

AALBORG UNIVERSITET

Master thesis

Persuasion in cross culture advertising

- A qualitative study uncovering the success of some Chinese online advertisements for foreign products



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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate why some Chinese online ads for imported organic and natural cream are successful from the ELM's (Elaboration likelihood model) perspective, by studying how the ads used messages to persuade the customers. 4 Chinese ads for bestselling products are selected from the 2 biggest Chinese E-Commerce platforms, and their effectiveness is then tested by the sales of the products and 4 questionnaires for each ad which answered by some potential Chinese customers, who are willing to buy imported cream. Later, after analyzing the message characteristics, it is found that the selected ads contained almost equivalent central arguments and peripheral cues, sometimes more cues than arguments, and such ads are effective under a somewhat high elaboration level. As it is confirmed that the 4 ads are effective, the used of messages are then analyzed in detail by the help of using thematic analysis, in order to find out what qualities of the messages make the ads successful. The messages were first coded piece by piece and then codes are grouped into themes according to the topic of the messages and the ELM theory. At last, the themes were analyzed one by one to answer how the ads used messages in advertising persuasion. It is found that argument-relevant information in the ads focuses on the attribute information of the product. By introducing some skin care knowledge, the contained organic and natural ingredients, the way the ingredients and the product work on skin, the ads proved the product's effects. On the other hand, simple cues contribute also very much on the success of the ads, especially source credibility, consensus information and visual impacts play a great role in the persuasion. It is therefore concluded that arguments and simple cues are both important for generating positive attitude in the Chinese ads.

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1. Introduction

Advertising plays a central role in a marketing communication program (Keller & Kotler, 2006). One of the most important goals of advertising is to highlight the benefits that the advertised product can provide to a user, and to further influence a potential customer to make a positive decision on the purchase of the product (Keller & Kotler, 2006). As O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2004) state that an effective advertising is a persuasive advertising, and although it is not all advertising seek to persuade, but in the competitive world, the winner is most likely to be the one who best persuades consumers. However, sometimes, persuasive messages can also irritate consumers, rather than change their attitudes. Thus, understanding the way messages affect people and the way people process messages becomes important in persuasion. Theories of persuasion are developed in order to demonstrate how people process information and how their attitudes can be changed (Shrum et al., 2012). By applying persuasion theories in advertising field, an advertiser can design a more effective advertisement, which can better persuade the consumers to buy the product. This study would like to make use of the influential persuasion theory, elaboration likelihood model (ELM) to study messages included in some successful Chinese online ads and the way consumers processed the ads, in order to obtain knowledge about how to design an ad on the Chinese E-Commerce market. The study is also relevant to the researcher at work regarding advertisement design for products under the Danish brand Matas Natur on the Chinese E-Commerce market, since the researcher is in charge of a part of the Matas Natur grogram. This research is conducted in cooperation with a Danish company, named Arctic Group, where the researcher works, and most information of the brand, Matas Natur is obtained through the company. Arctic Group is working for another Danish company, Matas for developing, marketing and selling its products into China through E-Commerce channel, and Matas Natur is one of the brands under Matas that the company aims to develop in China.

Arctic Group is a group of companies based in Aalborg, Denmark. The group is composed by Arctic Import and Global Supply and Trading (GSAT), running international trading business in Retailing, Hotel & Institution, Food Service, Contractors' Equipment and Mining and Ship Supply areas. These two parts of the company respectively focus on different markets. Arctic Import is founded in 1978 in Greenland, but the head office of the company is later moved into

Denmark in 1984. Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands are the primary markets of the company. GSAT was established in 2009, focusing on the African retail market and the Chinese retail and E-Commerce market. As a trading company, Arctic Group does not produce any physical products, but buying and reselling other producer's products. In China area, GSAT is not only selling products to China, but also offering service and solutions for its Danish and European partners for accessing China Market. For many foreign companies, it is difficult and expensive to directly reach the Chinese consumers, but Arctic Group can enable its clients to enter and benefit from the Chinese market without very much investment. Based on its already established expertise, knowledge and experiences of the local Chinese market, Arctic Group is both serving for Danish, European and Chinese E-Commerce companies. A company can authorize Arctic Group to sell its products to China, and Arctic Group will provide a full solution of marketing, developing and selling the products in China. The Danish health and beauty retail chain Matas is one of the companies, who chose Arctic Group as partner for its Denmark to China E-Commerce business.

Matas is the leading health and beauty retail chain in Denmark. The company focuses on selling health and beauty products of other brands and also develops and produces its own brands. The chain is founded in 1949. Up to 2015, Matas opened 291 physical stores across Denmark and have approximately 2300 employs. Along with the development of digitalization, Matas is threated, just as other traditional retailers. However, Matas is also seeing this as opportunities, and they are therefore responding positively to the new market situation through developing Matas becoming a cross-channel retail retailer. Based on the physical stores, Matas opened its online health and beauty store in 2008, and later in 2013, its first Stylebox online store is opened. Moreover, Matas established its member system Club Matas for rewarding customers, developed mobile App to make the shopping easier and marketing the products through different channels e.g. E-mail, social media, printed consumer advertisement etc. Matas means digitalization will play an important role in its future strategy, and they will combine their online and off-line resources to ensure the best consumer experiences. In Denmark Matas is already a welldeveloped company, it is therefore the time for Matas to enter the international market. To response to its digitalization strategy, the Chinese E-Commerce market is chosen by Matas to develop products under its own brands, as China is the largest E-Commerce market in the world, and Chinese consumers desire for the high qualitied foreign products (Wichmann, 2016). Matas

has about 150 products under its own brands, and the products are selling in its own stores and also other stores. Matas Natur, launched in 1967, is one of the brands that Matas will start with in China. All products under this brand compose a certain percentage of ingredients from organic and natural plants, but some of them are not certificated by relevant organizations, therefore Matas promotes the products as natural products containing organic ingredients.

