% level of agreement, with 28 disagreements. For identifying types of sexual content, a 93% level of agreement was achieved. Agreement on codes of visual references to sex ranged from 90% to 100%, and agreement on practice related variables ranged from 89% to 100%. Agreement on verbal and other codes respectively ranged from 94% to 100% and 93% to 100%. Overall, given the large number of codes involved and the complexity of the coding tasks, the reliability analyses establish strong confidence in the consistency of the data reported in the studies.
Coding Scheme Validity

Wimmer and Dominick (1997:131) defined validity as ‘the degree to which an instrument actually measures what it sets out measure’. Singletary (1994:97) suggested that ‘researchers should ask themselves if they have measured what they think they measured’. The coding scheme designed for this study was proven to measure all the elements under scrutiny.

The coding scheme of this study was designed with reference to content analysis studies in three areas, sexual acts, gender roles and other related codes. The coding categories appeared clear and comprehensive and provide a parsimonious picture of the sexual content in television advertisements: including nudity, sexual acts, gender roles and verbal references. The context of sexual content was also included. The separation of visual and voice-over data eliminated the need for forcing voice-over codes into categories such as role and location, which are designed to describe characteristics of visual sexual actors.

In addition, the outputs from previous audience opinion research in China and Britain were employed to design the framework and categories. The results of the content analysis could be used to predict possible audience responses. This is a development on previous studies in this area.
Chapter Six

Amount and Distribution of Sex in Chinese and British TV Ads

This chapter will present the findings on the amount and distribution of sex in Chinese and British television advertisements. Many scholars have investigated the codes relating to sexual appeals in advertising under scrutiny (such as Soley & Reid, 1985; Soley & Reid, 1986; Soley & Kurzbard 1986; Lin, 1998; Reichert et al., 1999; Reichert & Carpenter, 2004). Features such as duration, product type, and representation type were all carefully investigated in previous studies. This thesis provided a replication and extension of previous content analyses of sex in television networks. It also addressed the issue of unit of analysis that designed to measure the television advertising. There were two kinds of analysing unit used in this study, the number of advertisements and sexual interactions. Every advertisement in each sample was coded for analysis, based on the quantity of commercials and on the quantity of sexual interaction.

The results of this study indicate distinct differences between Chinese and British television advertising related to sex, in both the quantity of sexual content and the representation of sexual behaviours. The similarities between Chinese and British sex-containing advertising on screen will also be summarized in this chapter.

The features outlined below were chosen to discover how much sex is shown in Chinese and British television advertisements and different representations of sex in television advertising due to different cultural background and government regulations. Ten attributes related to the amount and distribution of sex in television advertising were investigated here: (1) Ad number; (2) Channel; (2) Duration of ad; (4) Time of day; (5)
Product type; (6) Number of sexual acts; (7) Amount of sexual content; (8) Type of sexual acts; (9) Nudity; (10) Setting.

The Number and Channel of Sex-containing Adverts

The categories identified the number of adverts which contained sexual content that appeared on television and the channels they appeared on. The Chinese sample was taken from two biggest national channels in China, CCTV1 and CCTV2. Due to the pyramidal structure of Chinese media system, a sample from one city-level television station, Wenzhou television station (WTV), was also drawn to better represent Chinese adverts. There were 1,198 commercials recorded from CCTV1, 1,092 commercials recorded form CCTV2, and 796 commercials recorded from WTV. A total of 3,086 commercials were recorded from the Chinese networks. Meanwhile there were 1,358 adverts recorded from Channel 4 and 1,047 adverts recorded from ITV1; a total of 2,405 adverts taped from British networks. The adverts which contained any kind of sexual content were analysed in this study. The findings will contribute to answering RQ1 ‘How much sex occurs in TV advertisements in Britain?’ and RQ2 ‘How much sex occurs in TV advertisements in China?’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
<th>X²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCTV1</td>
<td>CCTV2</td>
<td>WTV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ads Num(Ori)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ads Num(Rep)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ads Num(Sum)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ads Number</td>
<td>1198</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1 reveals that 93 commercials (including 27 original adverts and 66 repeat adverts) were identified containing sexual content across the three Chinese networks. This means approximately 3% of the commercials appearing on Chinese networks were coded as
sex-contained advertising and investigated in this study. In the Chinese sample, 46 (3.8%) commercials contained at least some sexual content on CCTV1, 20 (1.8%) commercials contained sexual content on CCTV2, and 27 (3.4%) commercials contained sexual content on WTV. The chi-square result shows there were no significant differences in the distribution of sex-containing adverts broadcast between the Chinese national level channels (CCTV1 and CCTV2) and the Chinese city-level channel (WTV).

In British networks, 1,358 commercials were recorded from Channel 4 and 1,047 commercials were recorded from ITV1. In all, of the total of 2,405 taped commercials, 283 commercials (including 80 original adverts and 203 repeat adverts) were coded as sex-containing advertising and investigated in this study. The data shows that approximately 11.8% commercials appearing on the British networks contained at least some sexual content; 175 (12.9%) of these commercials came from Channel 4, and the other 108 commercials (10.3%) from ITV1. The chi-square result indicates the difference in the frequency of sex-containing adverts broadcast on Channel 4 and ITV1 was not significant.

This study coded a total of 376 advertisements containing sexual content in Chinese and British networks; 93 from the three Chinese TV channels and 283 from the two British TV Channels. The proportion of sex advertisements in all recorded adverts was around 3% in Chinese sample, and 11.8% in the British sample. It is clear that British networks contained a much higher proportion of sex-containing advertisements compared to the Chinese networks ($X^2=162.37 \text{ df}=1 \ p<0.000$) [Exact]. Channel 4 contained the highest proportion of sex-containing commercials of all five Channels, while CCTV2 from China contained the lowest ratio of sex-containing adverts.

**Duration of Sex-containing Adverts and Duration of Sexual Content**
The duration of sex-containing adverts and the duration of sexual content within those adverts are important features to scale the amount of the sex in television advertising, but these two features have never been examined in previous studies on sex in television commercials. The duration of sex-containing adverts category was added to code the length of advertisements which contained at least some sexual content. The duration of sexual content category was added to code the length of sexual scenes which featured sexual appeals within the sex-containing adverts. The duration of sex-containing adverts varied from 8 seconds to 240 seconds. The total duration of sexual content in sex-containing adverts varied from 2 seconds to 147 seconds. Table 6.2 shows the duration of sex-containing advertisements and the sexual content in those adverts across the five channels. These findings also contribute to RQ1 and RQ2.

Table 6.2 Duration (seconds) of Sex-containing Ads and Sexual Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCTV1</td>
<td>CCTV2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex-containing Ads</td>
<td>1275</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Content</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Duration of Sex-containing Ads and Sexual Content in Chinese Networks

According to Table 6.2, on CCTV1 the total duration of sex-containing adverts was 1,275 seconds (more than 21 minutes). Of this, 229 seconds (about 4 minutes) of scenes in sex-containing advertising were coded as containing sexual appeals. On CCTV2, 414 seconds (around 7 minutes) of advertisements were coded as sex-containing adverts, of this 109 seconds (around 2 minutes) of scenes were defined as presenting sexual content. On WTV, the total duration of sex-containing adverts was 3,579 seconds (around 1 hour), and the duration of sexual content within those adverts was 1,981 seconds (around 33 minutes). In total, there were 5,268 seconds (around 1 and a half hours) of advertisements coded as sex-
containing adverts in this study from the Chinese sample, and 2,839 seconds (more than 47 minutes) of the scenes in those sex-containing adverts were coded as containing sexual content.

Of around one and half hours of samples of sex-containing advertisements from Chinese networks, two thirds of the commercials by duration (around 1 hour) were from WTV, meanwhile of a total of 47 minutes of sexual scenes from the three Chinese Channels, about 70% (about 33 minutes) were from WTV. These findings reveal that the duration of sex-containing advertisements and sexual content on the local WTV network were much longer than on the national level networks (CCTV1, CCTV2) in China.

**The Duration of Sex-containing Ads and Sexual Content in British Networks**

Table 6.2 states that on Channel4, the total duration of sex-containing adverts was 4,027 seconds (around 1 hour and 7 minutes). Of this, 1,969 seconds (more than 32 minutes) of the scenes in these sex-containing adverts were defined as containing sexual appeals. On ITV1, the total duration of sex-containing adverts was 1,985 seconds (around 33 minutes). Of this, 686 seconds (more than 11 minutes) of scenes within those sex-containing adverts were defined as presenting sexual content. In the whole British sample, there were a total of 6,012 seconds (around 1 hour 40 minutes) of sex-containing advertising that appeared on British screens. As to the duration of sexual content within sex-containing adverts, a total of 2,655 seconds (more than 44 minutes) scenes were defined as containing sexual appeals in the British sample.

These findings indicate that in British sample, Channel 4 contained considerably longer sex-containing adverts and sexual content than ITV1. The duration of sex-containing adverts on Channel 4 was approximately two times the duration of sex-containing adverts
on ITV1, and the duration of sex-containing scenes appearing in adverts on Channel 4 was approximately three times the duration of sex-containing scenes in adverts on ITV1.

The Advertised Product Categories Related to Sex

This category identified which product categories that featured in both Chinese and British television commercials were related to sex. The analysis continued by examining whether sexual themes were more likely to occur in adverts associated with specific product ranges than others. This analysis also made comparisons between adverts in Britain and China to determine whether there were differences between them in the key product areas most closely associated with the use of sexual content in advertising.

Conventional wisdom suggests that sex is more likely to appear in adverts when there is a reasonable link between it and the advertised product (Reichert, 2003a). In addition, product types are a very important element in reference to audiences’ acceptance of televised sexual content. This category is used to determine the relationship between sexual content and product types in Chinese and British television adverts. A total of 14 product categories were created to represent all the sex-containing adverts which appeared in both the China and British samples. Table 6.3 shows the advertised product categories related to the use of sex on Chinese and British TV adverts. The findings help to answer RQ5 ‘What kinds of sexual depictions occur in TV advertisements in Britain’ and RQ6 ‘What kinds of sexual depictions occur in TV advertisements in China?’

Advertised Products and Sex in Chinese TV Adverts

According to Table 6.3, about 74.2% of the sex-containing advertisements appearing on Chinese television networks were coded under four product categories ‘beauty and personal care products’, ‘domestic’, ‘bedding’ and ‘underwear’. However, on CCTV1 and
CCTV2 there were no advertisements for underwear. The only reason the Chinese sample contained so many underwear advertisements is because WTV had continually been broadcasting a television shopping show for underwear in sample collecting period. Thus, in the Chinese national sample, ‘beauty and personal care products’ ‘domestic’ and ‘bedding’ product categories were predominant in respect of the use of sexual themes in their advertising. Table 6.3 shows that the ‘beauty and personal care’ category dominated the advertised product categories which contained sexual content appearing on Chinese television, with 27 advertisements (29%) using sexual appeals to promote personal and beauty care products. There were no ‘motoring’, ‘service’ ,‘travel’, ‘movies’ or ‘electronic’ commercials using sexual appeals to promote products in the Chinese sample.

**Table 6.3 Product Types related to the Use of Sexual Themes in Adverts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CCTV1</th>
<th>CCTV2</th>
<th>WTV</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Channel4</th>
<th>ITV1</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>X²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beauty and Personal Care Product</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27/29%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>109/38.5%</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6/6.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7/2.5%</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwear</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14/15%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/0%</td>
<td>14.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedding</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11/11.8%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/0%</td>
<td>30.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD/Music</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/0%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26/9.2%</td>
<td>9.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19/20.4%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19/6.7%</td>
<td>14.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Beverage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/9.7%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44/15.5%</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motoring</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21/7.4%</td>
<td>7.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4/1.4%</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6/2.1%</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Disease and Treatment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5/5.4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/0%</td>
<td>11.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/0.0%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25/8.8%</td>
<td>8.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electronic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/0.0%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22/7.8%</td>
<td>7.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2/2.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/0%</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>283</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advertised Products and Sex in British TV Adverts

Table 6.3 shows that ‘beauty and personal care’ product was the dominant product category containing sexual content advertised on British television. 109 (38.5%) commercials were coded under this category. The second most popular products using sex content in British television were ‘food and beverages’, comprising 44 (15.5%) of the total adverts. More than half of the British commercials were coded under these two categories. The advertisements for ‘CD/music’, ‘motoring’, ‘movies’ and ‘electronics’ also took a small proportion of total sex adverts. There were no advertisements coded under the ‘underwear’, ‘bedding’ or ‘sex disease and treatment’ categories in the British sample.

The advertised product categories appearing on Chinese and British television were classified into four groups according to their frequency of appearance. The first group represented the product categories which had a sizeable presence in both Chinese and British commercials using sex appeals. This group included the adverts promoting ‘beauty and personal care’ and ‘food and beverage’. The findings show that ‘beauty and personal care’ products occupied over one quarter of both the Chinese and British samples. ‘Food and beverage’ categories occupied 9.7% and 15.5% in the Chinese and British samples respectively. The chi-square results showed no significant differences between the number of Chinese and British television sex-containing adverts promoting these two kinds of products.

The second group represents the product categories which appeared significantly more frequently in the Chinese sample than the British sample. This group included ‘underwear’, ‘bedding’ and ‘domestic’ products. Table 6.3 indicates that number of Chinese sex-containing television adverts featuring ‘underwear’ ($x^2 = 14.67$, df=1 p<0.001) [Exact] ‘bedding’ ($x^2 = 30.44$, df=1 p<0.000) [Exact], and ‘domestic’ ($x^2 = 14.50$, df=1 p<0.001) [Exact]
were significantly greater than their British counterparts. Furthermore, it is worth reiterating that CCTV1 and CCTV2 did not contain any underwear commercials in the sample, all 14 underwear commercials were from WTV.

The third group represents the product categories which appeared much more frequently in British samples compared to the Chinese sample. This group includes ‘CD/music’ ‘motoring’ ‘movies’ and ‘electronics’. The finding suggests 9.2% of the sample were for ‘CD/music’, 8.8% for ‘movies’, 7.8% for ‘electronics’ and 7.4% for ‘motoring’ in the British sample, whereas there were no products coded under these four categories in the Chinese sample.

The fourth group represents the product categories which appeared rarely in both Chinese and British commercials using sex appeals. This group includes adverts promoting ‘fashion’, ‘service’, ‘travel’ and ‘sex disease and treatments’. The proportions of these product categories were all under 7% in both countries. The chi-square results showed no significant differences between the number of Chinese and British television sex-containing adverts promoting these types products.

**Time of the Day and Sex in TV Advertising**

All the adverts were recorded from 6pm to 11 pm in both countries. 9pm at night was regarded as the important time boundary for sex in television research in Britain because sexual content shown after 9pm seems to be accepted more easily, according to previous audience research conducted by ITC in 1995.

**Table 6.4 Time of Transmission of Adverts with Sexual Content**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCTV1</td>
<td>CCTV2</td>
<td>WTV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bef 9pm</td>
<td>20/43.5%</td>
<td>6/30%</td>
<td>3/11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aft 9pm</td>
<td>26/56.5%</td>
<td>14/70%</td>
<td>24/88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.4 shows the time distribution of sex-containing advertisements in both countries. The findings show that 29 adverts (31.2%) which contained sexual themes appeared on Chinese television before 9pm; with rather more advertisements with these themes (68.8%) appearing after 9pm. In the British sample 106 (37.5%) sex-containing commercials appeared on screen before 9pm, with the remaining 177 (62.5%) sex-containing commercials appearing after 9pm. The findings indicate that on both Chinese and British television networks the commercials which appear on screen after 9pm are substantially more sexual than before 9pm. The chi-square results showed no significant differences between the time of transmission of adverts with sexual content in Chinese and British television networks.

**The Number of Sexual Acts on Chinese and British TV Adverts**

This attribute refers to the number of sexual acts in TV adverts in both countries. The analysis unit of sexual acts is sexual interactions. This category used sexual interactions as the basic unit of measurement to determine the amount of sexual acts in adverts. The sexual acts here include verbal and visual sexual interactions.

**Table 6.5 The Number of Sexual Acts in TV Adverts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese sample</th>
<th>British sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCTV1</td>
<td>CCTV2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of sex acts</td>
<td>52 /49.5%</td>
<td>24/22.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5 shows the number of sexual acts found on Chinese and British television networks. The findings show that of the 105 sexual acts appearing in Chinese advertisements, CCTV1 showed nearly half (49.5%) of these acts, while CCTV2 and WTV showed about 22.9% and 27.6% respectively. WTV, who had the greatest duration of sex-
containing advertisements and sexual contents within sex-containing adverts across the
three Chinese channels, did not lead in the number of sexual acts.

In the British sample 183 (58.5%) sexual acts appeared on Channel 4, while the other
130 (41.5%) commercials appeared on ITV1. Altogether, there were 313 visual and verbal
sexual acts in British adverts, and more sexual acts were shown on Channel 4 in contrast
than on ITV1.

In total, 418 sexual acts appeared on Chinese and British adverts; 105 sexual acts from
three Chinese channels and 313 sexual acts from two British television channels. Compared
to Chinese adverts, the British sample contained substantially more sexual acts. Channel 4
contained the most sexual acts in these five channels. The amount of sexual acts reached 52
in CCTV1, which ranked third behind ITV. CCTV2 contained the smallest number of sexual
acts.

Types of Sexual Acts in Chinese and British Adverts

In this analysis, sexual acts were analysed for explicitness and arrayed according to levels of
sexual intimacy. The lower threshold for sexual content measured in this study was physical
flirting, followed by acts implied sex with products and sexual bathing/undressing. Other
higher level behaviour categories were sexual activities which occurred between two
characters, including kissing on mouth, sexual touching/caring, kissing on body, sexual
intercourse strongly implied, and sexual intercourse depicted. Verbal references to sexual
acts were included in this study.

Types of Sexual Acts in Chinese TV Adverts

Table 6.6 shows the different types of representations of sexual acts in Chinese and British
adverts. The findings suggest that of the 105 sexual acts seen in Chinese adverts, most of
them involved physical flirting (83.8%). There were nine (8.6%) sexual acts that referred to sexual undressing/bathing, three (2.9%) that referred to implied sex with products and another five (4.8%) that showed sex talk (detailed). Chinese adverts did not contain any scenes portraying actual sex activities between the characters and all five detailed sex talks were coded from WTV.

Types of Sexual Acts in British TV Adverts

In the British sample, there were 338 sexual acts that referred to physical flirting, which occupied the biggest proportion (69.6%). There were three (1%) sexual acts that referred to implied sex with products, 16 (5.1%) that showed sexual undressing/bathing. In the British sample, 50 (16%) that showed actual sexual activities happened between the lead characters, including 32 (10.2%) of kissing on mouth and 18 (5.8%) of sexual touching. Moreover there were 26 (8.3%) sexual acts that referred to talking about sex suggestively in British sample.

Table 6.6 Types of Sexual Acts in TV Adverts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCTV 1</td>
<td>CCTV 2</td>
<td>WTV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Flirting</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied Sex with Product</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Undressing/Bathing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kissing on Mouth</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Touching</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Intercourse Implied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Intercourse Depicted</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Talk (implied)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Talk (detailed)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing Types of Sexual Acts in Chinese and British TV Adverts
In both the Chinese and British samples, physical flirting was the most common representation of sexual behaviour. On average, around 74% of all the sexual acts showed physical flirting on screen in China and Britain. The chi-square results revealed that the number of instances of physical flirting in Chinese television adverts was greater than their British counterparts ($X^2=8.04$ df=1 $p <0.01$). Implied sex with products and sexual bathing/undressing took the small proportion in both countries. The chi-square results showed no significant differences between the number of instances of implied sex with products and sexual bathing/undressing in Chinese and British television adverts.

The British sample clearly contained more sexual acts and a higher level of sexual behaviour in TV adverts than the Chinese sample. Overt sexual activities only featured in British adverts. British television channels contained 32 instances of kissing on mouth and 18 sexual touching behaviours whereas no Chinese adverts from the three channels contained any sexual acts coded under these two categories.

Moreover, there were 31 scenes coded under verbal references to sex including 26 implied sex talks from British adverts and five direct sex talks from WTC in Chinese adverts. There were no sexual acts coded under sexual intercourse implied or depicted in either Chinese or British adverts.

**Level of Nudity Depicted in Chinese and British Television Advertising**

There were five different sub-categories used to measure the different levels of nudity depicted in Chinese and British television adverts. These were: no nudity; partial nudity, which included wearing underwear or bikini; partial nudity, which means topless; behind-side nude, which features a totally naked body from beside or behind; and full-frontal nudity. The sub-categories were designed based on audience research conducted by ITC (1995). The findings revealed that first two categories could be accepted by the audience at any time of
the day, topless from the waist and totally nude viewed from the side or behind could be accepted by most British audiences after 9 pm, but full-frontal nudity was hard to accept at any time of the day. Chinese audience research showed a much stricter attitude to nudity; it was considered that any level of nudity might cause public offence in Chinese society (Cheng, 2002; Fam & Waller, 2003).

**Nudity in Chinese TV Advertising**

Table 6.7 shows the level of nudity exposed in sex-containing commercials in both countries. The findings show that the majority (74 or 79.6%) of Chinese sex-containing adverts did not contain any level of nudity, while 20.4% of Chinese sex-containing commercials used partial nudity (wearing underwear) to present their sexual appeals. There were no topless, behind and side nude or full-frontal nudity in the Chinese sample.

**Nudity in British TV Advertising**

In the British sample, 167 (59%) sex-containing advertisements did not contain nudity. 112 (39.5%) sex-containing advertisements contained partial nudity, which actually showed models wearing underwear or bikinis. Only four (1.4%) advertisements used full nudity from the behind and side view to present sexual information, which were all broadcasted by ITV.

There was no topless nudity or fully frontal nudity in British television advertising.

**Table 6.7 Nudity in the Chinese and British TV Advertising**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
<th>(X^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCTV1</td>
<td>CCTV2</td>
<td>WTV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Nudity</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Nudity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(underwear)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Nudity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(up-waist topless)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nudity (Behind-side)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Frontal Nudity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing Nudity in the Chinese and British TV Advertising

The findings indicate that the proportion of Chinese sex-containing adverts coded under ‘no nudity’ was significantly greater than their British counterparts \( (X^2 = 12.86 \ df=1 \ p<0.001) \). In total, 112 British commercials contained partial nudity (wearing underwear or bikini) on the two British channels, as opposed to 19 Chinese commercials on the three Chinese channels. The chi-square result indicates that the difference between the number of the Chinese and British sex-containing adverts in the ‘partial nude (wearing underwear)’ category was statistically significant \( (X^2 = 11.30 \ df=1 \ p<0.001) \).

There were four British commercials that contained behind and side view nudity in contrast with none in Chinese sample. As might have been expected, British advertisements showed more flesh than Chinese advertisements.

Setting of Sex Scenes in Chinese and British Adverts

This category is widely used in gender representation schemes (McArthur and Resko, 1975; Furnham & Schofield, 1986; Ferrante, et al., 1988; Lovdal, 1989). Because this category was used to examine exactly where the sexual acts and behaviour were taking place, the sexual act was used as the unit for analysis. The scheme had lists of nine sub-categories to determine exactly where the sexual acts happened on screen. The options were (1) bedroom; (2) bathroom; (3) living room; (4) occupational setting; (5) leisure (including bar or restaurant); (6) fantasy; (7) outdoor; and (8) other. If sexual behaviour appeared in more than one setting then only the setting which appeared for the longest time was coded.

Setting of Sexual Acts in Chinese TV Advertising

Table 6.8 shows exactly where the sexual acts and behaviour took place in Chinese and British television adverts. The findings suggest that in Chinese sample, 48 sex scenes (45.7%) featured a bedroom setting, 18 (17.1%) sexual acts happened in a bathroom. 17 (16.2%) sex
scenes occurred in outdoor settings, 13 (12.4%) sex scenes showed leisure settings and five (4.8%) sexual acts took place in a living room. None of the adverts in the Chinese sample occurred in occupational or fantasy settings. Moreover, there were seven sexual acts (6.7%) for which it was not possible to determine the setting.

**Setting of Sexual Acts in British TV Advertising**

In the British sample, the most frequent setting was, like the Chinese sample, also the bedroom with 29.7%. Other common settings were outdoors and bathrooms with 85 (27.2%) and 43 (13.7%) respectively. There were 25 (8%) commercials in a leisure setting, 20 (6.4%) portrayed in a living room setting and 10 (3.2%) in a fantasy setting. Moreover, there were 10 (3.2%) commercial for which it was not possible to determine the setting.

**Table 6.8 Setting of Sexual Acts in Chinese and British Adverts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese sample</th>
<th>British sample</th>
<th>X²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCTV1</td>
<td>CCTV2</td>
<td>WTV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Room</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Setting</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comparing the Setting of Sexual Acts in the Chinese and British TV Advertising**

Bedroom settings took up the biggest proportion of settings related to sexual activities in both Chinese and British samples. The chi-square result reveals that the Chinese sample contained more sexually-themed activity in bedroom settings than the British sample (X²=9.01 df=1 p<0.001)[Exact]. Bathroom, outdoor and leisure settings also occupied considerable proportions in both countries. British sex-containing adverts contained significantly more outdoor settings than Chinese sex-containing adverts (X²=8.31 df=1 n.s).
The chi-square results shows there were no significant difference between ‘bathroom’ and ‘outdoor’ categories in the Chinese and British samples.

The British sample contained much more sexually-themed activity in occupational settings than the Chinese sample ($X^2 = 9.68$ df=1 $p<0.01$)[Exact]. There were 27 sexual acts that took place in vocational settings in British adverts but no sexual acts coded under this category in Chinese sample.

The ‘living room’ and ‘fantasy’ categories appeared rarely on both Chinese and British samples. The proportions of these categories were under 7% in both countries. Moreover, in both Chinese and British samples there were seven and ten sexual acts respectively that could not be defined in terms of setting.

**Conclusion and Discussion**

In considering how much sex is shown in the Chinese and British television advertising, one approach taken has been to ask the audience, as was discussed in Chapter Four. However, the subjective opinions of media consumers may not reflect the reality of what television adverts actually contain (Gunter, 2002). Therefore, this chapter used content analysis to quantify how much sex is depicted in both Chinese and British television networks, including the number of sex-containing adverts, the duration of sexual content, and the amount of sexual acts and the level of the nudity. This part also sums up the way sexual content is presented, including the type of sexual acts, where the sexual acts happened and what products they were trying to sell. Discussions and comparisons with previous studies will be made in the following paragraphs.
The Amount of Sex-containing Adverts in Chinese and British Networks

There were 93 commercials from Chinese networks and 283 from British networks defined as containing sexual content in this study. The average proportion of sex-containing advertisements was 3% on Chinese networks, and 11.8% on British networks. British networks contained significantly larger amounts of sex-containing advertisements compared to Chinese networks ($X^2=162.37$ df=1 $p<0.000$) [Exact].

The author believes that having such a significant difference in the amount of sex-containing adverts between the Chinese and British contribution might be attributed to the large impacts of the traditional cultural values of Confucianism in Chinese society, and the stricter censorship offered by the Chinese government compared to its British counterpart. As mentioned earlier, the Chinese state religion Confucianism holds a conservative attitude towards sex-related issues. These traditional values have shaped Chinese society and individuals for thousands years. In particular, under the control of the New Confucianist ideology, sex was a taboo subject in the late imperial period in China (960-1911 A.D.). In the first decade after the People’s Republic of China was established, traditional sexual morals were reasserted; discourse on sex was not forbidden but was restrained in limited areas. However, in 1966 and 1967 when the Cultural Revolution swept the whole of Chinese society, discourse on sex was strictly banned in Chinese society again and the slightest suggestion of sexual interest was considered ideologically unsound. After the restrictions of the Cultural Revolution, sexual attitudes and behaviour changed in China, but Confucianism still impacts Chinese society in every aspect (Ruan, 1991). Moreover, conservatism, as another major Chinese ideology, emphasizes the propagation of a traditional ethos and culture that is mainly derived from Confucianism. Therefore, the Chinese censorship authority, SARFT, holds a stricter attitude with regard to issues related to sexual material in
the media compared to the British censorship authority. This will be explained in detail in Chapter Ten.

According to a previous study carried out by Lin (1998), around 8% of television commercials in America feature at least one type of sexually-oriented behaviour. The figure for the British sample revealed in current study was a little higher than Lin’s study. It is also worth pointing out that Lin’s study coded some non-sexual physical contact such as handholding as sexual content. This problematic definition of sexual content might induce the figure found in Lin’s study for the amount of sexually oriented adverts to be lower than what the sample actually contains. The difference in the amount of sex-containing adverts between the current study and Lin’s study may due to the fact that the number of television advertisements containing sexual elements has increased during the twenty-year time interval or because cultural differences between Britain and America reflect on the differences in the amount of sex-containing adverts.

The results of this content analysis indicate that only 3% of commercials in the Chinese sample contained sexual content. This is significantly lower than the proportion of sexually themed adverts in American television networks found by Lin (1998). This can be attributed to the cultural differences between the Eastern and Western countries reflecting on the representation of sexual appeals in adverts.

Compared to print magazines, 11% of general interest magazine adverts and at least 25% of men and women’s magazine adverts contained sexual content a quarter of a century ago (Soley & Kurzbard, 1986). Apparently, magazine adverts generally contain more sexual references than television commercials, to the extent that comparisons can be made between studies across different media.
The Duration of Sex-containing Ads and Sexual Content on British and Chinese Networks

Altogether, 11,280 seconds (around 3 hours 8 minutes) of advertisements were coded in this study, including 1,689 seconds from Chinese national networks, 3,579 seconds from Chinese local channel WTV and 6,012 seconds from British networks. First, a comparison was made between the two Chinese national channels and two British channels. The findings reveal that British networks contained much longer sex-containing adverts and sexual content than Chinese national-level channels. The British sample contained over three and half times the duration of sex-containing adverts and nearly eight times the duration of sexual content in those adverts than the Chinese national-level channels. However, it is clearly visible that the local channel WTV contained much longer duration of sex-containing adverts and sexual content in those adverts compared to the two Chinese national-level networks (CCTV1 and CCTV2).

The duration of sex-containing adverts appearing on WTV was longer than on ITV, but shorter than Channel 4. WTV contained the longest duration of content in sex-containing adverts across the five channels from the two counties.

The author believes that WTV had such a large duration of sexual content, for two reasons. First, as mentioned earlier, Chinese TV networks have a pyramidal construction; it is therefore more difficult for SARFT to supervise all the local networks and it has to go through complex bureaucratic procedures to enforce the standard codes. Moreover, at the time the samples were taken, WTV was regularly airing a 30 minute teleshopping show for underwear; this is another reason why WTV contained a much longer duration of sexual content than CCTV1 and CCTV2.

In general, there were more advertisements in the British samples that contained sexual material than in the Chinese samples. Sex-containing adverts occupied more
televisiob airtime in the British sample than adverts that contained sexual material in the Chinese sample. On average, for adverts that contained any sexual content, that content occupied more time in British adverts than in Chinese adverts. The reason for these differences could also be explained by the cultural, historical and regulatory differences between Chinese and British society. The impact of traditional values and the strict censorship of sex-related issues contribute to the respectively shorter airtime of sex-containing adverts and scenes on Chinese television networks.

Comparisons with previous studies were not possible for this finding as no previous study in this field has measured the length of sex-containing adverts and the sexual content within those adverts.

**Advertised Products in Chinese and British TV Ads**

The findings show ‘beauty and personal care’ products occupied more than one quarter in both the Chinese and British samples. It was quite common to use sexual appeals to sell beauty and personal care products in both countries. The chi-square result shows no significant difference between the number of Chinese and British television sex-containing adverts promoting beauty and personal care products. Beauty and personal care products could easily be associated with sexual content and so increase the recall and acceptance among audiences (Tinkham & Reid; 1988; Gunter; 2002; Cheng, 2002).

The Chinese sample contained a significantly greater number of sex-containing adverts to promoting ‘underwear’ than the British sample. This could be attributed to the repeated broadcast of the 30 minute teleshopping show in WTV during the sample collecting time. CCTV1 and CCTV2 did not contain any sex-containing commercial for underwear. It is also worth pointing out that these underwear adverts broadcast on WTV breached the Chinese
advertising codes for promoting female underwear in advertising and, according to audience research conducted in China (Cheng, 2002), these commercials for underwear might offend Chinese audiences.

**Time of the Day and Sex in Chinese and British TV Ads**

The findings indicate that for both Chinese and British television networks the commercials which appear on screen after 9pm are substantially more sexual than before 9pm. The chi-square result shows no significant difference between the time of transmission of adverts with sexual content in the Chinese and British television networks. According to the previous audience research, 9pm was regarded as an important time boundary for sexual content in prime-time television research in Britain. The showing of sexual content after 9pm seems to be accepted more easily, according to audience research carried out by ITC in 1995. In both Chinese and British television advertising, the majority of sexual content was transmitted after family viewing hours to avoid offence and to protect people under the age of eighteen.

A previous study on sex on television conducted by Franzblau et al. in 1977 indicated that sexual acts were shown more frequently in the 8-9 pm time period than later in the evening. However, another content analysis of sex on television launched by Fernandez-Callado et al. indicated more than twice as many sexual acts occurring from 9pm to 11pm (2.70 per hour) as from 8pm to 9pm (1.14 per hour). The results of this study coincide with the findings from Fernandez-Collado et al. (1978), that the representation of sex-related content appeared more frequently after 9 pm.

**Amount of Sexual Acts in Chinese and British Ads**

In total, 418 sexual acts appeared in Chinese and British adverts, including 105 sexual acts from the three Chinese channels and 313 sexual acts from the two British television
channels. As opposed to Chinese adverts, the British sample contained substantially more sexual acts. This could be attributed to the fact that, in general, the discourse of sex is more open in Britain than in China. The conservative values towards sex in Confucianism shape many aspects of the Chinese society, including the amount of sex represented in television advertising. Moreover, sexually-themed materials on screens are restricted by SARFT in Chinese society.

**Type of Sexual Acts in Chinese and British Ads**

The findings indicate that in both the Chinese and British samples, physical flirting was the most common representation of sexual content. Compared to British television adverts, Chinese television adverts were more likely to represent sexual appeals through physical flirting ($X^2=8.04$ df=1 $p < 0.01$) [Exact]. Meanwhile, the British sample contained obviously more sexual acts and a higher level of sexual behaviour in television adverts than the Chinese sample. Overt sexual activities only featured in British television adverts and the British television sample contained 32 kissing on mouth and 18 sexual touching behaviours whereas the Chinese sample did not contain any sexual acts coded under these two categories.

It comes as something of a surprise to find that WTV contained five sex talks about sex in detail while the British sample did not contain any scenes coded under this category. The author believes all of these sexual detailed talks were contained in commercials about sexual diseases and treatments broadcast on WTV. According to previous audience research (Cheng; 2002) and the advertising codes authorized by SARFT in China, these five sex detailed talks could cause the public offence and may have breached the advertising code. This might be attributed to the fact that Chinese television networks have a pyramidal
construction and it is more difficult for SARFT to supervise the local networks to ensure they comply with the standard codes.

As Lin’s (1998) study is the only authoritative research to have analysed the types of sexual acts represented in television advertisements a comparison will be made between this study and Lin’s (1998) study. In Lin’s (1998) analysis advertisements were coded for three dimensions of sexually-oriented conduct: physical innuendo (flirting, dressing, undressing, bathing or swimming), verbal innuendo (verbal expressions of sexual desire) and physical contact (hand holding, fondling, embracing, kissing or implied sexual activity). The findings indicated that one per cent of the advertisements contained verbal references to sex, seven per cent of the advertisements contained physical references and eight per cent contained physical contact of a sexual nature.

As Lin’s study used the quantity of commercials as its unit of analysis, this study recoded the sexual acts based on the same measure for purposes of comparison. If there was more than one sexual act appearing in a commercial, the act which appeared for the longest time was coded. The nine sub-categories for the types of sexual acts examined earlier were divided into three groups; physical innuendo, which covered physical flirting, implied sex with products, sexual undressing/bathing; verbal innuendo, which covered sex talk (implied) and sex talk (detailed); and physical contact, which covered kissing on mouth, sexual touching, sexual intercourse implied and sexual intercourse depicted.

Table 6.9 shows that 0.3% Chinese commercials contained physical references. Only 0.002% Chinese commercials were coded as containing verbal innuendo and there was no physical contact in the Chinese sample. The figures for all representations of sexual appeals were much lower than the data revealed by Lin’s study in 1998.

Table 6.9 Sexual Acts in Chinese and British TV Adverts
Turning to the British sample, there were 8.7% of the adverts contained physical
innuendos to sex, 1.2% contained verbal references to sex and 2% contained actual sexual
activities. Comparing this with Lin’s study, the proportion of commercials coded under
physical innuendo was slightly higher. There was no significant difference between the
number of adverts containing verbal references to sex in the current study and Lin’s study.
The proportion of physical sex contact in current study was much lower than the data
revealed by Lin’s study. This could be attributed to the fact that in Lin’s study, hand holding
and embracing were defined as sexual activities, and so excluding the hand-holding and
embracing acts from the coding scheme could cause a reduction in the amount of physical
contact behaviour it found.

**Level of Nudity Depicted in Chinese and British TV ads**

The findings reveal that British television advertising contained much more partial nudity
than Chinese television advertising ($X^2=11.30$ df=1 p<0.001) [Exact]. In addition, all the
instances of full nudity from behind and side views were featured in British television
adverts. British television adverts showed more flesh than Chinese television adverts ($X^2=
12.86$ df=1 p<0.001)[Exact]. The findings of Nelson & Paek, (2007) study indicated that
adverts in magazines from Western countries such as the US and France contained much
more nudity than women’s magazines from Eastern countries such as China. The findings of
the current study mirror this cultural difference between China and Western countries as
well.
According to a recent cross-cultural study which focused on sex in women’s magazines (Nelson & Paek, 2007), only 1.8% of Chinese print advertising contained ‘nudity with bare bodies, wearing translucent under apparel or lingerie, poses where the model wears only a towel’ (Nelson & Paek, 2007:376). From a total of 3,086 Chinese television adverts analysed in this study, only 19 (0.006%) contained nudity. Apparently, magazine ads generally contain more nudity than television commercials.

Moreover, according to audience research carried out by Cheng in 2002, Chinese audiences showed much more rigorous attitudes toward nudity. A majority of audiences found that showing nudity in adverts was quite offensive. Those 19 commercials in the Chinese sample might offend Chinese audiences. Advertisers aiming at the Chinese market need be cautious about the use of nudity to present sexual appeals in advertising.

**Setting of Sexual Acts in the Chinese and British TV Ads**

The findings revealed that the Chinese sample contained more sexually-themed activity in bedroom settings than the British sample ($X^2 = 9.01$ df=1 $p<0.01$)[Exact]. In contrast, the British sample contained much more sexually-themed activity in occupational settings and outdoor settings than the Chinese sample. In general, the distribution of settings in British sex-containing adverts showed a wider range than Chinese sex-containing adverts. This might be attributed to the fact that the advertising industry is generally more sophisticated in Britain than in China. Sexual appeals as means to promote products and grab consumer’s attention are used more commonly and diversely in British adverts than in Chinese adverts. Sex activities in British television adverts were, therefore, not limited to bedroom settings.

This study shows that the most common setting for sexual activities in television advertising in both China and Britain was the bedroom. According to a study that focused on
the context of sexual acts conducted by Greenberg et al. (1986), 45% of sexual activities occurred in bedrooms, 23% occurred in the workplace and 19% occurred in restaurants. Bedrooms were therefore the dominant setting for sexual behaviours. The findings of this study are in line with those of Greenberg et al. (1986).

The Perceived Impact of Sex-containing Adverts in Chinese and British Networks

Arousal theory states that effective sexual appeals in advertisement might be expected to cause physiological responses and cause disequilibrium in emotions which arouse the audience’s attention toward the particular advertisement (Howard, 1977; Bancroft & Mathews, 1971). 93 commercials on Chinese networks and 283 commercials on British network were defined as containing sexual appeals in this study. According to arousal theory, these sex-containing advertisements could grab audiences’ attention more effectively compared to advertising which did not contain sexual appeals.

However, previous studies have been unable to prove a direct relationship between increased attention being paid to advertising and positive consumer attitudes and purchase behaviour. A sexual appeal which it is considered could increase arousal failed to increase brand recall and loyalty (Baker, 1961; Steadman, 196; Alexander & Judd, 1978; Courtney & Whipple, 1983). Therefore, 376 sex-containing television adverts in this study might increase the arousal, yet fail to increase the brand recall and loyalty. Moreover, previous research showed that when using sexual content with no logical link to the product, it may turn out that arousal actually inhibits the impact of irrelevant information (Howard, 1977).

The findings of this study revealed that in the Chinese sample there were 19 domestic products that used sexual appeals to sell products and in the British sample there were 22 electronic products, 19 domestic products and four service products that employed sexual content; these products do not seem to have clear congruency with sexual content.
and so, according to Howard (1977), these adverts might fail to grab the audience’s 
attention toward products they promote.

Moreover, according to Zillmann (1978, 1979, 1982) exposure to sexual content 
increased sympathetic activity as an accompaniment to more specific genital responses, 
and after this sexual stimulation, the residues of the slowly dissipating nonspecific 
sympathetic excitation from sexual arousal are likely to intensify these experiences and 
drive the hostile and aggressive actions stimulated by them. Therefore, the 376 sex-
containing adverts in the current study might drive hostile and aggressive actions from 
the audiences stimulated by the sexual appeals within the adverts.

The next chapter will investigate gender representation in Chinese and British 
sex-containing television adverts.
Chapter Seven

Gender Representation in Chinese and British Sex-containing TV Advertisements

This chapter will examine how sex appeals employed by male and female models were utilized in Chinese and British television commercials. This analysis focuses on the gender, age, ethnicity, occupation and body type of both the sexual initiator and the recipient in television adverts. The sexual initiator is somebody who actively launches the sexual behaviour. The sexual recipient is somebody who receives the sexual behaviour. Any people involved in sexual acts and portrayed in a central role in an advert, either visually or vocally, or both, would be included.

The gender, age, ethnicity and role categories were employed by most researchers who dedicated to investigate how men and women were depicted in adverts (McArthur & Resko, 1975; Lovdal, 1989; Gunter 1995; Furnham & Mark, 1999). The portrayal of gender roles in commercials has been one of the most important issues in media research. Most of this research has been conducted in Western countries, principally the United States and Britain (for example Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Lovdal, 1989; Furnham & Schofield, 1986; Furnham & Bitar, 1993; Gunter, 1995; Furnham & Skae 1997; Furnham & Mak, 1999; Bartsch et al., 2000). Only a small number of studies have been carried out with advertisements televised in developing countries (such as Griffin, et al., 1994; Mwangi, 1996; Das, 2000). Much of the gender representation research has agreed that advertisements, regardless of the medium in which they appear, have typically exhibited significant gender bias.
This phenomenon has been manifested in several ways; for example, there has been a tendency to use females predominantly to promote certain categories of products, such as personal care products, food and domestic products, such as household cleaning products. Historically, females were more often presented performing household chores than males. In contrast, male characters were more likely to be shown in professional or occupational roles than females (Gunter 1995). Even when both sexes were featured in domestic settings, women were more likely to be shown as users, while men would be product experts and advisors (Manstead & McCullonch, 1981).

In more recent research, however, evidence has emerged to show that this historical gender stereotyping in television commercials has been redressed. Research conducted by Bartsch, Burnet, Diller and Rankin-Williams (2000) replicated the studies conducted by O'Donnell and O'Donnell (1978) and Lovdal (1989) to examine the changes that occurred in gender role portrayals in American television advertising over time. They reported that in their sample, the number of female characters representing the aforementioned product types on screen (59%) was significantly greater than the number of males.