As a partner of Matas, Arctic group works on marketing and selling Matas' products on the Chinese E-Commerce market. Advertising is one of the most important tasks that Arctic Group has to work on for promoting the products to Chinese consumers. However, China has a very different culture compare to Denmark, and there are big differences between Danish and Chinese advertisements. In order to design an ad matched to Chinese consumers, we have to know what messages the Chinese consumers prefer to read, and the Chinese cultural that may influence consumer's preference. This is not only a problem for Matas products but all Danish products. This research would like to take Matas Natur as an example, focusing on study some successful Chinese online ads for product similar to Matas Natur. In this way, it is expected to find answers to e.g. how the successful Chinese ads present messages in the ads, what qualities the ads have, and what reasoned the success of the ads. These answers may be valuable for other Danish brand, when advertising in China.

As the reference substance is Matas Natur, which consists of different organic and natural personal care products, and aims to enter the Chinese E-Commerce market, this study will focus on investigating Chinese successful online ads for imported organic and natural personal care products. It also happens that this kind of product has a growing market in China, as in recent years, a natural products wave is sweeping all over the world in a variety of industries, from organic food to natural personal care products, household items and else. According to SPINS and Pure Branding's (2015) Natural Products Marketing Benchmark Report 2015, natural product is a \$90 billion market, has a growth rate as 11% and will maintain a healthy growth in the future. Cosmetics Business (2016) states that consumers do not only concern what is taken into their body, but also care about what is put on their face and body in recent years. Organic and natural personal care products become therefore more and more popular, as the research conducted by Persistence Market Research (2016) reveals that the global organic personal care products market reached a value at \$22 billion by 2014, and have a growth of 8.8% per year.

China as one of the world's biggest market has also a silent growth in the organic and natural personal care products industry with a percentage of 16% over the past three years (export.gov, 2016). Nowadays, organic and natural beauty products become a great beauty tendency in China (Gentlemen Marketing Agency, 2016). Many foreign organic and natural products aim to respond to the demand in China. However, China is a huge market, and there is intense competition between foreign brands (HKTDC Research, 2016). Since there are increasing disposable income and food safety problem in China, people believe that foreign products, especially foreign organic and natural products can protect them from various food scandals and other inferior Chinese products (Euromonitor, 2011; Mintel, 2012). According to HKTDC Research (2016) foreign cosmetics brands shared 60% of the Chinese market, with nearly 90% sales value, and more and more foreign brands entre the market. Although many Danish brand, like Matas Natur match the organic and natural trend in China, how to make the brand be competitive among its foreign counterparts is still an important question to think. Advertising is seen playing a very important role in the marketing process, therefore, what kinds of ads appeals better to the Chinese consumers is also important to investigate. Most products that contain organic and natural ingredients promote health, beauty, quality etc. in the advertising. This study would like to systematically investigate what kinds of massages the Chinese successful ads prefer to post and how the messages are presented form the elaboration likelihood model's perspective. By doing so, it is expected to provide inspirations for Danish brands about designing ads in China.

2. Problem formulation

Why some Chinese online ads for foreign organic and natural personal care products are successful from the ELM's perspective combining cultural consideration.

To better answer the research question and reducing complication in the research, I suggest the following sub-questions.

1) How do the selected Chinese successful ads for organic and natural personal care products differ to a Danish ad for Matas Natur product?

2) How are the Chinese successful ads effective from the ELM's perspective?

3) How do the Chinese ads present and use messages to persuade customers?

3. Theoretic framework

This chapter discusses the relevant theories and studies, and how they will be applied in this study. According to Costley (2006) a theory is used to guide the study and keep the research going on the right path. He further explains that theory is like a lens, through the lens, we capture meanings of what we see. The point here is to choose a lens, which can better match the research purpose, which is to understand how and why some Chinese online ads for foreign organic and natural personal care products are successful on persuading customers to buy the products. This purpose is fulfilled through studying the way the messages are presented in the ads, thus, a theory about how messages in information are processed and further influence the reader's attitude formation is what we need. The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion (ELM) is such a theory, which provides a general model of attitude change process. The theory is used to study the messages in the Chinese ads, since The ELM is not only a general persuasion theory, but also has a remarkable contribution in understanding of persuasion in marketing and advertising (Shrum et al., 2012). However, one thing has to be noticed is that most consumer researches as well as the ELM theory are developed based on evidences collected from Western society with a Western culture background. The effectiveness of prediction of such theories has to be dealt carefully when applying the theories in a cross-cultural context, especially when collectivistic culture is involved (Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997). This study will therefore introduce individualism-collectivism cultural orientation from Hofstede's cultural dimension theory beside the ELM theory, in order to explain the message processing by taking cultural orientation into the consideration. The two theories will be introduced in the following.