**Gender of Sex Initiators and Recipients in Chinese and British Ads**

The ‘gender’ category is one of the key categories in gender role studies. When analysing sexual materials in advertising, many researchers have included this category in their coding scheme to examine the relationship between gender and sexual appeals (Lin, 1998; Reichert et al., 1999; Reichert & Carpenter, 2004). Gender analysis in this study focused on the characters in television adverts involved in sexual activities. The relationships found between gender and sexual acts, gender and age, gender and product types will be explored in the following sections.
Table 7.1 Gender of Characters in Chinese TV Adverts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sexual initiators</th>
<th></th>
<th>Sexual recipients</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>No SI</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Flirting</strong></td>
<td>6/6.8%</td>
<td>82/93.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implied Sex with Product</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3/100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Undressing/Bathing</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9/100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex talk (detailed)</strong></td>
<td>5/100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>11/10.5%</td>
<td>94/89.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender of Characters in Chinese TV Adverts

Table 7.1 shows that of a total of 105 sexual acts contained in Chinese adverts, 94 (89.5%) of them were initiated by women, in contrast with 11 (10.7%) initiated by men. Many more women took the dominant role of sexual initiators compared to male characters ($X^2=131.22$ df=1 $p<0.000$) [Exact]. In 88 physical flirting actions featured in Chinese television adverts, 93.2% were initiated by female characters, with only 6.8% of physical flirting initiated by male characters. The chi-square results show the advanced role of female models in initiating physical flirting in Chinese sex-containing adverts compared to male models ($X^2=132.28$ df=1 $p < 0.000$) [Exact]. All the sexual acts that implied sex with products or showed sexual undressing/bathing were initiated by women. There were five detailed sex talks in the Chinese sample; all of these were launched by male characters.

Turning to sexual recipients, Table 7.1 shows that the majority (87.6%) of sexual acts did not contain sexual recipients. This means that most sexual acts in the Chinese sample occurred between the characters on screen and the audience. In 88 acts of physical flirting, which represented as the most common sexual acts in the Chinese sample, 85.3% of them did not have sexual recipients. Of the 13 on-screen sexual recipients of physical flirting, seven were male and six were female. Except for physical flirting, other sexual acts seen in...
the Chinese sample included ‘implied sex with products’, ‘sexual undressing/bathing’ and ‘sex talk (detailed)’ all lacked sexual recipients on screens.

The findings indicated that in Chinese sex-containing adverts; the most common representations of sexual acts were physical flirting behaviour launched by female characters without sexual recipients on screen. In other words, sexy female models using their physical attractiveness to flirt with audience in order to pass the sexual information was the most popular representation of sexual acts in Chinese adverts.

**Gender of Characters in British TV Adverts**

Table 7.2 shows that in the British sample, there were 225 (71.9%) sexual acts instigated by women, compared with 88 (28.1%) initiated by men. The difference between the gender of characters who initiated the sexual behaviours was significant ($X^2=119.93$ df=1 $p < 0.000$) [Exact]. In the British sample, the majority of sexual acts (69.6%) were represented by physical flirting, 78.9% of physical flirting signals were instigated by women.

All the sexual acts implying sex with products were initiated by women. Compared to male characters, a larger number of female characters also took the lead position in initiating sexual acts referring to physical innuendo, such as ‘Sex undressing/bathing’ ($X^2=18$ df=1 $p < 0.000$) [Exact] and ‘Sex talk (implied)’ ($X^2=24.92$ df=1 $p < 0.000$) [Exact]. Male characters initiated many more actual sexual behaviours, such as ‘kissing on mouth’ ($X^2=4$ df=1 $p < 0.045$) [Exact] $X^2=21.78$ df=1 $p < 0.000$) [Exact] and ‘sexual touching’, compared to female characters in the British sample.

Turning to sexual recipients, Table 7.2 shows that 164 sexual acts did not contain sexual recipients in the British sample. Of the 149 sexual recipients appearing in British sex-containing adverts, 73.8% were female and 26.2% were male.
The number of the female sexual recipients was significantly greater than male sexual recipients in British sex-containing adverts. ($X^2=44.08$ df=1 $p < 0.000$) [Exact]. Compared to male sexual recipients, the number of female sexual recipients took the lead position in all sexual act categories.

It is worth noticing that there were two men trying to arouse audience sexual appetite through initiated sexual bathing and undressing acts, and there were 22 sexual interactions that featured implied sex talks which took place between female characters in the British television adverts.

**Table 7.2 Gender of Characters in British TV Ads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British Adverts</th>
<th>Sexual Initiators</th>
<th>Sexual Recipients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Flirting</td>
<td>46/21.1%</td>
<td>172/78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied Sex with Product</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undressing/Bathing</td>
<td>2/14.3%</td>
<td>14/87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kissing on Mouth</td>
<td>20/62.5%</td>
<td>12/37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Touching</td>
<td>16/88.9%</td>
<td>2/11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Talk (implied)</td>
<td>4/15.4%</td>
<td>22/84.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88/28.1%</td>
<td>225/71.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Links between Gender and Product Types**

One of the aims of this current chapter is to investigate the relationship between the gender of the lead characters appearing in Chinese and British sex-containing adverts and the products they are promoting. The aim of this analysis is to find out whether advertisers tend to use female lead figures to promote certain products in sex-containing adverts.

Many scholars have investigated the relationship between the gender of the lead characters and the different categories of the promoted products (such as McArthur &
Resko, 1975; Manstead & McCulloch, 1981; Furnham & Schofield, 1986). Media research conducted between the 1950s and 1970s repeatedly found that television advertisements portrayed women as decorative, domestic, and dependent on men and primarily concerned with personal beauty (Caballero et al., 1989; Ferrante & Kingsley, 1988; Knill et al., 1981; Lovdal, 1989). These scholars found that females were more likely than males to be associated with domestic products and personal care products, whereas males more frequently appeared in adverts promoting automobiles, services, or products used outdoors. This analysis tries to find out whether this trend exists in sex-containing adverts.

Due to the nature of product category as variable, the genders of the characters were recoded based on the unit of commercials. If different sexes appeared in the same commercial, the gender of the lead character who appeared for the longest time was coded. Many previous studies have found a link between the gender of the lead characters and the product type.

Gender of Characters and Product Types in Chinese Adverts

Table 7.3 shows the link between the gender and product type in this study. Of a total of 27 personal care products in Chinese television adverts, 85.2% of them used female models and the other 14.8% used male models. Female models also took an absolutely dominant role in promoting fashion items, underwear, bedding and domestic products. There were five sexual diseases/treatments commercials in the Chinese sample, all of which used male models to promote their products and services.

Gender of Characters and Product Types in British Adverts

In the British sample, female models took the leading role in commercials for beauty and personal care, domestic items, CD/music and electronic products. In 108 beauty and personal care commercials on British television, 81 (74.3%) of them used female models to
promote their products. Male characters took the dominant roles in promoting movies and services in British television adverts. Motoring adverts used equal numbers of male and female models; there were 47.6% motoring adverts using male characters and the other 52.4% motoring adverts used female models.

Table 7.3 Gender and Product Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Type</th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th></th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty /personal care</td>
<td>4/14.8%</td>
<td>23/85.2%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28/25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>2/33.3%</td>
<td>4/66.7%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3/42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwear</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14/100%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedding</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11/100%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD/Music</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19/100%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4/21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Beverage</td>
<td>3/33.3%</td>
<td>6/66.7%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16/36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motoring</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10/47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex disease treatment</td>
<td>5/100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19/76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2/100%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14/15%</td>
<td>79/85%</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>84/29.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese and British TV Ads

This study used the age category in schemes to find out whether sexual acts were trigged by younger or older actors in television advertising. This section presents the findings related to the age-groups of the lead characters involved in sexual acts in Chinese and British television adverts. Many previous scholars have investigated the age group of the lead
figures appearing in television and print adverts (Ferrante et al., 1998; Furnham & Bitar, 1993; Furnham & Skae, 1997).

Age of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese TV Adverts

Table 7.5 shows that in the Chinese sample, the young adult age group (20-35) took a completely dominant role, no matter whether they were coded as sexual initiators or sexual recipients. There were no characters appearing in Chinese television advertising who were older than 50 or younger than 20. The young adult age group made up 94.3% of sexual initiators with the other 5.7% of sexual initiators being coded as being middle aged (35-50), and all these 6 sexual initiators aged between 35 and 50 were males. Female young adults took the dominant role in sexual initiations. The distribution of age groups differed significantly according to the gender of the sexual initiators in the Chinese sample. Chinese adverts featured greater numbers of young female sexual imitators than males.

The 13 sexual recipients in Chinese television adverts included seven males and six females. Of all the sexual recipients, 11 of them were young adults; only two of them were coded as being middle aged. All the female sexual recipients were coded in the age group of young adult. Of the seven male sexual recipients, five were young adults and the other two were aged from 35 to 50.

Table 7.4 Age of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese TV Ads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>Sexual initiators</th>
<th>Sexual recipients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young adult (20-35)</td>
<td>5/45.5%</td>
<td>94/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle age (35-50)</td>
<td>6/54.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No SI/SR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Age of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in British TV Adverts

Turning to the British sample, the young adult age group (20-35) was used as lead characters more than any other group. Of all the 313 sexual acts, 95.5% were initiated by young adults (Table 7.1), and of the 149 sexual recipients, 143 were young adults. There were no characters who appeared in British television advertising who were older than 50 or younger than 20. Of the 88 male leading character who launched sexual acts, 79 (89.8%) of them belonged to the 20 to 35 age group, the other nine (10.2%) belonged to the 35 to 50 age group. Of the 225 female leading characters that launched sexual acts, 220 (97.8%) were young adults and only five (2.2%) female characters were over 35 years old. Young adults also made up the greatest proportion of sexual recipients. Of 39 male sexual recipients, 89.7% were coded as young adults, in contrast with 97.7% female young adult characters out of 110 female sexual recipients.

Table 7.5 The Age of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in British TV Ads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sexual initiators</th>
<th>Sexual recipients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young adult (20-35)</td>
<td>79/89.8%</td>
<td>210/93.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle age (35-50)</td>
<td>9/10.2%</td>
<td>15/6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No SI/SR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occupational Roles of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese and British TV Adverts

This section examines the types of roles played by lead characters appearing in Chinese and British television commercials when involved in sexual behaviours. Once again, comparisons were made between advertisements from Chinese and British networks. Table 7.7 summarizes the occupational roles of sexual initiators and recipients in the two countries.
These data indicated some similarities and some significant differences between the type of roles male and female lead characters played in Chinese and British adverts.

The Occupation Role of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese TV Adverts

In the Chinese sample, there were 11 male and 94 female sexual initiators, and seven male and six female sexual recipients. All of them were coded under five categories. The finding shows that of the 11 male sexual initiators, six (54.5%) were featured in decorative roles, while the other five (45.5%) featured as professionals. Of the 94 female sexual initiators, 72 (76.6%) were coded under decorative role, with nine (9.6%) and seven (7.4%) coded under celebrity and house chores respectively. Meanwhile, of seven male sexual recipients, six (75.6%) and one (14.4%) were coded under professional and decorative roles respectively. All six female recipients in the Chinese sample were coded under the decorative category.

In the Chinese sample male and female characters who were involved in sexual acts were most often featured in decorative roles, especially the female characters. Of sexual initiators, 76.6% female characters were featured as decorative role in contrast with 54.5% of males. The proportion of female sexual initiators featured as decorative roles in Chinese sex-containing adverts was slightly greater than that of male sexual initiators. The difference between the genders of the sexual initiators featured as decorative roles was statistically non-significant ($X^2 = 1.49$ df=1 $p<0.223$) [Monte Carlo]. There were no female sexual initiators in the Chinese sample coded under professional role contrast while almost half of the male sexual initiators (45.5%) were coded under this category. Celebrity and house chores also made up small proportions of the female sexual initiators.

Of the sexual recipients, all the females were coded under the decorative category in contrast with 14.3% of the males; 75.6% of the males were coded under the professional
category, in contrast with none of the female characters. The base size was too small to permit meaningful chi-square results.

**Table 7.6 Occupation Role of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese and British TV Ads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual initiators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>5/45.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9/9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House chore</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7/7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorative</td>
<td>6/54.5%</td>
<td>72/76.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6/6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Occupation Role of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in British TV Ads**

Turning to the British sample, the decorative role also took the dominant role in the 313 sexual initiators and 149 sexual recipients coded in this study. For the British adverts, of the 88 male sexual initiators, 10 (11.4%) were coded under professional, 17 (19.3%) under celebrity, 69 (78.5%) under the decorative role and two (2.3%) were coded under other roles. For female sexual initiators, once again, the decorative role was the most prevalent occupation featured in British adverts, which took more than half (56.4%) of the total proportion. After that, the celebrity role (17.8%), house chore (5.8%) and professional roles (9.3%) also made up some proportion of the female sexual initiators.

As for the male sexual recipients, the most common role was decorative again (66.7%), the others were coded under professional (26.6%) and celebrity (7.7%). Of 110 female sexual recipients, 67 (60.9%) of them were coded under decorative, 22 (20%) under professional, four (3.6%) under celebrity, and the rest were coded under other roles. The
chi-square results show there were no significant gender differences in the roles occupied by sexual initiators and recipients in British sex-containing adverts.

**Ethnicity of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese and British Adverts**

The ethnicity category was added to measure the relationship between the ethnicity of the models and sexual acts on screen. This category was also created to compare the ethnicity of actors appearing in adverts which contained sexual content between China and Britain.

**Table 7.7 Ethnicity of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese TV Ads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th></th>
<th>Sexual Initiators</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Sexual Recipients</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>2/18.2%</td>
<td>21/22.3%</td>
<td>23/21.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3/42.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5/38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9/81.8%</td>
<td>73/77.7%</td>
<td>82/78.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/57.1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8/61.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Ethnicity of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese TV Adverts**

Table 7.7 shows the ethnicity of sexual initiators and recipients in Chinese adverts. The figure shows that Chinese television adverts featured a substantially greater number of Asian characters than those coded under other sub-categories. Table 7.8 indicates that of 105 sexual initiators in Chinese adverts, 23 (21.2%) were White, made up of 21 females and two males from White background, while the other 82 (78.8%) were Asian. Of 13 sexual initiators, five (38.5%) sexual initiators were White and the other eight (61.5%) were Asian. There were no Black and Hispanic models in the Chinese sample.

**The Ethnicity of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in British TV Adverts**

In contrast with the Chinese sample, the British sample showed more diversity in ethnicity. Table 7.8 shows that from a total of 313 sexual initiators in British television adverts, 231 (73.8%) were White, 16 (5.1%) were Black, only two (0.6%) were Asian, and the other 64
(20.4%) came from Hispanic backgrounds. From a total of 149 sexual recipients, 118 (79.2%) were White, four (2.7%) were Black, five (3.6%) were Asian the other 22 (14.8%) came from other backgrounds. In the British sample, females showed more diversity in ethnicity than males. These findings show there were no Black or Asian male sexual initiators or recipients; whereas a sizable percentage of Black and Asian female characters appeared as sexual initiators and recipients.

Table 7.8 Ethnicity of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in British TV Ads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
<th>Sexual Initiators</th>
<th>Sexual Recipients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>78/88.6%</td>
<td>153/68%</td>
<td>231/73.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16/7.1%</td>
<td>16/5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2/0.9%</td>
<td>2/0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>10/11.4%</td>
<td>54/24%</td>
<td>64/20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Body Type of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese and British Adverts

Many studies have focused on the bodies which feature on screens, especially female bodies. Bem (1993) pointed out that many female bodies are viewed as ‘things’, objects of male sexual desire, or as part of the advertised merchandise rather than as people. This argument can be seen in the reduction of women to ‘body parts’ instead of whole people (Kilbourne & Lazarus, 1987; Kilbourne & Wunderlich, 1979); for example, women’s body parts are featured more often than women’s faces in print advertising (Archer et al., 1983; Dodd et al., 1989). These studies focused on which body types featured in adverts.

Table 7.9 shows the body types of sexual initiators and recipients in Chinese and British adverts. The findings reveal that all the male characters in the Chinese sample were coded under athletic, while all the female characters were coded under thin.
In the British sample all the male characters were coded under athletic, as in the Chinese sample. While most female characters were coded under thin in British television adverts, 15 (6.7%) female sexual initiators and four (3.6%) female recipients were coded under average.

Table 7.9 Body type of characters in Chinese and British TV Ads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>British</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual Initiators</td>
<td>Sexual recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male  Female</td>
<td>Male  Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>0  94/100%</td>
<td>0  7/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>0  0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic</td>
<td>6/100%</td>
<td>6/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>0  0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6  94</td>
<td>6  7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion and Discussion

Comparisons of the portrayals of men and women in Chinese and British television advertising which contained sexual content were expected to reveal many differences and few similarities because of the cultural differences that differentiate Chinese society from its British counterpart. However, the findings reported in this chapter reveal some interesting similarities and differences with regard to the portrayals of men and women in Chinese and British commercials using sexual appeal.

Gender of Characters in Chinese and British TV Ads

Across both the Chinese and British samples, female characters generally outnumbered male characters.

First, comparisons were made of the gender of the person who initiated sexual acts in Chinese and British sex-containing adverts (Table 7.10). Female characters in Chinese adverts were more likely to have initiated physical flirting than their counterparts in British
adverts ($X^2=9.07$ df=1 $p < 0.002$) [Exact]. The chi-square result shows there was no significant difference between the frequencies of female characters launching undressing/bathing and implied sex with products in Chinese and British adverts. For the other types of sexual acts, as Chinese sample did not contain any scenes containing high sexual interaction, such as kissing or touching between the characters, and British sample did not contain any scenes featuring detailed sex talk, comparisons cannot be made.

**Table 7.10 Gender of Sexual Initiator in Chinese and British TV Ads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Initiator</th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Flirting</td>
<td>6/6.8%</td>
<td>82/93.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied Sex with Product</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undressing/Bathing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kissing on Mouth</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Touching</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Talk (implied)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Talk (Detailed)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11/10.5%</td>
<td>94/89.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondly, comparisons were made of the gender receiving the sexual acts in Chinese and British sex-containing adverts. Table 7.11 shows the gender of the sexual recipients in Chinese and British television commercials. Female characters in British adverts were more likely to be featured as the recipients of physical flirting than in Chinese adverts ($X^2=7.13$ .96 df=1 $p < 0.000$) [Exact]. The chi-square results show the male characters in British adverts were also more likely than their counterparts in Chinese adverts to be featured as the recipients of the physical flirting ($X^2=4.57$ df=1 0.032$<p< 0.05$) [Exact]. Comparisons for other types of acts could not be made due to the small base size.

The Table 7.11 reveals that in both the Chinese and British sample, females took the dominant role in initiating physical innuendo sexual behaviours, including physical flirting,
sexual bathing/undressing and implied sex with products. In the British sample, males started most actual sexual acts. The Chinese sample did not contain any actual sexual acts between characters. Generally, in both countries, female characters involved in sexual behaviours outnumbered male characters. In the samples of both countries, there were more female models portrayed sexually than there were male models.

Table 7.11 Gender of Sexual Recipient in Chinese and British TV Ads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex Recipient</th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Flirting</td>
<td>7/8%</td>
<td>6/6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied Sex with Product</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undressing/Bathing</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kissing on Mouth</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Touching</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Talk (implied)</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Talk (Detailed)</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>5/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7/6.7%</td>
<td>6/5.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings exhibit some interesting similarities and differences with earlier studies with regard to the number of male and female figures appearing in sex-containing adverts (see Silverman, 1979; Sapolsky & Tabarlet, 1991; Lin, 1998).

Previous gender role studies focused on the subordinate and dominant positions between male and female in sexual situations on screens. According to a study conducted by Sapolsky and Tabarlet in 1991, in interactions between men and women, the male predominates as the initiator. The results indicated that male characters were found to initiate two-thirds of sexual acts and sexual conversations on prime-time television in 1989. However, in the 1979 sample, both sexes had been shown to be equally likely to initiate sexual acts. Another study conducted by Silverman et al. (1979) claimed that females accounted for a greater ratio of kissing, hugging, and affectionate touching, and of implied
sexual intercourse than would have been expected on the basis of their overall representation.

The findings of this study show that women took dominant roles in physical innuendo to sex in both countries’ television commercials. Compared to males, female models were more likely to using their physical attractiveness to provoke the sexual interests of audiences in Chinese and British television advertising. The findings of this study were consistent with Sapolsky and Tabarlet’s (1991) study.

According to findings of this study, the Chinese sample did not contain any actual sexual interactions between characters, while the results of British television adverts accord with the studied carried out by Sapolsky and Tabarlet (1991), that in sexual interactions between men and women, the male predominates as the initiator; 62.5% of kissing and 88.9% of sexual touching in British television adverts were initiated by men.

Lin’s (1998) study showed that there were no significant gender differences in terms of physical innuendo, verbal innuendo or physical contact by models on American television networks. However, the findings in the present study are dissimilar to those reported by Lin (1998); it indicates that in both countries, women were more likely than men to be featured related to sexually-themed activities in television adverts. This finding was accordant with another previous study conducted by Reichert in 2003 which found that in adverts for young adults, female models were 3.7 times more likely to be portrayed sexually than male models. The findings of the current study show the prevalence of portraying women as sex objects in advertising. The trend of portraying sexy women in media has aroused strong public concerns about women’s sexual activities acting as the main criterion of their attractiveness and about the depiction of women as sexual objects waiting to please men’s sexual desires (Peter & Valkenburg, 2007).
Gender of Characters and Product Types in Chinese and British Adverts

The findings suggest that in both the Chinese and the British samples, the number of female characters representing products in sex-containing commercials was significantly more than males, especially in the Chinese sample in which of 93 commercials containing sexual content, only 14 (15%) of them used male models. Chinese sex-containing adverts were more likely to employ female characters compared to British sex-containing adverts ($X^2=7.77$ df=1 $p < 0.006$) [Exact].