3.1. Elaboration likelihood model of persuasion

The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion is developed by Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo in 1981, with the purpose of providing a general "framework for organizing, categorizing, and understanding the basic processes underlying the effectiveness of persuasive communications" (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986:125). The theory is developed within social psychology field, but also proved with success in consumer research area (Shrum et al., 2012). It is a dual process model of persuasion, describes how different variables, such as source, message, recipient and context influence attitude formation, and the theory proposes two distinct routes of information processing in attitude formation – the central route and the peripheral route (Petty &

Cacioppo, 1986). The theory explains how information is processed through these two persuasion routes, depending on the degree of the receiver's involvement in systemic thinking about information to the relevant topic. Under the central route, attitude is formed through the recipient's effortful and thoughtful processing of the argument related messages in the new information. Attitudes formed through this route are relatively more enduring over time, resistant to change and predictive of following behaviors. By contrast, under the peripheral route, attitude is formed through processing non-argument, simple cues, such as mood, attractiveness and credibility of the source. This process does not require systematic thinking of the attributes of the advocated position, and the receiver is likely to make a simple inference according to the cues. This leads to attitudes which are weaker, less resistant over time, less resistant to change and less predictive of following behaviors.

The ELM is the most influential theory in persuasion in the last three decades (Shrum et al., 2012). It integrated the earlier inconsistent persuasion models and developed a unified dual route model in this field. Persuasion research in the late 1970s was in an unordered state, where a large body of persuasion researches generated mixed results, which were conflicting with the dominant thinking in the earlier researches. The main issue here is that variables, such as, source, message and recipient often produce conflicting effects. Therefore the earlier thoughts that a variable has a single effect on persuasion were challenged. In the early 1980s, researchers tried to develop a common accepted "dual route model of information processing" framework (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), which can explain how different inputs (variables) can affect the desired outcome in a multiple ways through individual's engagement in different routes of information processing. Petty and Cacioppo's ELM theory is seen as the most influential theory developed in the period. The ELM is not only a persuasion theory in social psychology, but also extensively used in many other fields, such as marketing, advertising, consumer behavior etc. (Shrum et al., 2012). This study would like to focus on the application of the theory in advertising aspect.

3.1.1. Elaboration

Elaboration is concerned with a person's engagement in systematic or issue-relevant thinking of messages in a persuasive topic, and it influences how information will be processed by the person (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Sometimes, a receiver can make a great effort to scrutinize the messages, examine the evidence to the arguments and think the advocacy logically and carefully,

but under other conditions, a receiver might not engage much to think about the message systematically. This variation of the degree to which a receiver engages in issue-relevant thinking of a persuasive message is the so-called elaboration. A receiver's engagement in elaboration can be high, low, little or no elaboration. How the different degree of elaboration affect the information processing will be discussed later. The current task is to clarify what influence the amount of elaboration. Petty and Cacioppo divided the influences into two categories, elaboration motivation (the intention of making issue-relevant thinking) and elaboration ability (the capacity of thinking the arguments).

Elaboration motivation is about how people desire to elaborate (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). This can be influenced by a person's involvement of the relevant issue and his/her need for cognition. The first one is more like the extent to which the person is relevant personally to the issue, e.g. a person who wants to buy a hand cream has higher relevance to a hand cream advertisement than a person who has no need for hand cream. When someone's personal relevance to an issue increased, the person's motivation of taking thoughtful consideration of the issue increased too. The second element that influences elaboration motivation is one's need for cognition. This is concerned with how much a person enjoys thinking hard and learning new things. When someone's need for cognition increased, his/her motivation for issue-relevant thinking increased also.

Elaboration ability decides if a person can elaborate (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Factors that can influence elaboration ability are prior knowledge and distractions. Prior knowledge is the relevant knowledge the receiver uses to examine the arguments in a message, and distractions are the things that can decrease the receiver's ability to scrutinize the message, e.g. baby crying when you are reading.

When a person has limited ability to process a message, he/she will not be able to engage in a high degree of elaboration. Similarly, when a capable person has no motivation to examine message arguments, the person does not have high elaboration either. When elaboration motivation and ability both exist, the elaboration level is extremely high, and the message is more likely to be processed carefully and effortfully. When both motivation and ability or one of them is absent, the receiver will have less or no wishes to examine arguments. It is easy to image that there may be more persuasion under high elaboration, but is there also less or no persuasion

in the low or no elaboration condition? The ELM theory means that persuasion can be obtained under the both conditions, but information is processed through different routes (the central route and the peripheral route) under different conditions (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

3.1.2. Central route and the peripheral route

It is obvious that an individual's elaboration amount influences what processing route is taken by the individual in information processing. When the elaboration is high, attitudes is formed through the central route processing of information, whereas, persuasion follows the peripheral route when elaboration is relatively low. Different to the central route that persuasion achieved through considerate thinking of argument messages, in the peripheral route, persuasion achieved through the use of mental shortcuts based on simple cues.