The findings indicate that in both countries, female models are more likely to be used in sex-containing adverts to promote beauty and personal care products than male models. The chi-square results show there was no significant difference between the genders of the characters in Chinese and British sex-containing commercials coded under the beauty and personal care category. This finding was in line with the vast majority of previous studies which analysed the relationship between the gender of the lead figures and the advertised products (McArthur & Resko, 1975; Manstead & McCulloch, 1981; Furnham & Schofield, 1986).

Age of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese and British TV Adverts

In both the Chinese and British samples, the young adult age group was preferred over other age groups, especially in female characters. In both countries, the proportion of young adults playing female characters was significantly higher than those playing males. When a comparison was made between the age groups of the male models in the Chinese and British samples, there were no obvious differences in the age profiles of the male characters in British and Chinese sex-containing adverts. Turning to the female models involved in sexual acts in Chinese and British television adverts, female sexual initiators and recipients
in Chinese sex-containing adverts were more likely to be young adults than in British sex-
containing adverts ($X^2 = 5.21 \text{ df}=1 \ 0.01<p<0.05$) [Monte Carlo].

According to Lin (1998)’s study, males were typically older than females in sex-
containing television advertising. The findings of the present study are consistent with these
previous findings. Female models were more likely to be featured as young adults in both
Chinese and British television advertising. This finding was also consistent with the vast
majority of previous studies which analysed the age groups of the lead figures appearing in
television and print adverts (Ferrante et al., 1998; Furnham & Bitar, 1993; Furnham & Skae,
1997).

**Occupational role of sexual initiators and recipients in Chinese and British TV Ads**

Comparisons were made of the roles played by lead male and female characters involved in
sexual acts in Chinese and British commercials. Male sexual initiators in Chinese sex-
containing adverts were significantly more likely to be depicted in professional occupations
than male sexual initiators in British sex-containing adverts ($X^2 = 5.21 \text{ df}=1 \ 0.01<p<0.05$)
[Monte Carlo]. Male sexual recipients in Chinese sex-containing adverts were also more
likely to be depicted in a professional occupation than in British sex-containing adverts ($X^2 =
13.37 \text{ df}=1 \ p<0.001$) [Monte Carlo]. In contrast, British male leads were generally more
likely than their counterparts in Chinese adverts to be featured in decorative roles. Among
male sexual initiators, the chi-square test showed that there were no significant differences
between the proportions of male sexual initiators featured in professional occupations in
Chinese and British sex-containing adverts ($X^2=0.24 \text{ df}=1 \ p>0.05$)[Monte Carlo]. As for male
sexual recipients, there was a significantly greater tendency for these to be shown in
decorative roles in British adverts than in Chinese adverts ($X^2=6.98 \text{ df}=1 \ p<0.01$)[Monte
Carlo].
Among female leads, there was a significantly greater tendency for them to be shown in professional roles in British adverts than in Chinese adverts as there were no female characters in the Chinese sample depicted in professional roles. However, small proportions of female sexual initiators and recipients were coded under ‘professional’ category. In general, the British sample showed a wider range of occupational roles in female models in contrast with the Chinese sample.

Furthermore, in Chinese adverts, male characters involved in sexual acts showed an obviously greater tendency to be featured in professional roles than females. Meanwhile, compared to male characters, female characters were more likely to be featured in decorative and domestic roles in the Chinese sample. There were no male characters in the Chinese sample coded under the ‘domestic role’ category. This finding was consistent with previous gender role stereotyping studies which found that women tend to be shown in much less professional and inferior roles to men in the media (McNeil, 1975; Butler & Paisley, 1980; Tuchman, et al., 1978). This could be attributed to the impacts of Confucianism in Chinese society. Confucianism believes that men and women have different social assignments; women are naturally assigned to the inner, which means the private and domestic sphere, while men are assigned to the outer, which means the public and social sphere (Chan, 2000).

However, this gender role stereotyping was challenged by figures revealed in the British sample. The chi-square test shows that there was no significant difference in the number of males and the number of females playing professional roles in British sex-containing adverts.

In summary, the findings reveal a considerable degree of gender stereotyping in television advertisements in both countries, but this occurred to a more significant degree
in advertisements from China. Such stereotyping was particularly manifest in the extent to which male and female leads were featured in professional or domestic roles. This finding was consistent with previous cross-cultural gender role stereotyping studies in the context of Eastern and Western cultural background. The findings suggest that that gender stereotyping in Eastern media has been greater represented than their Western counterparts (Cheng, 1997; Bresnahan et al., 2001; Firth et al., 2005).

**Ethnicity of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese and British TV Adverts**

The findings indicate that in both countries, the domestic ethnicity made up the most proportion of people appearing in sex-containing advertising. In general, there was no significant difference in the distribution of models’ ethnicities in Chinese and British sex-containing adverts. However, in contrast with the Chinese adverts, the British sample showing greater pluralism in ethnicities, especially in the female characters. There were considerable numbers of Black, Asian, and other ethnicity female characters featured in British television advertising. In the Chinese sample, the male and female characters featured in television advertising came only from Asian and White ethnic backgrounds.

**Body Type of Sexual Initiators and Recipients in Chinese and British Ads**

In both the Chinese and British samples, all male characters were coded under the athletic category. Thin was the most prevalent body type for females. Compared to the Chinese sample, the British sample showed a slightly wider range of body types in female models, with the average body type appearing in female sexual initiators and sexual recipients in British television advertising. In general, there was no significant difference in the body types of male and female characters in Chinese and British television sex-containing adverts.

Lin (1998) used four sub-categories to investigate body shape, namely ‘skinny’, ‘fit’, ‘full-figured’ and ‘chunky’. His findings indicated that women were more likely to be shown
as fit, while men were more likely to appear as full-figured. In the current study both the ‘skinny’ and ‘fit’ categories were coded under ‘thin’ while the ‘full-figured’ body type was coded as ‘average’ or ‘athletic’. The findings of the current study show that in both Chinese and British sex-containing adverts women were more likely to be featured as ‘thin’ while men were more likely to be shown as ‘athletic’. This finding was consistent with Lin’s (1998) study which found that most female models appear to be more slender than male models in television adverts.

The Perceived Impact of Featuring Women as Sex Objects in Television Ads

Social scientists have suggested that although the primary objective of television adverts is generally to promote products, they may have a lasting effect on several other things, such as people’s beliefs, values, attitudes and even their behavior (see Condry, 1989; Pollay, 1986). The findings of this study reveal that both Chinese and British television advertisements contain gender-stereotypical ideas and images. In the samples from both countries, more female models were portrayed sexually than male models; and compared to male models, female models in both samples were younger and more slender, and more likely to be featured in a decorative role. The findings of this study were consistent with the widely voiced criticism of sex-role stereotyping in television and other media that feature women as sex-objects.

According to the cultivation theory, a consistent diet of television can influence viewer’s conceptions of social reality, such that heavy viewers’ beliefs about the real world are formed by images from television (Gerbner et al., 1978). Cultivation theory posits that the messages contained on television can influence people’s conceptions of social reality, and television advertising offers abundant messages that serve as a social mirror (Greenberg et al., 1986). This study used cultivation theory to understand the indirect effects of sex-
containing adverts in Chinese and British television networks on people’s conceptual constructions.

The findings of the current study show that both Chinese and British television adverts more likely to depict women involved in sexual acts and posing as decorative objects. This may lead to the belief that women are seductive and frivolous sex objects, whereas adverts depicting women as homemakers may activate the belief that women are nurturing, communal and domestically-minded (Clifton et al., 1976; Noseworthy & Lott, 1984; Six & Eckes, 1991).

The cultivation effects associated with advertisements featuring women as sex objects in Chinese and British networks might temporarily influence the female audience’s self-concepts (Jennings et al., 1980) in both countries. Advertisements which treat women as sex-objects, who are to be admired, manipulated and used by men, misinterpret the gender status in the real world (Gunter, 2002). These advertisements in British and Chinese networks might create a distorted belief among men about female sexuality and even arouse violence against women.

**Perceived Impact of Idealistic Body Shapes on Screen**

Advertising which is full of idealized female body images presents social standards for women. Such advertising has been accused of objectifying women by treating them as commodities and has led to claims that these portrayals can, in turn, then influence women’s self-esteem and self-satisfaction. Alexandra Hendriks (2002) examined the effect of the ideal body images on female’s perceptions of and satisfaction with their own bodies. This study suggested that because idealized female beauty is narrowly defined by current media; women who admire the cultural thin ideal may reduce her own body satisfaction.
Social scientists have pointed out that engaging in a high amount of self-objectification is thought to place women at increased risk of mental health problems, such as body dissatisfaction and depression (Hendriks, 2002; Bresnahan et al., 1997).

Western culture has changed its norms of feminine beauty over time. Whereas once pleasantly plump was considered beautiful, the contemporary ideal prominently emphasizes a more slender body (Goodman, 1995; Seid, 1989; Wolf, 1991). In contrast to women, some research suggests that men tend to perceive themselves as thinner than they actually are and report a desire to be larger (Harmatz et al., 1985; Miller et al., 1980). The ideal body shape for men is a muscular physique (Cohn & Adler, 1992). This standard of an ideal body type in Western culture dominates in Chinese society as well as Western countries. The results of this study show that in both British and Chinese adverts, most female characters related to sexual acts were featured having thin body figure, while most male characters had an athletic body shape; in other words, most characters in both Chinese and British sex-containing television adverts have the ideal body shape for their gender.

Furthermore, a recent study added man as the subject of self-satisfaction research and claimed that beyond its potential effects on women, sexually-oriented advertising can also influence body perceptions among men. Lavine (1999) pointed out that if the female sex object subtype enhances men’s beliefs that women are flirtatious and seductive, this may increase the salience of the perceived characteristics of men (such as a muscular physique) to which women are attracted. The adverts in both countries being full of attractive, athletic men may increase male audiences’ awareness of, and concerns about, their own bodies and thus increase body dissatisfaction among men.
This study evaluates that exposure to sex-containing television adverts full of ideal body images in both countries would influence female and male audiences’ perceptions of, and satisfaction with, their bodies.

The next chapter will investigate verbal references and other codes related to sex in Chinese and British television adverts.
Chapter Eight

Verbal References and Other Codes Related to Sex in Chinese and British TV Adverts

This chapter will explore verbal references and other codes related to sexual themes in Chinese and British television adverts. Verbal references to sex include voice-overs during sexual behaviour and implied or detailed sex talk between characters on screen. Other codes related to sex include the gender of the voice-over; the type of voice-over with reference to sexual meanings; double entendre for sex used in adverts; music used during sexual acts; camera and lighting techniques used during sexual acts; humour; and homosexuality. A comparison between Chinese and British adverts will be performed in the discussion part of this chapter.

Voice-over during Sexual Acts

Lovdal (1989: 716) defined voice-overs as ‘when a voice is heard but no person is visible’; this study adopted the same definition for voice-overs. This category is used to investigate the gender of voice-over during the scenes featuring sexual acts.

Bartsch et al. (2000) found that voice-overs were most often presented by male characters (71%). This is in contrast to previous studies carried out by O’Donnell and O’Donnell (1978) and Lovdal (1989) which found that the amount of female product representatives increased significantly during the late 1970s to the late 1990s. The percentage of females promoting products on screen increased slightly from 50% in O’Donnell and O’Donnell’s research to 51% in Lovdal’s study, but then reached 59% in Bartsch et al.’s study. The study conducted by Bartsch et al. (2000) also reported a highly significant increase in the number of female voice-over narrators (29%).
Table 8.1 summarises the findings concerning voice-over gender profiles during sexual acts in both Chinese and British television adverts. The findings indicate that from a total of 105 scenes featuring sexual acts, 73 of them contained voice-overs as a background voice, including 59 (80.2%) done by females and only 14 (19.2%) done by males. These data indicate a high degree of gender bias in voice-overs in Chinese sex-containing adverts ($X^2=55.48$ df=1 $p<0.000$) [Exact].

Turning to the British sample, there were 135 sexual acts that contained voice-overs compared with 178 sexual acts that did not use voice-overs during sexual scenes. Among 135 voice-overs applied in British television adverts, 29 (27.6%) of them were by males and the other 106 (78.5%) were by females. The difference between the proportions of sex-containing adverts featuring male and female voice-overs was highly significant ($X^2=48.13$ df=1 $p<0.000$) [Exact].

**Voice-over Containing Sexual Meanings**

This category was used to examine whether voice-overs used in Chinese and British TV adverts contained sexual meanings and, if so, the types of sexual meaning contained in those voice-overs. Table 8.2 shows the type of sex messages contained in voice-overs in Chinese and British adverts. There were total 73 voice-overs in sex-containing television adverts in the Chinese sample. Of these 73 voice-overs, most of them (93.2%) did not
contain any sexual meanings. But it is worth to point out that five voice-overs in adverts on WTV mentioned the word ‘sex’. Predictably, these all came from sexual disease treatment commercials appearing on WTV during the sample collecting period.

Turning to the British sample, there were 135 voice-overs in sex-containing advertising. Among these voice-overs, 112 (82.9%) voice-overs did not contain any sexual meanings. There were 21 (15.6%) voice-overs alluding to sex in British sample, means they used words such as ‘seduce’ and ‘attractive’ to try to arouse people’s sexual association; these were made up of 19 voice-overs from Channel 4 and two from ITV1.

**Table 8.2 Types of Voice-Over Containing Sexual Meanings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCTV1   CCTV2   WTV      Total</td>
<td>Channel4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mention ‘Sex’ Words</td>
<td>0       0       5/33.3%</td>
<td>0          0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allude to Sex</td>
<td>0       0       0</td>
<td>19/22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>0       0       0</td>
<td>0          0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No sexual meanings</td>
<td>35/100% 23/100% 10/66.7%</td>
<td>68/93.2% 65/77.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>73      23      15</td>
<td>73        84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Double Entendre**

This category refers to advertising containing allusions and references to objects and events that could have sexual meaning by means of double entendre. Double entendre to sex in advertising could be made either visually or verbally. Table 8.3 shows the number of double entendre referring to sex in Chinese and British television adverts. This figure shows that from a total of 105 sexual acts in Chinese adverts, only three (2.9%) sexual acts used visual double entendre, made up of two from CCTV2 and one from WTV. Most Chinese television adverts did not contain double entendre to sex. There was no double entendre to sex in verbal or double entendre in both visual and verbal in the Chinese sample.
Turning to the British sample, double entendres were used more commonly as compared to the Chinese sample, particularly double entendre to sex in verbal. There were 47 verbal references alluding to sexual information by means of double entendre, 41 from Channel 4 and the other six from ITV1. There were three visual references in British television adverts implying sexual meanings by means of double entendre.

**Table 8.3 Double Entendre in Chinese and British TV Ads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Music Used during Sexual acts</th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCTV1</td>
<td>CCTV2</td>
<td>WTV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double entendre in visual</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2/1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double entendre in verbal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double entendre in visual-verbal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Double entendre</td>
<td>52/100%</td>
<td>22/99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Type of Music Used during Sexual acts**

Music is one of the nonverbal forms of communication in television advertising, which has been investigated by many researchers (such as Haley et al., 1984, Appelbaum & Halliburton, 1993). Appelbaum and Halliburton (1993) noted that ‘music often transmits emotions better than words.’ Advertisers use several non-verbal elements to help create a favourable mood for the advertised products in the audience. Music acts as a facilitating factor that enhances or contributes to sexual meanings.

Table 8.4 shows the different types of music used in Chinese and British television adverts during sexual acts. In the Chinese sample, the vast majority of sex scenes used music as background sound, only 20 (19%) sexual acts were depicted without music. Light music was the most popular music type in Chinese sex-containing adverts with a proportion of 53.5%. 15.2% of sexual acts featured pop music and 8.6% of sexual acts featured jazz.
Turning to the British sample, light music took more than half (56.9%) of the total amount. As in the Chinese sample, the second most popular type of music was pop and Hip hop and Jazz also made up considerable percentages of the types of music used during sexual acts in British television adverts.

**Table 8.4 Music in Chinese and British Sex-containing TV Ads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light music</td>
<td>56/53.3%</td>
<td>178/56.9%</td>
<td>234/56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>16/15.2%</td>
<td>47/15%</td>
<td>63/15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazz</td>
<td>9/8.6%</td>
<td>32/10.2%</td>
<td>41/9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip hop</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35/11.2%</td>
<td>35/8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4/3.8%</td>
<td>8/2.6%</td>
<td>12/2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No music</td>
<td>20/19%</td>
<td>13/4.2%</td>
<td>33/7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Camera/lighting Technique**

This category was used to determine whether a particular camera/lighting technique was used to enhance or contribute to sexual meaning during sexual acts. Some previous studies had noticed the function of specific camera and lighting related to sexual content in advertising; for example, a study carried out by Arima (2003) pointed out that many advertisements used close-up camera angles to feature the eyes and breasts of female models.

**Table 8.5 Camera/lighting Technique in Chinese and British Sex-containing TV Ads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Particular</td>
<td>69/65.7%</td>
<td>198/63.3%</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No particular</td>
<td>36/33.3%</td>
<td>115/36.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>313</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$X^2$</td>
<td>20.74</td>
<td>44.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the 105 sexual acts seen on the Chinese screen, 69 (65.7%) sexual scenes used particular camera/lighting techniques such as close-shot and up-down angles to enhance sexual messages (see Table 8.5). The other 36 (33.3%) did not use any special techniques during sex scenes. These findings indicate that sexual scenes appeared in the Chinese sample were more likely to use particular camera/lighting techniques to create a sexy atmosphere and to strengthen the sexual information ($X^2=20.74$ df=1 $p<0.000$) [Exact].

Turning to the British sample, there were 198 (63.3%) sexual acts that used particular camera/lighting techniques to convey sexual meaning. The other 115 (36.7%) sexual acts did not feature any special camera techniques. This distribution represented a highly significant difference ($X^2=44.02$ df=1 $p<0.000$) [Exact].

**Humour as Context**

This analysis was added to investigate the ‘context’ of the sexual acts in advertising. It aimed to figure out whether the situation during sexual acts was humorous or serious. Table 8.6 shows the context of sexual behaviours in Chinese and British sex-containing adverts. In the Chinese sample, only five sexual acts were featured in a verbal humour context, most sexual acts (95.2%) were featured in a serious context. In the British sample, 28 (8.9%) sexual acts used verbal humour and eight (2.6%) sexual acts used visual humour. The majority of sexual acts (88.5%) were featured in a serious context.

**Table 8.6 Humour as Context for Sexual Acts in Chinese and British TV Ads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>British Adverts</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal humour</td>
<td>5/4.8%</td>
<td>28/8.9%</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual humour</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8/2.6%</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No humour</td>
<td>100/95.2%</td>
<td>277/88.5%</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>313</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Homosexuality

This analysis was added to determine whether there were any adverts or products related to homosexuality. According to previous consumer opinion research, most audiences found adverts related to homosexuality offensive.

The findings show that in both Chinese and British countries, there were no sexual acts related to homosexuality. All the sexual acts shown in television advertisements in both countries were heterosexual.

Conclusion and Discussion

This chapter has investigated verbal references and other codes related to sex in Chinese and British adverts. Verbal references to sex covered the voice-over, talk during sexual acts or implied or detailed sex talk between characters on screen. The other codes related to sex included the double entendre, music, camera techniques, humour and homosexuality. This paragraph will compare the Chinese and British samples and then discuss the differences or similarities.

Gender of Voice-over during Sexual Scenes in Chinese and British TV Ads

Comparing the gender of the voice-overs featured in Chinese and British sex-containing adverts indicate that both samples were gender biased, and featured a greater number of female than male voice-overs. However, further statistical analysis reveals that there were no significant differences between the genders of voice-overs during sexual acts between the two samples.

Many studies on gender stereotyping in advertising found that advertisements utilize male actors more often than female actors to provide voice-overs (Manstead & McCulloch, 1981; Smith, 1994). In a British study, Manstead & McCulloch (1981) found that 94% of voice-overs in television advertising were male. The finding of the current study shows that
sex-containing adverts in both Chinese and British networks more likely to utilize female actors than male actors to provide voice-overs.

**Type of Voice-over Containing Sexual meanings in Chinese and British TV Adverts**

Compared to Chinese sex-containing adverts, British sex-containing adverts used more voice-overs implying sexual information to enhance sexual appeals. ($X^2=4.14$ df=1 0.1<p<0.5) [Exact]. It is worth reiterating that there were five voice-overs containing the word ‘sex’ in the Chinese sample, in contrast with none in the British sample. This can be attributed to the fact that WTV aired five sexual disease and treatment commercials during the sample collecting time. Moreover, these voice-overs from WTV breached the Chinese advertising codes on sex-related materials.

**Double-entendre to Sex in Chinese and British TV Ads**

Compared to Chinese television adverts, British television adverts used much more double entendre to convey sexual information ($X^2=4.14$ df=1 p<0.001) [Exact]; in contrast with 47 double entendres verbally referring to sex in the British sample; there were no double entendre verbally related to sexual content in the Chinese sample. In Chinese adverts, the use of double entendre as a representation of sexual content was very rare.

**Type of Music Used during Sexual acts in Chinese and British TV Adverts**

In both Chinese and British sex-containing adverts, light music and pop music made up a majority proportion of the total music type. Sexual acts and behaviours were often featured in combination with light and pop music in television adverts in China and Britain. Comparing the type of music used in Chinese and British television sex-containing adverts showed that British adverts were more likely than their Chinese counterparts to use ‘hip-hop’ when featuring sexually-themed activities ($X^2=11.62$ df=1 p<0.001) [Exact].

**Camera/lighting Technique Used during Sexual Acts in Chinese and British TV Ads**
In both the Chinese and British samples, shots using particular camera techniques were significantly more common than normal shots. The camera/lightning techniques, including half-lighting, special angles and close shots, were widely used to enhance sexual appeal in both countries. There were no significant difference between the Chinese and British sex-containing adverts when using camera and lighting techniques.

**Context of Sexual Acts in Chinese and British TV Ads**

In both countries, most sexual acts featured in a serious context as against conveying humorous information. The finding indicates that sexual acts were more likely to be featured in a serious context in Chinese television adverts than in British television adverts. ($X^2=4.04$ df=1 0.01<p<0.05). There were no sex scenes comprising both visual and verbal humour in the television adverts in either country.