The central route is followed by a person when he/she is motivated and/or has the ability to think the message carefully and systematically (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In this route, information is processed with great effort, and an individual usually pays more attention to the argument messages in order to evaluate whether the advocated position makes sense and can benefit him/her. Here involves two types of factors, which can influence the effectiveness of the persuasion, positivity of the advocated position and strength or quality of the arguments. The first one is about whether the messages evoke a point of view that the receiver is already favorably inclined. In a positive attitudinal situation, the receiver is likely to generate predominately favorable thoughts about the advocacy, on the other hand, in a negative attitudinal position the receiver usually reaches to unfavorable thoughts of the evoked view. The second one involves strength or quality of the arguments concluded in the message. Arguments are the kind of information that the message sender aims to use as evidence to prove the advocated view (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), e.g. to claim an advertised hand cream can prevent your hands form dryness is an argument, which is using to prove that the hand cream is good for your hands. An argument can be strong or weak, depending on its effectiveness of persuasion. A strong persuasive argument can evoke positive thoughts towards the advocacy, and this can lead to attitude change to the desired direction. In the contrary, weak arguments can result negative thoughts and lead to attitude change to the opposite direction of the advocacy. Under the condition of high elaboration, the central route is followed, and the quality of arguments influences the effectiveness of persuasion.

The peripheral route is engaged when a person has relatively low motivation and ability to process information in a particular topic. Instead of arguments, simple cues and mental shortcuts are used as a manner to process information and form attitude towards the advocacy in the information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). A simple cue can be things like mood, humor, visual appeal, credibility, attractiveness of the source, the length of the message and number of arguments. A receiver, in low elaboration condition, associates these cues with the advocated view of a message in a positive or negative way, and makes a quick decision of his/her attitude towards the advocacy, e.g. a female might agree with the advocated view of a hand cream, because there are many other people says the hand cream is good. Under the peripheral route, the quality of argument has limited or no impact on the receiver's attitude change or formation. Achievement of persuasion in this route does not rely on thoughtful considerations of the arguments in the message, but simple evaluation of simple cues. The peripheral persuasion, however, can also lead to persuasive impacts on the receipient's behavior and attitude.

The following figure can illustrate the central route and peripheral route of persuasion in the ELM.



The central and peripheral routes of persuasion

Source: Petty and Cacioppo, 1986: p. 126

3.1.3. Consequences of the route to persuasion

The ELM proposes that both central route and peripheral route can provide persuasion, but the strength or success of persuasion is different, depending on the route the persuasion is obtained. Petty & Cacioppo, (1986) and Petty & Wegener (1998) state that attitudes shaped through the central route tends to be more durable and stable over time, resistant to counter-persuasion and likely to lead to the desired behaviors. These characteristics of outcomes from the central route support that central persuasion produces "strong attitude" and will therefore result sustained attitude change. It is clear that central persuasion brings long term advantages, but this result of persuasion is usually difficult to obtain, since it demands sufficient understanding of the target audience (O'Keefe, 2012). Thus, it is not a good idea to only focus on the central route should also be considered, although attitudes obtained through this route are less enduring. Since the peripheral persuasion usually achieved based on mental shortcut, the obtained attitudes might be unstable and has no strength to result a long term behavior change (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

One thing has to be noticed is that the ELM does not mean that persuasion can be only achieved through either the central route or the peripheral route by processing information systematically or simply, rather, the two processes occur either concurrently or one route might be dominated (O'Keefe, 2012; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Chaiken et al., 1989). When the two processes do not generate extremely contradictory results, the two processes are used cooperatively (Chaiken et al., 1989). For example, when a potential consumer generated positive thoughts about a hand cream, because it works on dryness, and he/she also believes that Procter & Gamble as the source of the hand cream has high credit, the two processes are complementary in promoting the consumer to produce positive thoughts towards the product. In the contrary, when the two processes yielded contradictory results, the central process usually tends to dominate, since it based on more rational examination, which has typically more strength to discount the mental shortcuts (Chaiken et al., 1989).

3.1.4. Elaboration, arguments and cues

According to the ELM variables can affect the effectiveness of persuasion in 3 ways, namely by affecting elaboration level, by serving as arguments, and by serving as cues (Petty & Cacioppo,

1986). This section discusses how variables, as source, message, recipient, channel and context work on persuasion through the 3 effect ways.

Elaboration level is determined by the recipient's personally motivation and ability to process the information. When one's motivation and ability of processing a particular message are both high, he/she has a relatively high level of elaboration, whereas the person has a relatively low level of elaboration, when his/her motivation and/or ability of processing the message are low. The high the elaboration level is, the likely the central route is taken, the arguments in the information are processed, and the changed attitudes are more enduring and resistant. Identically, the low the elaboration level is, the likely the peripheral route is taken, the simple cue information is processed, and the formed attitudes are less stable over time. So elaboration plays a moderating role in persuasion, and the variation of elaboration influence significantly the effectiveness of persuasion.