In a previous study on sex in prime-time television conducted by Greenberg et al. (1986), the majority of sexual activities were presented in a serious context; in addition, verbal humour was more commonly used to feature sexual acts than visual humour in television. The findings of the current study agree in that in both Chinese and British television adverts, most sexual acts were featured in a serious context, and verbal humour to sex was more common than visual humour.

**Homosexuality in Chinese and British TV Ads**

The finding reveals that in both the Chinese and British samples, there were no sexual acts related to homosexuality. This can be attributed to the cultural and historical factors in Chinese and British society. In Britain, the state religion, Christianity, regards homosexuality as sin (Dallas & Heche, 2009). In British history, homosexuality has long been seen as a taboo. This remained until the 1960s and the sexual revolution, when homosexuality, which was previously considered unsuitable for discussion, was openly talked about in British
society (Hall, 2000). However, according to the audience research conducted by ITC in 1995, the majority of the British audience still cannot accept homosexuality-related products and services promoted in adverts. The bulk of the British audience would be offended by homosexual content on screen.

None of the major religions in China consider homosexuality as a sin, so China has a history of being tolerant to homosexuality since ancient times. However, in contrast to the tolerance shown in the country’s dynastic history, urban China shows a strict attitude toward homosexuality. Before the 1980s, public discourse was totally silent about homosexuality in urban China. Public debate about homosexuality is very circumscribed and popular opinion condemns it as a sickness or a perversion. Since the 1980s, the topic of homosexuality has begun to be included in public discourse. Nowadays, the Chinese media still holds negative attitudes toward homosexuality. In late April 2004, SARFT initiated a campaign to clear violence and sexual content from the media. Programmes scene, or language related to homosexual topics are considered to be going against the healthy way of life in China, and are banned. Moreover, according to audience research conducted by Cheng (2002), the Chinese audience could not accept homosexuality-related products and services promoted on screen. The findings of this study indicate that homosexuality as a strong stimulating element could easily cause public offence and so was not found in any advertisements in either country.

The next chapter will explore sex in television advertisements that cause public offence and contravene codes of practice in China and Britain.
Chapter Nine

Sex in TV Advertisements that could Cause Public Offence and Contravene Codes of Practice in China and Britain

This thesis has addressed a number of important issues regarding the representation of sex in the media. Television networks, as ubiquitous audio-visual media, provide a major source of entertainment for audiences of millions. The popularity of television has given rise to specific concerns about the distribution of erotic or pornographic material which could cause public offence. Television advertising has been criticized for using increasingly graphic depictions and realistic sexual content (see Gunter, 2002). As the boundaries of what is apparently deemed tasteful and appropriate for mass consumption are pushed back further by the media industries, some observers have questioned the freedom that is given to produce such material (Dunkley, 2000). Due to the harmful effects caused by exposure to too much sexual content, standard codes were needed to regulate the content appearing on screens.

Chapter one explained specific codes of practice for TV advertising in China and Britain. The regulatory administrations in the Chinese and British media were also discussed before. Chapter four explored the audiences’ acceptance of sexual content in media in China and Britain. In this chapter any evidence of adverts causing public offence in the sample will be outlined, and any evidence of adverts that contravene codes of practice in the sample will be highlighted.

Adverts at Risk of Breaching the Codes in Britain
The findings reveal that all sexual initiators and recipients who were coded in British TV adverts appeared to be over 20 years old, so no sexual acts happened between adults and young people. There were no products coded under unacceptable products or services, such as drugs or gambling which are banned.

In the British sample there was a laptop advertisement that featured implied sex talk between two female office ladies to sell a product. The advertisement used intimate conversation between women to insinuate sexual activities by creating a wonderful male sexual partner, such as ‘it moved fast’, and ‘it was a very good size’. This advertisement for an Acer laptop was repeatedly broadcast on Channel 4 during the sample collection time. It is quite hard to draw a link between a laptop, as the promoted product type, and sexual content.

There was also an advertisement on ITV1 that featured a male model wearing shorts to sell a credit card. This advertisement was repeatedly aired in ITV1 during the sample collecting time. The half-naked male model here seems to be using sexual appeal to attract attention in order to sell an unrelated product.

These two advertisements in the British sample seem to breach the ASA code that states: ‘In particular people should not be portrayed in a manner which uses sexual appeal simply to draw attention to an unrelated product.’ The laptop advertisement was broadcasted 22 times and the credit card advertisement was aired 4 times on British television networks during the sample collection time. These two advertisements are considered to breach the codes and so this provides a positive answer for RQ7: ‘Is there any evidence of sex in TV advertisements that contravenes codes of practice in Britain?’

**Adverts at Risk of Breaching the Codes in China**
In 2007 SARFT banned programmes dealing with material of an ‘extreme pornographic nature’ and talked about sex lives, sexual experiences, sexual organs and the efficiency of certain drugs for sex. Rule 11 of the advertising codes regulated by SARFT in 2005 stated: ‘The advertising should not contain scenes which are sexually explicit or implied; pornography; sexual disease treatment advertising.

According to these regulations, advertisements for sexual diseases and female underwear in WTV breached the advertising codes. In the Chinese sample there was an advertisement for sexually-transmitted diseases and treatment. The advertisement contained imagery of a male doctor talking about sexually-transmitted diseases and recommended a hospital that could heal these diseases. The voice-over used in this advertisement also included the words ‘sex disease’ and ‘genitourinary organ’. This advertisement, which was repeatedly broadcast on WTV during the sample collection time, is considered to be in breach of the Chinese advertising codes.

In addition, there was also a repeatedly-broadcast television shopping show for female underwear on WTV. The advertisements contained half-naked female models wearing the underwear. This breached the Chinese advertising codes for promoting female underwear in advertising.

This finding provides an answer for RQ 8: ‘Is there any evidence of sex in TV advertisements that contravenes codes of practice in China?’ There were a total 19 advertisements (including repeating advertisements) in the Chinese sample that breached the code issued by SARFT; all of them came from WTV. This can be attributed to the complex system of the SARFT. Although SARFT has established local branches to supervise the content of local networks, the code issued by SARFT is harder to enforce in local
television channels than in national channels. City-level channels containing sexual content which breaches the advertising codes is quite typical in China.

**Advertising that might Cause Public Offence in Britain**

According to previous research, advertising could cause public offence with regard to sex in three ways: the product type, the level of sexual content and nudity, and the lack of product congruency (Millwood-Hargrave 1999; Gunter & Stipp, 1992; ITC, 2003; Gunter; 2002).

**Product Types Might Cause Offence**

In Britain, the IBA (Independent Broadcasting Authority) conducted a series of public opinion surveys in the 1980s. This work was especially concerned with the public’s acceptance, not just of sexual content in advertising, but of the advertising of products that were associated directly or indirectly with sexual matters (IBA, 1988; Wober, 1980). These findings suggest that advertisements promoting products for personal hygiene were found deeply offensive.

According to research carried out by Gunter and Wober in the mid-1980s, some products might cause audience offence when watching advertisements. The findings showed that there was widespread support from British audiences for advertisements for personal beauty products (such as deodorants, underwear) and health treatment/services (such as family planning clinics, pregnancy advice services, syringes for diabetics, contraceptives and sanitary products). Less than half of the audience could accept advertisements for undertakers and funeral service, and marriage or dating agents.

A majority of British viewers felt uncomfortable when faced by advertisements for homosexual advice services and homosexuality-related products (Gunter & Wober, 1990). In a later survey conducted by ITC, most audiences said they did not think AIDS, contraceptives or condoms advertisements would cause offence, but advertisements for homosexuality-
related products could not be accepted by the majority of audiences. In the British sample in this research, there was no homosexuality-related commercial or product. So there were no product categories advertised on British networks that could cause public offence.

Level of Sexual Content and Nudity Might Cause Public Offence

In 1995, the ITC carried out research using focus groups and depth interviews to investigate audiences’ attitudes toward different degrees of nudity in advertising. The research found that nudity was regarded as more acceptable when it was relevant to the product and appeared after 9 pm (ITC, 1995). The survey also claimed that nudity became more offensive when it was combined with sexual intercourse. It also concerned which parts of the body should be exposed. The exposure of naked female breasts caused some concern, but side views were regarded as less problematic for some viewers. Exposure of genitals was generally considered unacceptable for either sex. The data for the focus group revealed that suggestive and partially-nude views could be accepted by audiences at any time, semi-nude and back nude views could be accepted after 9pm, while full-frontal nude and sexual intercourse in implicit or explicit sex scenes were unacceptable to the audience (ITC, 1995).

A study carried out by the British researchers Beetles and Harries (2005) also found that neither male nor female British consumers could accept total nudity in advertising. The notion of ‘gaze’ of the imagery of female body was also suggested in this study. The findings showed that it is important to show the model’s face, and the imagery which cuts off the face and only focuses on body parts might cause negative feelings from audiences.

In the British sample in this study, as can be seen in Table 9.1, there were 112 advertisements that contained imagery of models wearing underwear that might be acceptable to a British audience before or after 9 pm. There were no adverts featuring topless female models. In addition, there were four adverts containing scenes depicting
total nudity from the back and side views in British sample; however, all of them appeared after 9pm. In consequence, the side and behind nude in British adverts should not lead to public offence. The findings show there was no nudity in British television adverts that might have caused public offence.

**Table 9.1 Nudity in British TV Adverts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British Adverts</th>
<th>Before 9</th>
<th>After 9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Nudity</td>
<td>78/73.6%</td>
<td>89/50.3%</td>
<td>167/59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Nudity(underwear)</td>
<td>28/26.4%</td>
<td>84/47.5%</td>
<td>112/39.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Nude (topless)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Nudity (Behind/side)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4/2.3%</td>
<td>4/1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontal Nudity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the findings of this study also suggest that there are no advertisements in the British sample that contained any content of sexual intercourse that might cause public offence.

**Lack of Product-Sex Congruency Might Cause Offence**

Previous studies have indicated that the congruency of the product and sexual content is a key area in audience responses. Audiences seem much happier to accept commercials which have direct and clear congruence between the product and the sexual content (Gunter, 2002). In other words, sexual content – within limits - may be tolerated provided the audience perceives that it is being deployed in a relevant rather than purely gratuitous fashion.

Of the 14 product categories investigated in this study, beauty and personal care product, fashion, underwear and bedding could be easily to associate with highly attractive models and tantalizing scenes. For CD/music, food and beverage, motoring and travel, it is harder to determine whether it is relevant to sexual content. For example, delicate
chocolate advertisements could be associated with tempting sexual scenes, but it is quite hard to draw a link between sexy models and fast food. Domestic products containing domestic applications and cleaning products; services, including financial and insurance services; and electronic products seem to have no correlation with sexual activities.

There were 19 domestic advertisements, 22 electronic advertisements and four service advertisements that used sex appeal to sell products. It is quite hard to draw a direct link between sexual content and these product types. Audiences might therefore find it difficult to find a direct and clear congruence between the product and the sexual content. These commercials might therefore arouse a negative feeling in the audience by using sexual appeals.

The findings of this study showed that there was no advertising containing references to homosexuality, which risks arousing public offence in the British sample. All the nudity in British advertising was likely to be acceptable to the audience. In addition, some adverts used sexual appeals to promote electronic products, domestic products and services in the British sample. Due to lack of the product congruency, an audience might find this hard to accept. These findings provide an answer for RQ 9: ‘Is there any evidence of sexual representations in TV advertisements that might cause public offence in Britain?’

Advertising Might Cause Public Offence in Chinese Society

By comparison with the situation in UK, there have been many fewer public opinion surveys on sex in Chinese television commercials. The only substantial studies it has been possible to locate are those conducted by Cheng in Hong Kong in 2002 and by Fam and Waller in 2003.

Product Type Adverts that Might Cause Offence

In 2002, Cheng carried out a public opinion survey aimed at identifying what kinds of advertisements consumers find offensive. From the focus group, commercials about female
underwear and contraceptive products were considered offensive by audiences. According to a survey by Fam and Waller (2003), Chinese audiences thought advertisements for gender/sex related products (including underwear, contraceptives, and hygiene products) and health care products (such as weight-loss programmes, charities, and sexual diseases) were offensive.

The Chinese sample contained five advertisements for sexual diseases and treatments and 14 advertisements for female underwear. These advertisements might, therefore, cause public offence in Chinese society.

Level of Sexual Content and Nudity Might Cause Public Offence

By comparison with the British viewers, the Chinese audience shows much stricter attitudes toward nudity in television commercials. The majority of the Chinese audience found nudity in commercials very offensive. However, other advertising which contains sexual connotations could be accepted by a majority of viewers. As can be seen in Table 9.2, there were 19 advertisements in the Chinese sample containing imagery of models wearing underwear. Based on previous audience research, these advertisements might offend the public and be hard for the audience to accept.

Table 9.2 Nudity in Chinese TV Adverts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Adverts</th>
<th>No Nudity</th>
<th>Partial Nudity (underwear)</th>
<th>Partial Nudity (topless)</th>
<th>Partial Nudity (Behind/side)</th>
<th>Frontal Nudity</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before 9</strong></td>
<td>21/72.4%</td>
<td>8/27.6%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>After 9</strong></td>
<td>53/82.8%</td>
<td>11/17.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>74/79.6%</td>
<td>19/20.4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lack of Product Congruency Might Cause Offence
According to previous studies (Soley & Reid, 1985; Soley & Kurzbard, 1986; Reichert, 2003; Gunter, 2002) audiences seem to find it much easier to accept commercials which have direct and clear congruency between the product and the sexual content. There were 19 domestic products that did not seem to have clear congruency with sexual content in the Chinese adverts sample. These advertisements might find it hard to be accepted by audiences.

The findings of this study indicate there were no advertisements promoting or containing homosexuality in the Chinese sample, which risks arousing public offence. However, the five advertisements for sexual diseases and treatment and the 14 advertisements for female underwear on WTV might cause public offence in Chinese society.

There were 19 advertisements in the Chinese sample containing images of models wearing underwear that might offend the public and find it hard to be accepted by audience. There were also 19 domestic commercial that might find it hard to increase the recall and accepted by audiences because they used sex appeals to promote the products. These findings provide an answer for RQ 10; ‘Is there any evidence of sexual representations in TV advertisements that might cause public offence in China?’

**Discussion and Conclusion**

In this chapter advertisements from the samples which seemed to contravene the codes of practice in sample were identified, and it was found that there were 26 advertisements in the British sample which seemed to breach the ASA codes by portraying models in a manner which uses sexual appeal simply to draw attention to an unrelated product. This provides an answer for RQ7: ‘Is there any evidence of sex in TV advertisements that contravenes codes of practice in Britain?’ In the Chinese sample, there were five sexual disease treatment advertisements and 14 underwear commercials that breached the codes of practice issued
by SARFT. All of these 19 advertisements were from WTV. These findings provided an answer for RQ 8: ‘Is there any evidence of sex in TV advertisements that contravenes codes of practice in China?’

The findings of this study show that there were no advertisements that promoted or contained homosexuality which risk causing public offence in the British sample. All the nudity in British advertising was acceptable to the audience. In addition, there were some televisions advertisements using sex appeal to promote electronic products, domestic products and services in the British sample which, due to lack of product congruency, might be hard for the audience to accept. These findings provide an answer for RQ 9: ‘Is there any evidence of sexual representations in TV advertisements that might cause public offence in Britain?’

The findings showed that there were five advertisements for sexually-transmitted diseases and treatments and 14 advertisements for female underwear in WTV that might cause public offence in Chinese society. There were 19 advertisements in the Chinese sample that contained imagery of models wearing underwear that might offend the public and so find it hard to be accepted by the audience. In addition 19 domestic commercials in the Chinese sample might find it hard to increase brand recall and to be accepted by audiences because they use sex appeals to promote their products. These findings provide an answer for RQ 10; ‘Is there any evidence of sexual representations in TV advertisements that might cause public offence in China?’ The following chapter will summarize the key differences in the use of sex in television advertising in Britain and China.
Chapter Ten

Sex in TV Advertising in Britain and China - What Have We Learned?

There are more sexual appeals advertised to consumers than ever before. This trend towards the increasing of depiction of sexually oriented themes in television advertising arouse the widely public debates in recent years. Concerns about sex in the advertising have centred on a number of issues relating to offence to public taste (Reichert & Lambiase, 2003); advertising routinely present women as sexual objects (Lin, 1998; Reichert, 2003a) and advertising contained a mass of idealised body imagery (Hendricks 2002; Bersnaham et al., 1997).

The different cultural background influences the representation of sex in television advertising. Researchers always emphasize how cultures can influence advertising campaigns (e.g. McCarthy & Perreault Jr., 1991; Walsh, 1993; Bradley, 1999). People in different societies behave differently because of cultural elements, such as the value systems adopted in their societies, their religious beliefs, the differences in the attitudes toward sexuality and gender roles reflected in the representations of sex in television advertising in Britain and China. Moreover the censorship and advertising codes also could shape the representations of sex in Chinese and British television adverts.

This chapter will review the key findings from the study and consider what have been learned from them. This discuss will examine the key differences and similarities in the use of sex in television advertising in Britain and China. Due to the various cultural backgrounds, historical elements and political factors significant differences were found to exist in the representation of sex in Chinese and British television advertising. This chapter would focus the discussion on identifying the main findings, highlighting differences and
similarities, identifying the study’s contributions, and incorporating implications, limitations and future research.

**Main Findings**

**The Amount and Level of Sex in Television Advertising in Britain and China**

The amount and level of sexual content in Chinese and British television adverts were investigated in current study. It provides the answer for RQ1 ‘How much sex occurs in TV advertisements in Britain?’ and RQ2 ‘How much sex occurs in TV advertisements in China?’

**Amount of Sex-containing Advertisements**

The finding indicates 93 commercials from three Chinese Channels (CCTV1, CCTV2 & WTV) and 283 commercials from two British Channels (Channel4, ITV1) were defined containing sexual content in this study. The average proportion of sex-containing advertisements was 3% on Chinese networks, and 11.8% on British networks. British networks contained significantly larger proportion of sex advertisements compared to Chinese networks ($X^2=162.37$ df=1 $p<0.000$) [Exact].

According to a previous study carried out by Lin (1998), around 8% of television commercials in America feature at least one type of sexually-oriented behaviour. The figure for the British sample revealed in current study was a little higher than Lin’s study. It is worth pointing out that Lin’s study coded some non-sexual physical contact such as handholding as sexual content. It might induce the figure found in Lin’s study for the amount of sex-containing adverts to be lower than what the samples actually contains. The difference in the amount of sex-containing adverts between the current study and Lin’s study may due to the fact that the number of television advertisements containing sexual elements has increased during the twenty-year time interval, or because cultural differences between Britain and America reflect on the differences in amount of sex-containing adverts.
The results of this content analysis indicate that only 3% commercials in Chinese sample contained sexual content. This is significantly lower than the proportion of sexually themed adverts in American television networks found by Lin (1998). This can be attributed to the cultural differences between the Eastern and Western countries reflecting on the representation of sexual appeals in adverts.

Compared to print magazines, 11% of general interest magazine adverts and at least 25% of men and women’s magazine adverts contained sexual content a quarter of a century ago (Soley & Kurzbard, 1986). Apparently, magazine adverts generally contain more sexual references than television commercials, to the extent that comparisons can be made between studies across media. As the little sexual content research in television advertising has been published present study findings should help update current trends.

Moreover, according to arousal theory, these 93 sex-containing commercials on Chinese networks and 283 sex-containing commercials on British networks could grab audiences’ attention more effectively compared to advertising which did not contain sexual appeals. However sexual appeals which are considered could increase the arousal failed to increase brand recall and loyalty (Baker, 1961, Steadman 196, Alexander & Judd, 1978, Courtney & Whipple, 1983). Therefore, 376 sex-containing television adverts in this study might increase the arousals in audiences whereas failed to increase the brand recall and loyalty.

Duration of Sex-containing Adverts and Sexual Content

There were more advertisements in the British samples that contained sexual material than in the Chinese samples. Sex-containing adverts occupied more television airtime in the British sample (around 100 minutes) than was true of adverts that contained sexual material in the Chinese sample (around 90 minutes). On average, with adverts that contained any
sexual content, that content occupied more time in British adverts (around 44 minutes) than in Chinese adverts (around 40 minutes).

Moreover, it could be easily noticed that the local channel WTV contained much longer duration of sex-containing adverts and sexual content in those adverts compared to Chinese national level networks (CCTV1 & CCTV2). The author believes that WTV had such a large duration of sexual content as a result of WTV was regularly airing a 30 minute teleshopping show for underwear during sample collecting time. According to the regulations published by SARFT, broadcasting commercials for female underwear is not allowed in China. These teleshopping shows in WTV breached Chinese advertising codes. As mentioned earlier Chinese television networks have a pyramidal construction. It is, therefore, more difficult for SARFT to supervise the local networks. Although, SARFT has established local branches to deal with local issues, it still has to go through complex bureaucratic procedures to enforce the standard codes. In some places in China, the local SARFT branches and local television stations have mutual economic interests. The regional protectionism remains a problem for completely putting the advertising standard codes into effect in Chinese society.

Comparisons with previous studies were not possible for this finding, as no previous study in this filed has measured the length of sex-containing adverts and sexual content within those adverts.

Amount and Level of Sex Acts

In total, 418 sexual acts appeared in Chinese and British adverts, including 105 sexual acts from the three Chinese channels and 313 sexual acts from the two British television channels. As opposed to Chinese adverts, the British sample contained substantially more sexual acts.
Moreover, the findings indicate that Chinese adverts did not contain any scenes portraying actual sexual activities between characters, except for five scenes depicting talk about sexual matters from WTV. However, in the British sample, 50 (16%) actual sexual activities were seen taking place between lead characters, including 32 (10.2%) kissing on mouth and 18 (5.8%) involving sexual touching. The British sample contained obviously higher level of sexual behaviour in television adverts than did the Chinese sample.

Level of Nudity

The findings reveal British television advertising contained much more nudity than Chinese television advertising. There were 112 British commercials containing partial nudity (wearing underwear or bikini) on the two British channels, as opposed to 19 Chinese commercials on the three Chinese channels. There were four British commercials containing behind and side view nudity in contrast with none in the Chinese sample. The findings of Nelson and Paek’s study indicated that adverts in magazines from Western countries such as U.S. and France contained much more nudity than they did in women magazines from Eastern countries such as China. The findings of current study mirror this cultural difference between China and Western countries.

Moreover, this study reveals that four side and behind nudity in the British sample were all broadcasted after 9 pm. According to previous audience survey conducted by ITC (1995), these four side/behind nudity could be accepted by British audience, all partial nudity could be accepted by British audience by any time of day. Whilst, according to previous audience research carried out by Cheng in 2002, Chinese audience showed much rigorous attitude toward nudity in television commercials. Majority of the Chinese audience found showing nudity in adverts very offensive. These 19 commercials applying partial nudity (wearing underwear) in the Chinese sample might offend Chinese audiences.
Advertisers who aim at Chinese market should be cautious about using nudity in television commercials.

The findings of this study indicate that Chinese television advertising contained less sex and nudity compared to British television advertising. In other words, Chinese television advertising contained fewer sex-containing advertisements, less sexual content, and a lower level of sexual acts and nudity than their British counterparts.

**The Type and Distribution of sex in Chinese and British TV Ads**

The representation types and distributions of sex were investigated in current study. The findings indicate that several similarities and differences were encountered in Chinese and British sex-containing television adverts. It provides the answer for RQ3. ‘What kinds of sexual depictions occur in TV advertisements in Britain?’ and ‘RQ4. What kinds of sexual depictions occur in TV advertisements in China?’

**Time of Transmission of Adverts with Sexual Content**

The findings indicate that for both Chinese and British television networks the commercials which appear on screen after 9pm is substantially more sexual than before 9pm. According to the previous audience research, 9pm was regarded as an important time boundary for sexual content in television research in Britain. The sexual content showing after 9pm seems to be accepted more easily according to audience research carried out by ITC in 1995. In both Chinese and British television advertising, the majority of sexual content was transmitted after family viewing hours to avoid public offence and to protect people under the age of 18.

The results of this study coincided with the findings from Fernandez-Collado et al. (1978) that the representation of sex-related content appeared more frequently after 9 pm.
Type of Sex Acts in Television Adverts

The findings indicate that in both the Chinese and British samples, physical flirting was the most common representation of sexual content. Compared to British television adverts, Chinese television adverts were more likely to represent sexual appeals through physical flirting ($X^2=8.04 \text{ df}=1 \ p <0.01$) [Exact]. The finding suggests that among total 105 sex acts happened in Chinese adverts, most of them containing physical flirting (83.8%). Meanwhile, British sample contained obviously higher level of sexual behaviour in television adverts than did the Chinese sample. Overt sexual activities only featured in British television adverts. The British television sample contained 32 kissing on mouth and 18 sexual touching behaviours, whereas, the Chinese sample did not contain any sexual acts coded under these two categories.

It comes as something of a surprise to find that WTV contained five sex talks about sex in details while the British sample did not contain any scenes coded under this category. The author believes all of these sexual detailed talks were contained in commercials about sexually transmitted disease and treatments broadcast on WTV. According to audience research carried out by Cheng in 2002 and advertising codes authorized by SARFT in China, these five sex detailed talks could cause the public offence and may have breached the advertising codes. This might be attributed to the fact that the pyramidal construction of Chinese media system make difficult for SARFT to supervise the local networks to ensure they comply with the standard codes.

For comparison purpose, sex acts in this study was recorded under the ‘physical innuendo’ ‘verbal reference’ and ‘physical contact’ categories. The finding indicates that in the British sample, there were 8.7% physical innuendos to sex, 1.2% verbal reference to sex
and 2% commercials contained physical contact. Compare with the Lin’s study, the proportion of physical innuendo in the British sample was slightly higher; there were 8% commercials in Lin’s study coded under this category. According to Lin’s study, one percent commercials contained verbal reference to sexual appeals. There was no significant difference between the number of adverts containing verbal references to sex in the current study and Lin’s study. The proportion of physical contact in the British sample in current study was much lower than the data found in Lin’s study. This could be attributed to the fact that in Lin’s study, hand-holding and embracing were defined as sexual activities. Therefore, excluding the hand-holding and embracing acts from the coding scheme in this study could cause a reduction in the amount of physical contact behaviour.

Turning to the Chinese sample, the finding shows there were 0.3% Chinese commercials contained physical references. Only 0.002% Chinese commercials contained verbal innuendo to sex, there was none physical contact in the Chinese sample. The figures for all representations of sexual content were much lower than the data revealed by Lin’s study in 1998.

**The type of Setting of Sexual Acts**

This study shows that the most common setting for sexual activities in television advertising in both China and Britain was the bedroom. According to a study that focused on the context of sexual acts carried out by Greenberg, et al. (1986), 45% of sexual activities featured in bedrooms, 23% featured in work place and 19% featured in restaurants. Bedrooms were therefore dominated setting for sexual behaviours. The findings of this study are in line with previous a study carried out by Greenberg et al. (1986). In general, the distribution of settings in British sex-containing adverts showed a wider range than Chinese sex-containing adverts.
The Gender of Voice-overs during Sexual Scenes

The findings show there were much more female voice-overs during the sex acts in television adverts in both countries compare to males. However, further statistical analysis revealed that there were no significant differences between the gender of voice-over during sexual acts in Chinese and British sample ($X^2=2.35$ df=1 $p>0.05$) [Exact].

Many studies on gender stereotyping in advertising found that advertisements more often utilize male actors than female actors to provide voice-overs (Manstead & McCulloch, 1981; Smith, 1994). In a British study Manstead & McCulloch (1981) found that 94% of voice-overs in television advertising were male. The finding of current study shows that sex-containing adverts in both Chinese and British networks more likely to utilize female actors than male actors to provide voice-overs.

Type of Voice-over Containing Sexual Meanings

The finding suggests in total 73 voice-overs in the Chinese sample, most of them (93.2%) did not contain any sexual meanings. Among 135 voice-overs in the British sample advertising, 112 (82.9%) voice-overs did not contain any sexual meanings. Compared to Chinese sex-containing adverts, British sex-containing adverts used more voice-overs implying sexual information to enhance the sexual appeals. ($X^2=4.14$ df=1 $p>0.1$) [Exact]. It is worth reiterating that there were five voice-overs containing the word ‘sex’ in the Chinese sample, in contrast with none in the British sample. This can be attributed to the fact that WTV aired five sexually transmitted diseases and treatment commercials during the sample collecting time. Moreover, these voice-overs from WTV breached the Chinese advertising codes for containing sexual related materials.
Type of Sexual Double-Entendre

The findings show that in total 105 sex acts happened in Chinese adverts only three (2.9%) sex acts used visual double entendre to sex. Most Chinese television adverts did not contain double entendre to sex. The double entendres were used more common in British television adverts as compared to the Chinese sample, particularly double entendre to sex in verbal. There were 47 verbal references and three visual references alluding to sexual information by means of double entendre in the British sample.

Type of Music Used during Sex Acts

In both Chinese and British sex-containing adverts, light music and pop music made up a majority proportion of total music type. Sex acts and behaviours often featured in combination with light and pop music in television adverts in China and Britain. Comparing the type of music used in Chinese and Chinese and British television sex-containing adverts shows that British adverts were more likely than their Chinese counterparts to use ‘hip-hop’ when featuring sexually-themed activities. \( \chi^2 = 11.62 \; \text{df}=1 \; p<0.001 \) [Exact]. This can be attributed to the fact that originated in Western country; hip-hop is more popular in Britain than China.

Camera/Lighting Technique Used during Sex Acts

In both the Chinese and British samples, shots using particular camera techniques were significantly more common than the normal shots. The camera/lightning techniques including half-lighting, special angels and close shot were widely used to enhance sexual appeal in both countries. There were no significant difference between the Chinese and British sex-containing adverts when using camera and lighting techniques.
Context of Sex Acts in Chinese and British TV Adverts

In both countries, most sexual acts featured in a serious context as against conveying humour information. The finding indicates that sexual acts were more likely to be featured in serious context in Chinese television adverts than in British television adverts. ($X^2=4.04$ df=1 $0.01<p<0.05$). There were no sex scenes comprising both visual and verbal humour in the television adverts in either country.

According to a previous study on sex on prime-time television conducted by Greenberg et al., (1986), the majority of sexual activities were presented in a serious context; in addition, verbal humour were more commonly used to feature sexual acts than visual humour in television. The findings of the current study agree in that in both Chinese and British television adverts, most sexual acts were featured in a serious context, and verbal humour to sex was more common than visual humour.

Homosexuality in Chinese and British TV adverts

The finding reveals that in both Chinese and British countries, there was none sex acts related to homosexuality. This can be attributed to the cultural and historical factors in Chinese and British society. According to the audience research the majority of the British and Chinese could not accept homosexuality-related products and service promoted in adverts (ITC, 1995; Cheng, 2002). The findings of this study indicate that homosexuality as a strong stimulating element could easily cause public offence and so was not found in any advertisements in either country.

The findings of this study indicate that sexual content was more variously represented in British television advertising compared to its Chinese counterpart. The findings show that compared to British adverts; the sexual content featured in Chinese adverts is represented more simply. Most Chinese television advertising only used visual...
elements to convey sexual meanings; very few of them used double entendres or verbal references to represent sexual content. Most Chinese adverts used physical innuendo to represent sexual messages. Sex acts in Chinese television adverts normally happened in bedroom setting. In contrast with Chinese television advertising, British television advertising was more likely to presented sexual content in different forms. It tends to use more verbal references and double entendres to represent sexual appeals than Chinese television adverts. The sex in British television adverts was also more likely to be represented in a humour context than in Chinese television advertisements. Sex activities in British television adverts were, therefore, not limited to be represented by physical flirting and featured in bedroom settings.

**Portrayal of Men and Women in Chinese and British Sex-Containing TV adverts**

This study analysed the gender roles in Chinese and British Sex-containing adverts. It also contributes to RQ3. ‘What kinds of sexual depictions occur in TV advertisements in Britain?’ and RQ4. ‘What kinds of sexual depictions occur in TV advertisements in China?’

The portrayal of men and women in media advertising has concerned a large number of scholars around the world, particular in America, and Europe. The main purpose for these studies was to investigate the differences between the presentation of men and women in mass media adverts. Previous studies indicated that females appearing in adverts were more likely to be featured at home, playing house chore roles, and they were confounded to certain products such as domestic stuff and personal and beauty products (McArthur and Resko, 1995; O’ Donnel and O’ Donnel, 1978; Manstead and McCulloch, 1981; Furnham and Bitar, 1993; Gunter, 1995). Meanwhile, in the context of sexually themed media, women were found routinely presented as sexual objects (Courtney & Whipple, 1983, Gunter, 2002).
The current study investigated the gender role portrayals in sexually themed television adverts. Several characteristics were investigated in this analysis including the number of each gender, the role they play and the relationship between the advertised products and the gender of leading figures promoting these products.

This study uncovered some interesting results with regard to the gender presentation depicted in Chinese and British television sex-containing television adverts. In general, the findings revealed a considerable degree of gender stereotyping in sex-containing advertisements in both countries, but this occurred to a more significant degree in advertisements from China.

Due to the fact that China is male dominant society, that superiority is bestowed to males by Confucianism values, for a long time women’s status in Chinese history was miserable, the results for the Chinese sample was more gender biased in contrast with the British sample. Chinese sex-containing adverts more tend to feature young, slender, female models in decorative and domestic roles than their British counterparts. In other words, Chinese television adverts were more likely to portray female as sexual objects than British television adverts. These findings were in line with some previous cross-cultural studies of gender role stereotyping in television advertising, which suggested that gender stereotyping in Eastern media has been greater represented than their Western counterparts (Bersnaham et al., 2001; Firth et al., 2005).

**Gender of Characters in Chinese and British TV Adverts**

The findings reveal in both the Chinese and British sample, females took the dominant role in initiating physical innuendo sexual behaviours, including physical flirting, sexual bathing/undressing and implied sex with products. Female characters in Chinese adverts were more likely to have initiated physical flirting than their counterparts in British adverts.
Whilst, female characters in British adverts were more likely to be featured as the recipients of physical flirting than in Chinese adverts \( (X^2=7.13, df=1, p < 0.000) \) [Exact].

In the British sample, males started most actual sexual acts. The Chinese sample did not contain any actual sexual acts between characters. Generally, in both countries, female characters involved in sexual behaviours outnumbered male characters. In the samples of both countries, there were more female models portrayed sexually than there were male models. This finding was consistent with Sapolsky and Tabarlet’s (1991) study and was dissimilar to Lin (1998)’s study, that found there was no significant gender differences in terms of physical innuendo, verbal innuendo or physical contact by models on American television networks. Moreover, this finding was accordant with another previous study conducted by Reichert in 2003^3 which found that in adverts for young adults, female models were 3.7 times more likely to be portrayed sexually than male models.

According to the findings of this study, the Chinese sample did not contain any actual sexual interactions between characters, while the results of British television adverts accord with the studied carried out by Sapolsky and Tabarlet (1991) that in sexual interactions between men and women, the male predominates as the initiator.

The findings showed the prevalence of portraying women as sex objects in advertising and were consistent with the widely voiced criticism of sex-role stereotyping in television and other media that feature women as sex-objects. The cultivation effects associated with advertisements featuring women as sex-objects in Chinese and British networks might temporarily influence the female audience’s self-concepts (Jennings et al., 1980) in both countries. Advertisements which treat women as sex-objects, who are to be admired, manipulated and used by men, misinterpret the gender status in the real world
These advertisements in British and Chinese networks might create a distorted belief among men about female sexuality and even arouse violence against women.

**Gender of Characters and product types in Chinese and British Adverts**

The findings indicate that in both countries, female models more likely to be used in sex-containing adverts to promote the beauty/personal care products than male models. This finding was in line with the vast majority of the previous studies which analyzed the relationship between the gender of the lead figures and the advertised products (McArthur & Resko, 1975; Manstead & McCulloch 1981; Furnham & Schofield, 1986).

**Age of Characters in Chinese and British TV Adverts**

In both the Chinese and British samples, the young adult age group was preferred over other age groups, especially in female characters. In both countries the proportion of young adults playing female characters was significantly higher than those playing males. This finding was consistent with the previous study carried by Lin (1998) which suggested that males were typically older than females in sexual oriented television advertising. This finding was also consistent with the vast majority of previous studies which analysed the age group of the lead figures appearing in television and print adverts (Ferrante, et al., 1998; Furnham & Bitar, 1993; Furnham & Mak, 1997).

When comparisons were made between Chinese and British adverts, female models in Chinese sex-containing adverts were more likely to be young adults than in British sex-containing adverts \( (X^2 = 5.21, \text{df}=1, 0.01<p<0.05) \) [Monte Carlo].

**The Occupation role of Characters in Chinese and British TV Adverts**

The findings indicated that male characters in Chinese sex-containing adverts were more likely to be depicted in professional occupation than male characters in British sex-
containing adverts, whilst, in generally, British male leads were more likely than their counterparts in Chinese adverts to be featured in decorative roles. This can be attributed to the fact that traditional values in Chinese society believes men are naturally assigned to outsider, which means the public and social sphere.

Among female leads, there was a significantly greater tendency for these to be shown in professional roles in British adverts than Chinese adverts. There are no female character in Chinese sample depicted in professional roles. This finding was consistent with the previous gender role stereotyping studies which found that women tend to be shown in much less professional and inferior roles to men in media (McNeil, 1975; Butler & Paisley, 1980; Tuchman, Daniels, & Benet, 1978). Moreover according to cultivation theory the advertisements depicting women as homemakers may activate the beliefs that women are nurturing, communal, and domestically-minded (Clifton et al., 1976; Noseworthy & Lott, 1984; Six & Eckes, 1991).

However, this gender role stereotyping was challenged by figures revealed in British sample. The chi-square test shows that there was no significant difference in the number of males and the number of females playing professional roles in British sex-containing adverts. This can be attributed to the experiences after World War Two and feminism movement in the 60s since when the status of women in British society has been largely improved.

The Ethnicity of Characters in Chinese and British TV Adverts

The findings indicate that in both countries, the domestic ethnicity made up the most proportion of people appearing in sex-containing advertising. In general, there was no significant difference in the distribution of models’ ethnicities in Chinese and British sex-containing adverts. However, in contrast with Chinese adverts, the British sample showed greater pluralism in ethnicities, especially in the female characters.
Body Type of Characters in Chinese and British Adverts

In the both Chinese and British samples, athletic was the most popular body type for male models. Thin was the most prevalent body type for females. Comparing to Chinese sample, the British sample showed slightly wider body type range in female models. In general, there was no significant difference in the body type of male and female characters in Chinese and British television sex-containing adverts. The finding of current study was consistent with the Lin’s study which found that most of the female models appear to be slender than male models in television adverts.

According to self-objectification theory mentioned before, people are likely to view themselves as an object and judge their bodies based on external cultural physique standards. Sexual advertisements which contain plentiful idealized body images have become among the primary source of these physique standards. The thin body type of the female models in Chinese and British adverts might cause the female audience to feel low self-esteem after watching the commercials, and might even lead to eating disorders.

Furthermore, the adverts in both countries being full of attractive, athletic men may increase male audiences’ awareness of, and concerns about, their own bodies and thus increase body dissatisfaction among men.

The findings indicate that Chinese sex-containing television advertising was more gender stereotyped than British sex-containing television advertising. Chinese sex-containing television advertising tended to feature women in decorative roles and without any function compared to its British counterpart. The reasons for this could be drawn from the cultural differences and historical factors of Chinese and British society.

Types of Products Associated with Sex in TV Ads in Britain and China
The analysis continued by examining whether sexual themes were more likely to occur in adverts associated with specific product ranges than in others. It provides answer for RQ5. ‘What kinds of products is sex most often associated with in TV advertisements in Britain?’ and RQ6. ‘What kinds of products is sex most often associated with in TV advertisements in China?’

**Products Most Often Associated with Sex in China**

The finding indicates about 74.2% of the sex-containing advertisements on Chinese television networks were coded under four product categories ‘beauty and personal care products’, ‘domestic’, ‘bedding’ and ‘underwear’. However, CCTV1 and CCTV2 did not contain any sex-containing commercial for underwear, all 14 underwear commercials were from WTV. Thus, in the Chinese national sample, ‘beauty and personal care products’ ‘domestic’ and ‘bedding’ product categories were predominant in respect of the use of sexual themes in their advertising. The finding shows that the ‘beauty and personal care’ category dominated the advertised product categories which contained sexual content appearing on Chinese television, with 27 advertisements (29%) using sexual appeals to promote personal and beauty care products.

**Products Most Often Associated with Sex in Britain**

The finding shows that ‘beauty and personal care’ product was the dominate product category containing sexual content advertised on British television. 109 (38.5%) commercials were coded under this category. The second most popular products using sex content in British television were ‘food and beverages’ comprised 44 (15.5%) in total adverts. More than half of British commercials were coded under these two categories. The advertisements for CD/music, motoring and movies and electronic also took certain proportion in total sex adverts.
The findings show ‘beauty and personal care’ product occupied over one quarter in both the Chinese and British sample. It was quite common that use sexual appeals to sell beauty and personal care products in both countries. Beauty and personal care products could be easily associated with sexual content and so increase the recall and acceptance among audiences (Tinkham & Reid; 1988; Gunter; 2002; Cheng, 2002). Food and beverage products also took certain proportion in both Chinese and British sex-containing adverts.

**TV Ads Contravening Codes of Practice in Britain and China**

**Britain**

The findings revealed that all sexual initiators and recipients were coded over 20 years old, so no sexual acts happened between adults and young person. There were no products coded under unacceptable products or services, such as drugs, gambling which are banned.

The findings indicated that there were 26 advertisements including 22 electronic adverts and four service commercials in the British sample are considered to breach the ASA codes that claimed ‘In particular, people should not be portrayed in a manner which uses sexual appeal simply to draw attention to an unrelated product.’ It provides an answer for RQ7: ‘Is there any evidence of sex in TV advertisements that contravenes codes of practice in Britain?’

**China**

In the Chinese sample, there were five sexually transmitted disease/treatment advertisements and 14 underwear commercials are considered to breach the codes issued by SARFT that clearly claimed that sexual related products and female underwear were banned in Chinese television adverts. All of these 19 advertisements were from WTV. One reason for this finding could be that the Chinese regularity authorities fail to exert the same control over services based further away from Beijing. Another explanation is that WTV
carries a lot of programme-length commercials which increased the average length of its advertisements. The finding provides an answer of RQ 8: ‘Is there any evidence of sex in TV advertisements that contravenes codes of practice in China?’

**TV Ads at Risk of Causing Public Offence in Britain and China**

**Britain**

The findings of this study show that in the British sample there was no advertisement promote or contain homosexuality which risks of arousing public offence in British society. All the nudity in British advertising was likely to be acceptable to audience. In addition, there were 22 electronic 19 domestic and four services adverts might hard to be accepted by audience as a result of lacking product congruency.

**China**

The findings showed that there were five advertisements for sexually-transmitted diseases and treatment and 14 advertisements for female underwear in WTV might cause public offence in Chinese society. There were 19 advertisements in the Chinese sample containing imagery of models wearing underwear might offend the public and be hard for the audience to accept. In addition 19 domestic commercials in the Chinese sample that did not seem to have clear congruency with sexual content might hard to increase the recall and be accepted by audience. The findings provide an answer for RQ 10; ‘Is there any evidence of sexual representations in TV advertisements that might cause public offence in China?’

**Key Differences and Similarities in the Use of Sex in TV Ads in Britain and China**

The various cultural backgrounds, historical elements and regulation factors in British and Chinese society contributed to the differences in use of sex in British and Chinese television
advertising. There are three key differences in the use of sex in television advertising in Britain and China. It provides the answer for RQ 11. ‘What are the key differences in the use of sex in TV advertising in Britain and China?’