Arguments are the information that is contained in the persuasive message for providing evidence to support an advocacy. Arguments are usually built by attribute information, which tells the true merits of a subject per se. When taking advertising an organic and natural hand cream as an example, the product contains organic ingredients, which provide the user a healthier life, is seen as an argument. Arguments are used to create favorable attitudes of the subject towards the advocacy under high elaboration condition, thus, an argument has to have good quality or power strength to result positive attitudes. Otherwise, it may ultimately reduce the amount of persuasion effect. However, the ELM does not well develop the characteristics of these high-quality persuasive arguments, since the theory use argument quality "primarily as a methodological tool to examine whether some other variable increases or decreases message scrutiny, not to examine the determinants of argument cogency per se" (Petty & Wegener, 1998:352). Argument quality in the ELM is defined in terms of persuasion effects under high elaboration condition. Specifically, a high-quality argument is a "strong message", which instructs an audience to generate favorable attitudes towards the advocated position compare to the audience's attitudes prior message exposure, while a low-quality argument is a "weak message", which instructs an audience to generate less favorable attitudes towards the advocacy than his/her attitudes prior message exposure (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). It means that a highquality argument is an argument, which is more persuasive under high elaboration, and using

high quality arguments under the conditions of high elaboration can enhance the effects of persuasion. In other words, to be persuasive under high elaboration condition, use persuasive arguments, but what are the characteristics of persuasive arguments is a question that does not be well answered in persuasion research (O'Keefe, 2012). As Fishbein and Ajzen (1981:359) state that "the general neglect of the information contained in a message ... is probably the most serious problem in communication and persuasion research".

Cues are the information which is contained in the persuasion context to affect recipient's attitudes with no help of argument processing (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). More specifically, determining whether a message is a cue is to evaluate whether the message has an impact on the recipient's attitude formation under condition, in which argument processing is absent. A peripheral cue can be credibility, expertise, attractiveness and celebrity of the source, mood, numbers of the arguments, aesthetic quality of the message or source, or maybe effective illustration etc. e.g. an organic and natural hand cream is recommended by a skin doctor, or there are high-quality professional visual image in the advertising. A cue influences the persuasion effects significantly under low elaboration condition. That is saying that using positive cues under low elaboration condition can enhance persuasion effects. To test whether a cue is operative is to see whether the potential cue message can result judgments towards the advocacy without argument processing (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). A cue which can generate positive attitudes towards the advocated position should be used under low elaboration conditions, in order to increase amount of persuasion effect.

A peripheral cue is usually operative under low elaboration condition, whereas an argument is usually influential under high elaboration condition. However, the ELM suggests that a given variable can serve as one or more roles depending on the elaboration level of the recipient. For example, an expert suggestion serves usually as simple cue affect attitude formation under low elaboration condition, but it can also serve as an argument to support the advocated position under high elaboration condition. Furthermore, attractiveness of an endorser can serve as a peripheral cue, but it can also serve as a central argument when the advertised product is a cosmetic product. Similarly, central arguments can also serve as simple cues, for instance, length and numbers of arguments in and ad can affect attitudes of people with low elaboration level. So a variable has multiple roles in persuasion. By serving as different roles, variables affect attitudes of recipients. To conclude, an advertiser can persuade his/her audience by increasing the audiences' elaboration level, argument quality and cue quality. In the advertising field, most researches focused on testing how the 3 types of variables influence the effectiveness of persuasion (Heckler and Jackson 2001, Forret and Turban 1996, Shrum et al. 2012). The subsequent section will discuss some of the past researches.

3.1.5. Past researches

According to (schumann *et al.*, 2012) since 1981 in the advertising and marketing literature, there are more than 125 articles and chapters used the ELM, when studying attitudinal change. Elaboration level plays a central role in the ELM, received the most attention in the literature (Kitchen, 2013). Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann (1983) proved Advertising recipient's product involvement has a moderating role, determining either the central processing or peripheral processing is taken in persuasion. These two routes represent the amount of cognitive effort is expended to process a message (Schumann *et al.*, 2011). Yang *et al.* (2006) applied the ELM to investigate trust formation in internet shopping. The result shows that costumers have high involvement and low anxiety formed their trust through central route, whereas costumers have low involvement and high anxiety built their trust through peripheral route. Researcher also studied how recipients with different age and demographic characteristics process argument information, and they found that there is differences between elaboration level between youth and adult (Harari, Lampert and Wilzig 2007).

Besides the variation of recipient involvement, the arguments and cues contained in the advertising content are also very important to ensure the effect of persuasion. Petty, Cacioppo and Goldman (1981) disused that arguments affect persuasion outcomes significantly under high elaboration likelihood condition, but not under conditions of low elaboration. Areni and Lutz (1988) discussed the role of argument quality in the ELM through two aspects, argument strength and argument valence, and O'keefe and Jaskson (1995) studied how argument quality can influence the persuasion effects. There are also many studies (Doallo et al., 2004; Cretenet & Dru, 2009) discussed the influences of peripheral cues in the ELM, and Hennessey and Anderson (1990) even reveal that peripheral cues can also affect recipient's involvement. However, there is rarely studies focus on the nature of argument or cue quality. Researchers like Vinokur and Burnstein (1974) tried to investigate what qualities make an argument persuasive, but this kind

of study is rare. This gives difficulty to advertisers to apply the theory in practice, when applying it in especially advertising design. While more and more advertising practitioners apply the theory in practice, difficulty of the theory applying in advertising design and implementation occurs (Szczepanski, 2006).

With the purpose of making it easier to apply the ELM theory in advertising design, this study would like to focus on the persuasive messages used in advertisements. The goal will be approached through studying how some successful ads use argument messages and cue messages to persuade their potential buyers from the ELM's perspective, in order to inspire advertisers in designing messages in ads. It means that the research emphasizes on how the qualities of messages and the way and reasons of using the messages that influence consumers, rather than how to rise the elaboration level, in order to affect recipient's attitudes. This study tries to engage in reducing the problem of applying the ELM in designing online advertisements on the Chinese E-Commerce market, by looking at how some Chinese successful ads used message, and why they are successful.

However, as other consumer researches, the ELM is developed in Western countries based on evidences, which is collected in individualistic culture. The theory's generalizability in Chinese cultural setting should be considered, especially, when China has a collectivistic culture. This study would like to take the influence from individualism and collectivism cultural orientation, into consideration when assessing predication of persuasion effects in the ELM. Hofstede's cultural dimension theory in individualism-collectivism dimension is therefore applied to explain the cultural impacts on the two persuasion processes.

3.2. Individualism-collectivism cultural orientation

The cultural dimension theory is earliest developed by Geert Hofstede for comparing cultural differences between nations, covered 93 countries and each country has a score on each dimension measured by a scale from 0 to 100 (Hofstede et al., 2010). Individualism-collectivism cultural dimension has drawn most attention in cross-culture research, because the differences in the two kinds of societies result salient impacts on its social members' value, attitude, behavior etc. (Hofstede. 1990). According to Hofstede (2003) Individualism and collectivism can be identified according to the connection between individuals. In an individualistic society, individuals have a loose tie to each other, people centralize themselves and their immediate

family, and maybe also close friends. Conversely, in a collectivistic society, people are integrated into cohesive in-groups, in which everyone can expect to rely on other members for help and protection in exchange of loyalty. As thus, people in individualist culture tends to credit independence, freedom, uniqueness, self-sufficiency and individual effort in work, and also, personal concerns and rights are valued in such a culture, whereas people in a collectivistic society emphasize most on interdependence, family, in-group members, social relationship and team work effort, so that the interests of the group is placed over the needs of each member.

In Hofstede's cultural dimension system, Denmark has a score as 74 in the individual dimension, and this indicates that Denmark is an individualist culture (www.geert-hofstede.com). This can be understood that to a certain degree, the social members do not have a close relationship with each other, rather, they care more about themselves and their immediate family. Favorable attitudes towards separateness, uniqueness and differentiation of individuals are more likely to appear in such a culture, and individuals in the culture are therefore expected to be initiative and self-reliant to handle his/her tasks. Moreover, everyone's self-construal is built based on the personal self, such as personal inter attributes and ability, so that other people's opinions do not have very big impacts on an individual's attitudes and behaviors. As same as Denmark, many European countries are also inclined to individualism according to Hofstede's theory.

China with a score of 20 in the individual dimension, is an extremely collectivist culture, in which people depend more on each other and make effort to keep a good relationship with others (www.geert-hofstede.com). Thus, social harmony, group interests and collective actions are putting above individual interests and attitudes in the society. People hold favorable attitudes towards similarity, popularity and authority for getting acceptation from the important others. As a result of this, one's self-construal is built based on important in-group members and his/her collective self, other people's opinion toward an individual is therefore important for the individual. This makes people easy to feel shame for losing face, since they are worried about other people's negative thoughts about him/her. In this sense, in China, in-group member's opinions contribute a lot to an individual's attitude formation and the following behavior change.

Trafimow, Triandis, and Goto (1991) conducted a research, in which they have participants from both individualist and collectivist culture to make 20 "I am" sentences. Respondents from individualist culture usually coded the question in terms of personal traits and beliefs (such as I am funny, kind, pretty etc.), while respondents from collectivist culture described themselves after their role and relationship in the society (such as I am a good mother, friend, employee etc.). This result proves that people orientated by individualist and collectivist culture have different self-cognitions, and these cognitions are further evidenced by the authors that they have impacts on the subjects' attitudes and behaviors of the objects. Additionally, another experiment conducted by Kim and Markus (1999) can also support that cultural orientation influence people to form different attitudes which can further influence the objects' subsequent behaviors and choices. In the experiment, participants from American and East Asian cultures are asked to choose a pen from a group of similar pens, but a few of them with different colors. The American participants are more like to choose the rare colored pen to show their uniqueness, while the East Asian participants tends to choose the color according to the majority's choice, so that most of them chose the common colored pens. The experiment tells that people from different cultures form their attitudes and make decision of their following behaviors based on different concerns, which is influenced by cultural orientation.

Since cultural orientation can lead subjects' attitudes and behaviors to different directions, this might also have impacts on the subjects' way of processing information. In the following section how individualism-collectivism cultural orientation influence people in information processing from the ELM' perspective will be discussed.