Firstly, Chinese television advertising represented less sex and nudity compare to British television advertising. The author believes the reason for these differences could be understood as being due to the cultural, historical and regulatory differences between the Chinese and British societies.

Advertising has been identified as a social mirror that reflects the cultural values of the specific society (Marchand, 1986). For thousands of years in China, Confucianism was the state religion and so had a great impact on both individuals and society as a whole. In particular, new Confucianism which strictly restricted the contact between opposite sexes was employed by Chinese leaders as a tool of ideological control that influenced Chinese society for thousands of years. ‘Conservatism’ as another main ideology in Chinese society contributes to maintain the traditional values which largely lead by Confucianism. Consequently, in general, cultural values of Confucianism make Chinese society more conservative than British society. The Christian religion in Britain also holds a conservative attitude towards sexuality, and in the 1960s the church complained about sex on television. However, since the 1960s, Britain’s dominant religious culture has been destroyed and the impacts of Christian values are largely declining in British society (Brown, 2009). Normally, the cultural values in Chinese society are identified as being more conservative with regard to sexuality, in comparison to British society. As social reflections, the different representations of sex in advertising reveal these cultural differences in China and Britain.

The reason why Chinese advertising contained fewer sexual activities could also be due to historical aspects. Since 1880, there have been enormous changes in sexual attitudes
and behaviour in British society (Mason, 1995; Hall, 2000; Williams, 2002). The high pressure of the restriction of sexuality was largely released at the end of the Victorian era. In the 1960s, British society experienced sexual liberation, and, since then, the traditional concerns of sexuality have changed significantly. Sexual topics previously considered unsuitable for discussion were represented more explicitly in the media. While the sexual liberation movement was sweeping Western countries, China was living under Mao’s decades, which focused on ideological control. During that period, Chinese society was very conservative.

The later Cultural Revolution movement furthered the ideology control in Chinese society and meant sex-related issues and topics were strictly prohibited in the public sphere and considered as an ‘outcome of capitalism’ that would harm the stability of the whole society. Since the 1980s, as China has begun to open more to the outside world, Chinese society has begun to change its attitudes towards sexuality. It has been permitted to publish sexual content to some extent since then. Compared to Chinese society, Britain society has experienced a much longer period of sexual freedom, and this might be another reason that British television advertising contains more sexual content than Chinese television advertising.

Moreover, the codes of standards of British television advertising and Chinese television advertising also influence the amount and level of the representation of sex. The British television and advertising codes show a more tolerant attitude towards sexual content and nudity, and so appropriate nudity is allowed to appear on screen. Some highly sexual acts which would not cause public offence are allowed to be shown after 9 pm. However, the Chinese censorship authority holds a much stricter attitude with regard to sex issues. Any advertising depicting or implying sexual activities is not allowed. The sexual
activities under discussion here only include intensive sexual behaviours happening between two characters, such as kissing on mouth, sexual touching/caring, kissing on body, sexual intercourse strongly implied, and sexual intercourse depicted. Slight physical flirting in advertising is not included. This stricter censorship is another reason for less representation of sexual content in Chinese television advertising in contrast with British television advertising.

Secondly, the sexual content was more variously represented in British television advertising compare to Chinese counterparts. These differences might be attributed to the fact that the advertising industry is generally more sophisticated in Britain than in China. Sexual appeals as means to promote products and grab consumer’s attention are used more commonly and diversely in British adverts than in Chinese adverts.

The British television advertising industry began in 1955 and over the last five decades, British television advertising has experienced significant developments. During the 1960s, the advertising industry in Western countries experienced a creative revolution in which emphasis was put on the creativity of ideas (Reichert, 2003). Since then, instead of simply featuring scantily-clad women and sexual intimacy, sexual content in advertising has had various representations.

The Chinese television advertising industry, on the other hand, only started at the end of the 1980s. It is therefore about 30 years behind the British television advertising industry and so, obviously, the British television advertising industry is much more sophisticated than its Chinese counterpart. This might be the reason that the representation of sex is more varied in British television advertising compared with Chinese television advertising. In addition, relatively relaxed censorship of television advertising in Britain also contributes to the greater variety of representations of sexual content in British advertising.
Thirdly, Chinese sex-containing television advertising was more gender stereotyped than British sex-containing advertising. The influence of religion on women's gender role attitudes is well documented in many social science studies (Bartkowski, 1999; Bartkowski & Read, 2003; Hardacre, 1997; Heaton & Cornwall, 1989; Lehrer, 1995; Mosher et al., 1992). According to these previous studies, women who belong to and participate in conservative denominations are typically more traditional in their gender role orientations than those with weaker religious ties (Read, 2003).

Influenced by Confucianism, which endorses patriarchy, places women at the lower end of the patriarchal family, and believes that the men and women have different social assignments, women traditionally had a subordinate role compared to men in Chinese society. The traditional Chinese values, led by Confucianism, claimed that women are naturally assigned to the inner, which means the private and domestic sphere, while men are assigned to the outer, which means the public and social sphere (Chan, 2000). The traditional cultural values and religious impacts may contribute in part to the representation of stereotypical women’s roles in Chinese sexual oriented advertising. Compared to Chinese society; British society has weaker religious ties. Along with the decline of Christianity in British society (Brown, 2009), the traditional Christian values that state a wife should submit to her husband has also lost power in British society.

Historical factors also contribute to the differences in gender role portrayals in Chinese and British television advertising. However, for a long time in British society, it had been considered that women should submit to men, and that women were weaker and inferior to men. However, the World Wars largely improved women’s roles in British society by opening up a wider range of working opportunities for females, and women became accustomed to their new-found economic independence.
After World War Two, the feminist movement swept Britain and in the 1960s and 1970s women began to demand the same pay as men, equal rights in law and the freedom to plan their families. The women’s role in British society was also largely improved through the feminist movement. For a long time, Chinese women remained of lesser status. However, after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, Chinese Communist Party rules successfully laid the basis for women’s liberation by facilitating women’s participation in the social labour force.

Mao’s early decades and the later Cultural Revolution period, imposed an artificial neutralization of gender differences and successfully increased women’s participation in social and political life. Women began to be treated with equality to men in the social labour force. However, the essential femininity of women was denied and females were deprived of their rights to present their feminine characters.

This gender neutralization to some extent improved the female’s status in Chinese society, but for most purposes it contributed to ideology control and Chinese women did not get complete liberalization. While the feminist movements in the 1960s influenced most Western countries around the world, China was following introverted policies and so the worldwide feminist liberalization of the 1960s and 1970s did not have a large impact on Chinese society. After the Cultural Revolution, traditional values returned and gender issues were brought back into Chinese society.

The beginning of market reform facilitated a renewed expression of natural gender differences. Although, women’s role were improving along with China’s openness after 1980s, due to thousands’ of years of despotism in Chinese society, traditional values led by Confucianism still have an impact on Chinese society in many aspects. Women have still not attained equal access to education, material prosperity and work opportunities as men.
Traditional cultural and religious values enhance the gender inequity in Chinese society. Compared to British society, the gender imbalance in Chinese society is more obvious, this difference is reflected in the gender role portrayals in sex-containing television advertising in these two countries.

Meanwhile, the findings highlighted that there were several similarities in the use of sex in British and Chinese television advertising.

Firstly, the findings indicated that in both Chinese and British television networks, the commercials which appear on screen after 9 pm are substantially more sexual than before 9 pm. The majority of sexual content in Chinese and British television advertising was transmitted after family viewing hours. For Britain, this finding indicates that advertisers and broadcasters have adopted practices that would receive the support of viewers who have been found to support restrictions on the use of sexually-themed promotions, particularly post-9 pm (ITC, 1998).

Secondly, the findings showed that in both Chinese and British television advertising, physical flirting was the most common representation of sexual content. The most common setting for sexual activities in television advertising in both China and Britain was the bedroom.

Thirdly, the findings revealed that female voice-overs were used more during the sex acts in television advertising in both countries compared with male voice-overs. The majority of voice-overs that appeared in Chinese and British samples did not contain sexual meanings.
Fourthly, the findings showed that in both China and Britain, there were no sex acts related to homosexuality. In both Chinese and British mainstream television advertising, there was a strict boundary against using homosexual content.

Fifthly, although Chinese advertisements were more stereotyped than their British counterparts, in general, there was a considerable degree of gender stereotyping in sex-containing advertisements in both countries. In particular, most of the female models appeared to be young and slender while male models were older and heavier; female models were used more to promote beauty and personal care products than male models.

Finally, in both Britain and China, beauty and personal care products and domestic products were most frequently associated with the use of sexual themes. Apart from these findings, however, sexual themes were often linked to different product ranges in televised advertising in each country. The association of sexual themes with beauty and personal care products confirms earlier findings (Tinkham & Reid, 1988; Gunter, 2002; Cheng, 2002).

**Contribution to Knowledge**

This study explored and described the representation of sex in television advertising in a number of previous under-explored contexts. This work made contributions to academic research on cross-national comparison of sex in television advertising in China and Britain. It provides useful insights into the understanding of similarities and differences of sex in television advertising existing in these two countries.

Firstly, this study filled the existing gap in Chinese research into sex in advertising. As mentioned before, British regulators (the Independent Television Commission, the Broadcasting Standards Commission, and the Radio Authority) carried out a number of
studies into the areas of sexual content in television. Meanwhile, research in this field in China has been very rare. The current research explored issues of sex in Chinese television advertising which had not been investigated previously, including the amount and level of sexual content, the type and manner of sexual representations and gender portrayals in sexual-oriented television advertising in China. For the first time, this study examined all types of sexual content, whether depicted in pictorial or verbal form, also including double entendre sexual references in Chinese television commercials. The findings of this research will contribute to future longitudinal studies to measure the changes of level and representations of sex in Chinese television advertising over time.

Secondly, this study first compared sexual representations in Chinese and British television advertising. It expanded on studies that have concentrated on a single national environment. A number of cross-national comparison studies of sexual content in advertising have been carried out before. However, the comparison has never been made between China and Britain. The findings of this research highlighted the similarities and differences that existed in sexual representations in television advertising in these two countries. As previously mentioned, this thesis presents insights into the significant differences in social systems and cultural values in these two countries that have shaped the representation of sex in television advertising. The findings showed that British television advertising contained more sexual content than its Chinese counterparts. It could be a result of the fact that British society was more open-minded about sexual issues. However, Confucianism, conservatism and historical factors make Chinese society more conservative than British society. Meanwhile, the traditional cultural values and historical impacts which enhance the gender inequality in Chinese society contributed in part to the representation of stereotypical women’s roles in Chinese sexual oriented advertising. Compared with
British television advertising, Chinese television advertising was more gender stereotyped. In this respect, this research supported existing theories that suggest that advertising is a social mirror and that the content of advertising is somehow reflected in the social trends and cultural values of a society (Marchand, 1986). This work generated conceptual contributions to the understanding of how sexual stimuli are represented differently by different cultural backgrounds. It also contributed to the understanding of how gender stereotyping varies by cultural context.

Thirdly, this study integrated previous media sex research and gender stereotyping studies. In previous research, these two types of studies were in separate systems which were interwoven at many points. Both types of studies claimed that the media tended to portray women more as sexual objects than men. Media sex research focuses on the amount and representations of sexual content in specific media outlets, while gender stereotyping research examined how men and women were portrayed in the media. This study integrated these two different types of research to examine how much sexual content was contained in Chinese and British television advertising and how men and women were portrayed in television advertising when they were involved in sexual acts. Integrating gender stereotyping research and media sex studies which were separate, however, was inextricably linked. This contributed to a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the representation of sex in television advertising.

Finally, a key contribution of this study is that this research draws upon previous research into public opinion about sexual content in television commercials to design a coding frame for content analysis. Previous audience research provides clues about the specific audience attitudes and responses of particular content or format features in advertisements and these features can be included in coding frames for content analysis.
purposes. This study used these clues from previous audience research to design a coding frame which could infer the audiences' responses which might occur. In doing so, this study expanded on the existing research by generating content coding frames more powerful in terms of their ability to identify the presence of advertising attributes that have been empirically verified as having effects upon audiences.

**Implications**

This thesis has contributed to regulators, television channels, advertisers, and common audiences in China and Britain.

Firstly, British and Chinese television advertising regulators profited from this research. The responsibilities for the advertising regulators are writing the advertising codes and implanting the rulings of the advertising industry. The findings of this study informed Chinese and British television advertising regulators exactly how much and how specific representations of sex have been shown in Chinese and British television advertising. It helps regulators to frame their guidelines and codes for sexual content in television advertising. The findings of this research showed that in both Chinese and British samples, there were some advertisements that breached the advertising codes. It could help both the Chinese and British advertising regulators to advise the responsible parties about the necessary changes to be made. Meanwhile, the findings of this research also indicate that Chinese and British regulators might need to step up efforts to implement the advertising codes and severely punish those who breach the codes and regulations. In the Chinese sample, all advertising breaching the codes was to be shown on WTV. This indicates that the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) in China must figure out a better way to control city-level channels as well as country-level channels. The findings of this study show that in the British sample there were 19 domestic adverts that did not breach
any codes. However, it might be hard to be accepted by the audience as a result of lacking product congruency. In the Chinese sample, there were 19 advertisements containing imagery of models wearing underwear and 19 domestic commercials that did not seem to have clear congruency with sexual content. Those commercials did not breach Chinese advertising codes. However, they might be hard to be accepted by Chinese audiences. The findings of this research showed that the existing advertising legislations in China and Britain might not be adequate enough. Those regulators responsible for regulating codes might need to work on more detailed and practicable guidelines that are implemented to ensure that appropriate standards for television advertising are maintained to avoid offending public taste.

Secondly, the findings of this research contributed to the television channels in China and Britain. The findings tell television channels whether or not specific sexual content broadcast in television advertising breached codes or aroused public offence. It helps channels to better manage television advertising which contained sexual content as regards appropriate time and manners. For example, the findings showed that audiences could be more tolerant of advertising containing sexual content broadcast after 9 pm. Television channels could adjust the broadcasting time of commercials containing sexual content to reduce the risk of causing offence or harm to the public.

Thirdly, advertisers targeting Chinese audiences, in particular, should benefit from the findings reported in this study. It inferred the possible audience attitude and response to the specific type of sexual content in Chinese television advertising based on the previous audience research. It indicated what kind of sexual content in television advertisements in China might cause public offence. Recognizing the audiences' attitude and acceptance of specific sexual content in television advertising might increase the effectiveness of using sex
appeal in television in Chinese society. The findings provide evidence that the use of sex appears to be more selective in advertising in China than in Britain. While it is used as a sales technique in both markets, there may be greater sensitivity in China to cultural values-related tolerances for use of sexual themes in advertising.

Fourthly, general audiences also could benefit from this study. The findings also reveal the detailed distributions of sexual content in television advertising in Britain and China. Audiences who hold negative attitudes on sexual content on television or want to avoid embarrassment caused by watching sexual content in television with family or friends could benefit from these findings. It would also be interesting to investigate the relationship between the characters in sexual oriented television advertising.

**Limitations**

This study investigated several issues related to sexual content in Chinese and British television advertising including the level and amount of sex, the representations of sex and the gender role portrayals in the sexual oriented television advertising.

It should be noted that the present study contains methodological limitations. Due to the time and financial constraints, this researcher had to limit this investigation to the adverts broadcasted during the 6pm to 11pm time period in five Chinese and British television channels during a two week period. The representations of sex are expected to vary according to the time and channels. Although this is a commonly accepted sampling practice for a content analysis study, the sample did not reflect either cumulative data or seasonal variability in television advertising.

Secondly, obtaining the Chinese literature needed for this study was a major problem. Compared to the British legacy regulators of the 1990s and early 2000s (Independent Television Commission, Broadcasting Standards Commission and the Radio Authority) which
had carried out a number of studies into the areas of sexual content on television and in advertisements, the study of sex-containing media in China has been rare. This study used the previous audience research to infer the effect and audience response in Chinese society. The previous audience research in China is very limited. The main previous audience research employed in this study focused on the Chinese audience attitude to sex in advertising that was conducted in Hong Kong. There might be some differences in the public opinion about the sexual content in advertising between Hong Kong and mainland China.

Thirdly, the coding scheme used in this study considered only substantial nudity. The application of a relatively strict scheme left out the suggestive dress code. Thus women who wore suggestive or revealing clothes could not be coded under nudity, whereas some scholars measured the revealing dress code in advertising (Lin, 1998, Reichert, 2003b).

Fourthly, a restriction of the comparison of television commercials between two countries is the fact that very different types of products were advertised. It might influence the findings of this research.

**Future Research**

This study provided an analysis of sex in television advertising in China and Britain. Several issues related to Chinese and British television advertising need to be explored. Researchers need to measure the relationship between characters in sex-containing television advertising in both countries. Some studies on sex in television measured the relationship between characters to examine whether the people who exhibited sexual behaviours have established close interpersonal relationships (Kunkel, 1996). It would also be interesting to investigate the relationship between the characters in sexual oriented television advertising.
Future research needs to be geared towards a multi-platform and multi-generic media environment, including online genres. It would be interesting to examine the sexual appeals and gender roles depicted in Chinese and British print and online advertising. It is also recommended to investigate the cross-national comparison of sex in Chinese and British print and online advertisements. Comparative research also could be carried out to investigate the sexual content in Chinese and British soaps or video games.

Moreover, future research could be launched to examine sexual content in television or advertising which targets specific audiences such as young people.
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Appendix I
Coding Scheme

1. Number of adverts
2. Length of adverts
3. Channel of adverts
   (1) Channel 4; (2) ITV 1; (3) CCTV 1; (4) CCTV 4; (5) WTV.
4. Time of day
   (1) Before 9pm.; (2) After 9pm.
5. The advertised product categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beauty and personal-care products</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwear</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedding</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD/Music</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Beverage</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motoring</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services (e.g. financial, banking and insurance)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual disease treatment/service</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Duration of sexual content (in seconds)
7. Number of sexual acts
8. Type of sexual acts
   (1) Physical flirting; (2) Implied sex with products; (3) Sexual undressing/bating; (4) Kissing on mouth; (5) Sexual touching/caressing; (6) Sexual intercourse implied; (7) Sexuality intercourse depicted; (8) Sex talk implied; (9) Sex talk detailed; (10) Other.
9. Nudity
(1) No nudity; (2) Partial nudity (wearing underwear); (3) Partial nudity (topless-front); (4) Nude (behind/side); (5) Nude (frontal).

10. Setting
(1) Bedroom; (2) Bathroom; (3) Living room; (4) Occupational setting; (5) Leisure (including bar, restaurant); (6) Fantasy; (7) Other (including outdoor) and (8) undetermined.

11. Gender of Initiator
(1) Male; (2) Female; (3) Undetermined (4) No sexual initiator.

12. Age of Initiator
(1) Child (up to 12); (2) Teenager (13-19); (3) Young adult (20-35); (4) Middle aged adult (36-65); (5) Over 65; (6) Undetermined; (7) no sexual initiator.

13. Occupation role of initiator
(1) Professional (such as doctor, lawyer, and office workers); (2) Celebrity; (3) House chores, including parent, partner/spouse and home-maker; (4) Decorative role without other functional occupation; (5) Other; (6) No sexual initiator.

14. Ethnicity of initiator
(1) White; (2) Black; (3) Asian; (4) Other; (5) No sexual initiator.

15. Body type of Initiator
(1) Thin; (2) Average; (3) Overweight; and (4) No sexual initiator.

16. Gender of Recipient
(1) Male; (2) Female; (3) Undetermined (4) No sexual recipient.

17. Age of Initiator
(1) Child (up to 12); (2) Teenager (13-19); (3) Young adult (20-35); (4) Middle aged adult (36-65); (5) Over 65; (6) Undetermined; (7) no sexual recipient.

18. Occupation role of Recipient
(1) Professional (such as doctor, lawyer, and office workers); (2) Celebrity; (3) House chores, including parent, partner/spouse and home-maker; (4) Decorative role without other functional occupation; (5) Other; (6) No sexual recipient.

19. Ethnicity of recipient

(1) White; (2) Black; (3) Asian; (4) Other; (5) No sexual recipient.

20. Body type of Initiator

(1) Thin; (2) Average; (3) Overweight; and (4) No sexual recipient.

21. Verbal References

(1) Mention the word ‘sex’/comment about sex directly, which refers to the voice-over containing the word ‘sex’ or comment directly on sexual activities;
(2) Allude to sex by means of double entendre, which means the voice-over implied sexual meanings, such as using the words ‘seduce’ and ‘attractive’ to try to arouse people’s sexual associations;
(3) Other;
(4) Did not convey sexual meanings.

22. Double entendre

(1) Double entendre in visual references; (2) Double entendre in verbal references, (3) Others; (4) No double entendre.

23. Music

(1) Light music; (2) Hip-hop; (3) Pop; (4) Other; (5) No music.

24. Camera/lighting technique

(1) Particular technique, including close shot, up/down, side angles, etc.; (2) No particular technique.

25. Humour
(1) Verbal, (2) Visual, (3) Both; (4) Undetermined; (5) No humour.

26. Homosexuality

(1) Sexual acts referencing homosexuality; (2) Product types related to homosexuality; (3) No homosexuality.
Appendix II
Coding Protocol

1. Number of adverts
This category was used to identify the number of adverts containing sexual content that appeared on television. For example, the first recorded advertising found to contain sexual content was coded as 1; the second was identified as 2; and so on.

2. Length of adverts
This category was added to the coding scheme to code the length of sex-containing adverts in seconds. For example, if the period of a sexual advert was 20 seconds, it would be coded as 20.

3. Channel of adverts
This category was added to the coding scheme to find out where the sexual adverts come from. Adverts from Chinese and British television were recorded from 5 channels, the sub-categories used were: (1) Channel 4; (2) ITV 1; (3) CCTV 1; (4) CCTV 4; (5) WTV.