3.2.1. Individualism-collectivism cultural orientation and the ELM

In the Western culture based ELM, argument-relevant information dominates the persuasion process under high elaboration condition, whereas cue-relevant information dominates the persuasion process under low elaboration condition. When these two types of information generated thoughts go to the same direction (congruent information), both argument and cue related thoughts valued, but when they go to conflict (incongruent information), the argument related thoughts usually discount the cue related thoughts, meaning that peripheral cues might be less important in the Western individualist culture. Researches (Axsom, Yates and Chaiken 1987; Mackie 1987) support this view in their researches that cue-relevant information, e.g. information which involves other people's opinions, is selectively used by people from individualist culture when forming attitude, and this type of information is often decreased or overridden by argument-relevant information.

However, people from collectivist culture value others' opinions or social norms much more than people in individualist culture, therefore, simple cue-relevant information, like consensus information are more concerned in a collectivist culture. Consensus information is defined by Aaker and Maheswaran (1997:317) ''as information involving other's opinions about evaluations of an attitude object''. This kind of information typically serves as simple cues in the ELM, but is valued in a collectivist culture, because it shows the "majority viewpoint" (Mackie, 1987). As Markus and Kitayama (1991) propose that an interdependent person places his/her internal feelings after social interests, and the internal feelings have less impact on the person's following action compare to independent people. To conclude, consensus information as a kind of simple cue-relevant information may be important in a collectivist culture even under high elaboration condition.

Aaker and Maheswaran (1997) have evidenced the above statement in their research The Effect of Cultural Orientation on Persuasion. They interviewed 136 Chinese students in order to see whether the collectivist cultural orientation has impacts on information processing in the ELM. They found that for members of collectivist culture, consensus information influences persuasion regardless of the level of motivation or congruity of information, and more favorable attitudes will be led by positive consensus information, whereas argument-relevant information only influences persuasion in high-motivation, congruent information condition. Consensus thoughts will therefore influence persuasion in all conditions, whereas argument-related thoughts only influence persuasion under high-motivation, congruent information condition. Thus, in a collectivist culture, consensus information should be equivalent in all conditions, and argumentrelevant information should be limited under low motivation condition (Aaker and Maheswaran, 1997).

However, Aaker and Maheswaran's study based on Hofstede's cultural dimension theory. One might argue that Hofstede's theory first developed in 1970s and based on work-related values in only one business area, thus the theory might be too old and not representative of a whole nation. Nonetheless, the theory was improved with new research results added in 2010, and the theory has also been proved with success in cross culture advertising (Mooij and Hofstede, 2010) and consumer research (Gong et al. 2007). Also, according to Hofstede China is a typical collectivistic culture, but some researches show that China has a trend to move toward a more

individualistic culture. Yan (2010) reveals that China is on the individualization path, and the rise of the individualization and its social consequences are reasoned by the quest for modernity sponsored by the Chinese state. Similarly, Griffiths et al. (2010) argue that the emerged favorability of rurality in China opposes the Chinese mainstream urbanization and industrialization, and indicates that individualistic consumer perceptions are showing up in China. However, the main thoughts in consumer research still accept China is a collectivistic culture, even the above 2 studies also mean individualization is rising in China. The rise of individualism does not mean that China is dominated by individualism. Hence, I argue that China is still a collectivistic society, but individualism might be rising in China. So that Chinese people are still influenced by their collectivistic cultural background. Chinese people are therefore to a certain degree still concern about other people's opinions (consensus information) as Hofstede means. This cultural background of Chinese people is valuable to be mentioned, since this will help a reader to understand Chinese consumers' way of processing information, and the impact of consensus information on them.

By taking cultural orientation influence into consideration, this study aims to apply the ELM in the Chinese cultural context, in order to provide knowledge, which can be used by Danish brands when designing ads to the Chinese market.

3.3 Application of the ELM

Since it can be problematic to transfer the ELM theoretical framework to practice, as it is mentioned earlier, the ELM researchers (Rucker & Petty, 2006) developed a guidance to support the application of the theory in real-world settings. 6 steps are included in the guidance, which proposes persuaders a step by step method of using the ELM in real communication. Following is the recommended steps of applying the ELM.

6 steps for applying the ELM in practice



Source: Rucker & Petty (2006): p. 41

Step 1 is to consider whether the recipients prefer to scrutinize the persuasive messages carefully or process them more peripherally. In this step a rough estimate of the recipients' elaboration level should be developed. It is not required that the predicted elaboration level has to be 100 % correct, because the correctness can be tested in message effectiveness testing. Step 2 is about to design messages and consider whether the information contained in the messages will be processed as arguments, peripheral cues or the both. In step 3 the persuader has to be clear whether the goal of the persuasion is to generate persistent or immediate attitude change. Fox example, does the advertiser aims to persuade a potential customer to buy the advertised product for once or persuade the customer to consider the product every time when the kind of product is needed. After have done these, steps 1-3 have to be evaluated in step 4, in order to see whether the audience elaboration level, the message characteristics and the goal of persuasion fit together. Thereafter, message effectiveness will be tested experimentally in step 5. Finally in step 6 whether the message was effective will be evaluated according to the data from step 5.