4. Time of day
This category was used to identify the airing time of adverts in both countries. All adverts were recorded from 6pm to 11 pm in both countries. 9pm was regarded as the important time boundary, two sub-categories were used: (1) Before 9pm.; (2) After 9pm

5. The advertised product categories
This category identified which product categories were featured in both Chinese and British television commercials. This analysis was designed to show that the use of sex varies by product category.
6. Duration of sexual content (in seconds)

This category was added to the coding scheme to code the duration of sexual content in seconds. The duration of scenes containing sex-related content within an advertisement would be coded. For example, an advertisement containing a five seconds scene featuring sexual appeal, then the duration of sexual content would be coded as 5.

7. Number of sexual acts

Based on the measurement framework, the number of sexual acts depends on how many sexual interactions are portrayed in each advert. For example, kissing and sex talk between characters within the same scene were coded as two sexual acts. Kissing and touching between characters within the same scene were coded as two sexual acts. Several kisses between two characters in the same scene were coded as one sexual act, while two kisses in different scenes were coded as two sexual acts. It is important to keep in mind, the measurement unit of sexual interaction. The number of sexual acts observed inevitably understated the actual amount of many activities that are examined. For example, some study may think of a kiss as a distinct behaviour, but in this coding scheme 10 kisses between two characters that occur within a single interaction would be counted as one sexual act. As mentioned before, when sexual acts were woven into adverts as individual behaviour, the numbers of sexual interactions between the model and the audience would be counted. For example, the model making eye contact with an audience several times in the same scene were coded as
one sexual interaction with reference to physical flirting. However, if the eye contacts were portrayed in two different scenes, they would be counted as two sexual interactions.

8. Type of sexual acts

The sexual act is a central variable in analyses of sexual media content. In this study, sexual act is analysed according to its explicitness and arrayed according to the levels of sexual intimacy. The lower threshold for sexual content measured in this study was physical flirting, which refers to a behavioural action such as a woman licking her lips provocatively while gazing intently at a man in a bar; implied sex with products, such as a women eating ice-cream suggestively, and sexual undressing. Other behaviour categories included actual sexual activities happening between characters, such as kissing on the mouth, sexual touching/caring, kissing on the body, sexual undressing, sexual intercourse strongly implied, and sexual intercourse depicted. The sexual acts in this study also include verbal references to sex: sex talks (implied) and sex talks (depicted).

The sub-categories were as following: (1) Physical flirting; (2) Implied sex with products; (3) Sexual undressing/bating; (4) Kissing on mouth; (5) Sexual touching/caressing; (6) Sexual intercourse implied; (7) Sexuality intercourse depicted; (8) Sex talk implied; (9) Sex talk detailed; (10) Other.

9. Nudity

The sub-categories of nudity were drawn from the audience opinion research conducted by ITC (1995). It was coded for degrees of explicitness: (1) No nudity; (2) Partial nudity (wearing underwear), which refers to a model wearing underwear (such as a woman in bikini, a man in shorts), but also included a female model naked from the waist up and using a pose or her hands to cover her breasts; (3) Partial nudity (topless-front), which is a female model naked from the waist up from a front view and with the nipples exposed; (4) Nude
(behind/side), which is the model showing a full nude from behind or from a side view, it refers to models only using hands and pose to cover sexual organs; and (5) Nude (frontal), which is the most extreme form of images of nudity, meaning the model is presented from the front and with the sexual organs exposed.

10. Setting
This category lists 9 sub-categories to determine where exactly the sexual acts and nudity were taking place. The options are (1) Bedroom; (2) Bathroom; (3) Living room; (4) Occupational setting; (5) Leisure (including bar, restaurant); (6) Fantasy ; (7) Other (including outdoor) and (8) undetermined.

11. Gender
The ‘gender’ category is one of the key categories in gender role studies. All researchers in this area have included this category in their coding schemes. The genders were categorized as (1) Male; (2) Female; (3) Undetermined (4) No sexual initiator (recipient).

12. Age
Most researchers have used the age category in their schemes to determine whether sexual acts were triggered by younger or older actors on screen. Coders estimated the age groups of actors appearing in the adverts: (1) Child (up to 12); (2) Teenager (13-19); (3) Young adult (20-35); (4) Middle aged adult (36-65); (5) Over 65; (6) Undetermined; (7) no sexual initiator (recipient).

13. Occupation role
The actors involved in sexual acts in adverts were classified according to the role they appeared to play in everyday life. The categories were: (1) Professional (such as doctor or lawyer); (2) Celebrity; (3) House chores, including parent, partner/spouse and home-maker;
(4) Decorative role without other functional occupation; (5) Other; (6) No sexual initiator (recipient).

14. Ethnicity

The ethnicity category was added to measure the relationship between the ethnicity of models and sexual acts on screen. This category was also created to compare the number of native and foreign actors appearing in adverts which contained sexual content in China and Britain. The sub-categories were: (1) White; (2) Black; (3) Asian; (4) Other; (5) No sexual initiator (recipient).

15. Body type

The body type of the character was appraised on a 3-point scale physically depicting both male and female model types from (1) Thin; (2) Average; (3) Overweight; and (4) No sexual initiator (recipient) (modified from Signorelli et al., 1994). Because this study investigated the body type of male models as well as female models, the sub-category athletic was added instead of average when examining male models.

16. Verbal References

Verbal references refer to the voice-over containing sexual meanings. This category was used to examine whether voice-overs used in adverts contained sexual meanings and, if so, the type of sexual meanings. The sub-categories were: (1) Mention the word ‘sex’/comment about sex directly, which refers to the voice-over containing the word ‘sex’ or comment directly on sexual activities; (2) Allude to sex by means of double entendre, which means the voice-over implied sexual meanings, such as using the words ‘seduce’ and ‘attractive’ to try to arouse people’s sexual associations; (3) Other; (4) Did not convey sexual meanings.

17. Double entendre
Double entendre is about investigating images and words that subtly refer to sex or trigger sexual thoughts by means of double entendre. This category was coded as: (1) Double entendre in visual references, such as the imagery of a banana used in condom advertising; (2) Double entendre in verbal references, for example, in a male sexual health care products advertising a wife suggestively said her husband felt ‘good’ and she felt ‘good’ too; (3) Others; (4) No double entendre.

18. Music

This analysis was added to figure out whether there was suggestive background music used during sexual acts, and what kind of music was employed. The sub-categories were as follows: (1) Light music; (2) Hip-hop; (3) Pop; (4) Other; (5) No music.

19. Camera/lighting technique

This category was used to determine whether particular camera/lighting techniques were used to enhance or contribute to sexual meaning during sexual acts and, if so, what kinds of camera techniques were used. The sub-categories were as follows: (1) Particular technique, including close shot, up/down, side angles, etc.; (2) No particular technique.

20. Humour

This analysis was added to investigate the ‘context’ of sexual acts in advertising. This was chosen to determine whether the situation during the sexual acts were humorous or serious. There were four sub-categories: (1) Verbal, the sex talk between characters seemed intended to be humorous; (2) Visual, the sexual behaviour of the actors was portrayed in a humorous fashion; (3) Both; (4) Undetermined; (5) No humour.

21. Homosexuality

This analysis was added to determine whether adverts and products were related to homosexuality. The sub-categories were: (1) Sexual acts referencing homosexuality; (2)
Product types related to homosexuality, such as adverts for homosexual magazines and services; (3) No homosexuality.
Appendix III

Examples

British sample

In the British sample there was a laptop advertisement that featured implied sex talk between two female office workers to sell Acer laptops. The advertisement used intimate conversation between women to insinuate sexual activities by creating a wonderful male sexual partner, such as ‘it moved fast’, and ‘it was a very good size’. This advertisement for an Acer laptop was repeatedly broadcast on Channel 4 during the sample collection time.

1. Number of adverts

This ad was the two hundred seventy fourth recorded advertising found to contain sexual content. It was identified as 274.

2. Length of adverts

The period of this ad was 51 seconds. It was coded as 51.

3. Channel of adverts

adverts from Chinese and British television were recorded from 5 channels, the sub-categories used were: (1) Channel 4; (2) ITV 1; (3) CCTV 1; (4) CCTV 4; (5) WTV. This ad was recorded from Channel 4. It was coded as 1 (Channel 4).

4. Time of day

There were two sub-categories were used: (1) Before 9pm.; (2) After 9pm. This ad was broadcasted after 9pm. It was coded as 2 (After 9pm).

5. The advertised product categories
The sub-categories are as following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beauty and personal-care products</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwear</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedding</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD/Music</td>
<td>5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Beverage</td>
<td>7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Motoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services (e.g. financial, banking and insurance)</td>
<td>9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Travel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Sexual disease treatment/service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Movies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Electronic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This ad used to promote laptop. It was coded as 13 (Electronic).

6. Duration of sexual content (in seconds)

This ad containing a ten seconds scene featuring sexual talk, then the duration of sexual content was coded as 10.

7. Number of sexual acts

In this ad, several sexual talks between same characters happened in two different scenes. The number of sexual acts was coded as 2.

8. Type of sexual acts

The sub-categories were as following: (1) physical flirting; (2) implied sex with products; (3) sexual undressing/bathing; (4) Kissing on the mouth; (5) sexual touching/caressing; (6) sexual intercourse implied; (7) sexuality intercourse depicted; (8) sex talk implied; (9) sex talk detailed; (10) other.

The sexual acts in this ad were all sex talks (implied). It was coded as 8.

9. Nudity

This attribution was coded for degrees of explicitness: (1) No nudity; (2) Partial nudity (wearing underwear), which refers to a model wearing underwear (such as a woman in bikini, a man in shorts), but also included a female model naked from the waist up and using
a pose or her hands to cover her breasts; (3) Partial nudity (topless-front), which is a female model naked from the waist up from a front view and with the nipples exposed; (4) Nude (behind/side), which is the model showing a full nude from behind or from a side view, it refers to models only using hands and pose to cover sexual organs; and (5) Nude (frontal), which is the most extreme form of nude images, meaning the model is presented from the front and with the sexual organs exposed.

In this ad, models were in business suits without exposing flesh. It was coded as 1 (No nudity).

10. Setting
This category lists 9 sub-categories to determine where exactly the sexual acts and nudity were taking place. The options are (1) bedroom; (2) bathroom; (3) living room; (4) occupational setting; (5) leisure (including bar, restaurant); (6) fantasy; (7) other (including outdoor) and (8) undetermined.

In this ad, sexual conversations all took place in an office setting. It was coded as 4 (occupational setting).

11. Gender of Initiator
The genders were categorized as (1) male; (2) female; (3) undetermined (4) no sexual initiator. In this ad, sexual talks were initiated by a female office worker. The female office worker was defined as the sexual initiator. The gender of the initiator was coded as 2 (Female).

12. Age of Initiator
Coders estimated the age groups of actors appearing in the adverts: (1) child (up to 12); (2) teenager (13-19); (3) young adult (20-35); (4) middle aged adult (36-65); (5) over 65; (6) undetermined; (7) no sexual initiator.
In this ad, the estimate for the age of the lady who initiated sexual talks was around 30. It was coded as 3 (young adult 20-35).

13. Occupation role of initiator

The categories were: (1) professional (such as doctor, lawyer, and office workers); (2) celebrity; (3) house chores, including parent, partner/spouse and home-maker; (4) decorative role without other functional occupation; (5) other; (6) no sexual initiator.

In this ad, the sexual initiator was an office worker. It was coded as 1 (Professional).

14. Ethnicity of initiator

The sub-categories were: (1) White; (2) Black; (3) Asian; (4) Other; (5) No sexual initiator.

The ethnicity of sexual initiator in Acer’s ad was white. It was coded as 1 (White).

15. Body type of Initiator

The body type of the character was appraised on a 3-point scale physically depicting both male and female model types from (1) thin; (2) average; (3) overweight; and (4) no sexual initiator.

The body type of sexual initiator in Acer’s ad was thin. It was coded as 1 (Thin).

16. Gender of Recipient

The genders were categorized as (1) male; (2) female; (3) undetermined (4) no sexual recipient. In this ad, sexual talks were received by another female office worker. The female office worker was defined as the sexual recipient. The gender of the recipient was coded as 2 (Female).

17. Age of Initiator

Coders estimated the age groups of actors appearing in the adverts: (1) child (up to 12); (2) teenager (13-19); (3) young adult (20-35); (4) middle aged adult (36-65); (5) over 65; (6) undetermined; (7) no sexual recipient.
In this ad, the estimate for the age of the lady who received sexual talks was around 30. It was coded as 3 (young adult 20-35).

18. Occupation role of Recipient

The categories were: (1) professional (such as doctor, lawyer, and office workers); (2) celebrity; (3) house chores, including parent, partner/spouse and home-maker; (4) decorative role without other functional occupation; (5) other; (6) no sexual recipient.

In this ad, the sexual recipient was an office worker. It was coded as 1 (Professional).

19. Ethnicity of recipient

The sub-categories were: (1) White; (2) Black; (3) Asian; (4) Other; (5) No sexual recipient.

The ethnicity of sexual recipient in Acer’s ad was white. It was coded as 1 (White).

20. Body type of Initiator

The body type of the character was appraised on a 3-point scale physically depicting both male and female model types from (1) thin; (2) average; (3) overweight; and (4) no sexual recipient.

The body type of sexual recipient in Acer’s ad was thin. It was coded as 1 (Thin).

21. Verbal References

The sub-categories were: (1) mention the word ‘sex’/comment about sex directly, which refers to the voice-over containing the word ‘sex’ or comment directly on sexual activities; (2) allude to sex by means of double entendre, which means the voice-over implied sexual meanings, such as using the words ‘seduce’ and ‘attractive’ to try to arouse people’s sexual associations; (3) other; (4) did not convey sexual meanings.

This ad used intimate conversation between women to insinuate sexual activities by creating a wonderful male sexual partner, such as ‘it moved fast’, and ‘it was a very good size’. It was coded as 2 (Allude to sex by means of double entendre).
22. Double entendre

This category was coded as: (1) double entendre in visual references; (2) double entendre in verbal references, (3) others; (4) no double entendre.

This ad alluded to sex through intimate conversation between models. It used the means of double entendre to sex in verbal reference. It was coded as 2 (double entendre in verbal references).

23. Music

The sub-categories were as follows: (1) light music; (2) hip-hop; (3) pop; (4) other; (5) no music.

In this ad, there was no background music used during sexual conversations. It was coded as 5 (No music).

24. Camera/lighting technique

The sub-categories were as follows: (1) particular technique, including close shot, up/down, side angles, etc.; (2) no particular technique.

This ad did not use particular camera/lighting techniques to enhance or contribute to sexual meaning during sexual talks. It was coded as 2 (No particular technique).

25. Humour

There were four sub-categories: (1) verbal, (2) visual, (3) both; (4) undetermined; (5) no humour.

In this ad, the sex talks between characters seemed intended to be humorous. It was coded as 1 (Verbal)

26. Homosexuality
The sub-categories were: (1) sexual acts referencing homosexuality; (2) product types related to homosexuality, such as adverts for homosexual magazines and services; (3) no homosexuality.

This ad was not related to homosexuality. It was coded as 3 (No homosexuality).
**Chinese Sample**

In Chinese sample there was a shower gel advertisement that featured a half naked woman in shower. This shower gel advertisement was repeatedly broadcast on CCTV 1 during the sample collection time.

1. Number of adverts

This ad was the four hundred thirty five recorded advertising found to contain sexual content. It was identified as 435.

2. Length of adverts

The period of this ad was 46 seconds. It was coded as 46.

3. Channel of adverts

Adverts from Chinese and British television were recorded from 5 channels, the sub-categories used were: (1) Channel 4; (2) ITV 1; (3) CCTV 1; (4) CCTV 4; (5) WTV. This ad was recorded from CCTV 1. It was coded as 3.

4. Time of day

There were two sub-categories were used: (1) Before 9pm.; (2) After 9pm. This ad was broadcasted before 9pm. It was coded as 1.

5. The advertised product categories

The sub-categories are as following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Beauty and personal-care products</th>
<th>8. Motoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Fashion</td>
<td>9. Services (e.g. financial, banking and insurance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Underwear</td>
<td>10. Travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. CD/Music</td>
<td>12. Movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Food and Beverage</td>
<td>14. Others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This ad used to promote shower gel. It was coded as 1.

6. Duration of sexual content (in seconds)

This ad containing a five seconds scene featuring half naked woman bathing herself, then the duration of sexual content was coded as 5.

7. Number of sexual acts

In this ad, sexual bathing as sexual acts happened in two different scenes. The number of sexual acts was coded as 2.

8. Type of sexual acts

The sub-categories were as following: (1) Physical flirting; (2)Implied sex with products; (3) Sexual undressing/bathing; (4) Kissing on mouth; (5) Sexual touching/caressing; (6) Sexual intercourse implied; (7) Sexuality intercourse depicted; (8) Sex talk implied; (9) Sex talk detailed; (10) Other.

The sexual acts in this ad were sexual bathing It was coded as 3.

9. Nudity

This attribution was coded for degrees of explicitness: (1) No nudity; (2) Partial nudity (wearing underwear), which refers to a model wearing underwear (such as a woman in bikini, a man in shorts), but also included a female model naked from the waist up and using a pose or her hands to cover her breasts; (3) Partial nudity (topless-front), which is a female model naked from the waist up from a front view and with the nipples exposed; (4) Nude (behind/side), which is the model showing a full nude from behind or from a side view, it refers to models only using hands and pose to cover sexual organs; and (5) Nude (frontal), which is the most extreme form of images of nudity, meaning the model is presented from the front and with the sexual organs exposed.
In this ad, models were half naked from the waist up and using a pose to cover her breasts. It was coded as 2.

10. Setting
This category lists 9 sub-categories to determine where exactly the sexual acts and nudity were taking place. The options are (1) Bedroom; (2) Bathroom; (3) Living room; (4) Occupational setting; (5) Leisure (including bar, restaurant); (6) Fantasy; (7) Other (including outdoor) and (8) undetermined.
In this ad sexual acts were all happened in bathroom setting. It was coded as 2.

11. Gender of Initiator
The genders were categorized as (1) Male; (2) Female; (3) Undetermined (4) No sexual initiator. In this ad, sexual bathing were initiated by female. The gender of initiator was coded as 2 (Female).

12. Age of Initiator
Coders estimated the age groups of actors appearing in the adverts: (1) Child (up to 12); (2) Teenager (13-19); (3) Young adult (20-35); (4) Middle aged adult (36-65); (5) Over 65; (6) Undetermined; (7) no sexual initiator.
In this ad, the estimate for the age of the lady who initiated sexual bathing was around 25. It was coded as 3.

13. Occupation role of initiator
The categories were: (1) Professional (such as doctor, lawyer, and office workers); (2) Celebrity; (3) House chores, including parent, partner/spouse and home-maker; (4) Decorative role without other functional occupation; (5) Other; (6) No sexual initiator.
In this ad, the sexual initiator was featured in decorative role without other functional occupation. It was coded as 4.
14. Ethnicity of initiator
The sub-categories were: (1) White; (2) Black; (3) Asian; (4) Other; (5) No sexual initiator.
The ethnicity of sexual initiator in this ad was Asian. It was coded as 3 (Asian).

15. Body type of Initiator
The body type of the character was appraised on a 3-point scale physically depicting both male and female model types from (1) Thin; (2) Average; (3) Overweight; and (4) No sexual initiator.
The body type of sexual initiator in this shower gel ad was thin. It was coded as 1.

16. Gender of Recipient
The genders were categorized as (1) Male; (2) Female; (3) Undetermined (4) No sexual recipient. In this ad, the sexual acts were lack of sexual recipient. It was coded as 4.

17. Age of Initiator
Coders estimated the age groups of actors appearing in the adverts: (1) Child (up to 12); (2) Teenager (13-19); (3) Young adult (20-35); (4) Middle aged adult (36-65); (5) Over 65; (6) Undetermined; (7) no sexual recipient.
In this ad, the sexual acts were lack of sexual recipient. It was coded as 7.

18. Occupation role of Recipient
The categories were: (1) Professional (such as doctor, lawyer, and office workers); (2) Celebrity; (3) House chores, including parent, partner/spouse and home-maker; (4) Decorative role without other functional occupation; (5) Other; (6) No sexual recipient.
In this ad, the sexual acts were lack of sexual recipient. It was coded as 6.

19. Ethnicity of recipient
The sub-categories were: (1) White; (2) Black; (3) Asian; (4) Other; (5) No sexual recipient.
In this ad, the sexual acts were lack of sexual recipient. It was coded as 5.
20. Body type of Initiator

The body type of the character was appraised on a 3-point scale physically depicting both male and female model types from (1) Thin; (2) Average; (3) Overweight; and (4) No sexual recipient.

In this ad, the sexual acts were lack of sexual recipient. It was coded as 4.

21. Verbal References

The sub-categories were: (1) Mention the word ‘sex’/comment about sex directly, which refers to the voice-over containing the word ‘sex’ or comment directly on sexual activities; (2) Allude to sex by means of double entendre, which means the voice-over implied sexual meanings, such as using the words ‘seduce’ and ‘attractive’ to try to arouse people’s sexual associations; (3) Other; (4) Did not convey sexual meanings.

In this ad, verbal references did not convey any sexual meanings. It was coded as 4.

22. Double entendre

This category was coded as: (1) Double entendre in visual references; (2) Double entendre in verbal references, (3) Others; (4) No double entendre.

This ad did not use double entendre to sex. It was coded as 4.

23. Music

The sub-categories were as follows: (1) Light music; (2) Hip-hop; (3) Pop; (4) Other; (5) No music.

In this ad, light music was used as background music used during sexual acts. It was coded as 1.

24. Camera/lighting technique

The sub-categories were as follows: (1) Particular technique, including close ups, up/down, side angles, etc.; (2) No particular technique.
This ad used close ups to features the female body figure. It was coded as 1.

25. Humour

There were four sub-categories: (1) Verbal, (2) Visual, (3) Both; (4) Undetermined; (5) No humour.

In this ad, sexual acts were appeared in serious context. It was coded as 5.

26. Homosexuality

The sub-categories were: (1) Sexual acts referencing homosexuality; (2) Product types related to homosexuality, such as adverts for homosexual magazines and services; (3) No homosexuality.

This ad was not related to homosexuality. It was coded as 3.