This guidance is a useful tool for advertisers when designing advertising. This study attempts to provide results that can help Danish brands to design ads match to the Chinese market by taking the above guidance into consideration. It can be difficult to design messages in step 2, especially when it involves promoting products developed in the Danish culture to the Chinese culture. We

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can try to imagine that we are setting in Denmark listing a series of messages which fit perfectly to the persuasion goal, and the experimental examination shows also the messages are effective, but it does not mean the ads will necessarily make many customers to buy the product. It is because that Rucker and Petty's guidance can ensure us to design an effective ad, but we do not know whether it is the most effective one on the market. All the similar products are competing with each other, as well as the ads for them. Our messages designed in the ads are effective to the audience does not mean that the messages are more effective than the competitor's messages in their ads. Fox example, we designed 5 messages, which are tested to be effective to the Chinese, but another similar Chinese ad might conclude 8 messages, which are more effective. The point is that the included messages in an ad have to be more effective than the competitors, in order to attract more customers. There might be many more effective messages we do not even think about it, because we do not know enough of the Chinese market. This study aims to study some Chinese successful ads for organic and natural personal care product, and investigate what messages includes in the ads, how do the messages sever as arguments or simple cues, try to explain why this messages effective, and what qualities make the messages effective. By doing so, the study is expected to provide suggestions to Danish product advertisers what are the most effective messages for Chinese consumers.

4. Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodological approaches of the study, including the paradigmatic stance, the idea of research design, and the methods in use. This will help the readers to understand that through which angel the researcher views the research question, and how and using what methodological tools the researcher investigates the question.

4.1. Definition of Paradigm

A paradigm can tell "a view of how science should be done" (Punch, 1998: 28), but none of definition of paradigm is universal accepted. According to Masterman (1970) scholars used paradigm in many different ways. This study follows Egon Guba (1990:17) and Denzin & Lincoln's (2000) definition of paradigm, as "a basic set of beliefs that guides action, whether of everyday garden variety or action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry". Guba (1990) expresses that paradigms are most concerned with 3 approaches, which are used by a researcher to conduct a research. These 3 approaches are positivism, postpositivism and constructivism. To explain the differences between paradigms, he further states that the 3 approaches can be distinguished by looking their ontological, epistemological and methodological stances. The ontological question is about how we believe reality exists (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln 1989). The epistemological question is concerned with how we view the relationship between the research and knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Guba, 1990). The methodological question refers to what methodological strategies we use to study knowledge (Guba, 1990).

Positivists believe that reality exists as one only truth, therefore, they prefer to hold a dualist or objectivist attitude when dealing the relationship between themselves and the researched subjects. This results in that positivists take experimental or manipulative methods to conduct a research, in order to avoid influence from the researcher and the complication of nature. Postpositivists, however, accept that nature is complicated and cannot be completely understood and comprehended, but they insist the only existence of reality. They believe that it is impossible to be neutral, but suggest being as objective as possible and taking a modified objectivist position to view the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Modified experimental or manipulative methodology is therefore applied by postpositivists. Constructivists, by the contrary,

support there are multiple realities exist, meaning that they believe that individuals construct their own realities. Thus, constructivists hold subjectivist opinions to the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and hermeneutic or dialective methodological strategies are adopted to obtain various constructions of realities. The final goal of constructivists is to generate a consensus in the constructions, and then to reconstruct the consensus (construction). There is no right or wrong paradigms, but how appropriate a paradigm fits to the research subject (Punch, 1998; Candy, 1989). Since this study aims to investigate how different ads are constructed as various realities to persuade potential consumers, constructivist paradigm is followed when conducting the research. Constructivism is concerned with a "way of interpreting different aspects of social life as they were constructed and given meaning through social processes" (Caruana 2007:295). Such a paradigm has a similar paradigmatic stance to the contextualist paradigm largely adopted in psychology by many persuasion theories, such as the ELM (Herbert and Padovani, 2015; Bjola and Kornprobst, 2010).

Contextualism emphasizes on "the whole organism interacting with its environment" (Herbert and Padovani, 2015), meaning that knowledge is obtained when taking the interactions between the subject and all its environment into consideration. Therefore, mapping reality is not the goal of contextualists, but finding knowledge with respect to individuals and their interaction with their environment. They do not believe an ultimate truth exists and reject that there is a predivided reality waiting for people to discover, instead of that, they devote to provide a framework that can work for many observers across different context (Herbert and Padovani, 2015). In this study I focus on interpret why some Chinese ads are successful, how are messages used in the ads, what qualities the used messages in the ads have, and how some potential consumers think about the messages in the ads. The purpose here is that all different meanings collected in the research are respected as a construction of reality, and analyzed by taking the study object and all its social setting into consideration. For achieving such a goal, the ELM which is developed from a contextualist point of view is adopted to explain the meanings behind phenomenon and constructivism is applied to guide how the research should be conducted.

Following I will discuss how the questions will be approached through a constructivist perspective from its ontological, epistemological and methodological stance.

4.1.1. Ontology

Ontological question deals with questions regarding what the nature of reality is and how entities exist (Gruba, 1990; Bryman, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). From a constructivist's point of view, the ontological stance of this study is relativism. In other words, the research supports that there are multiple existences of reality, and they are social constructed by individuals in their interactions (Gruba, 1990; Guba and Lincoln, 1989). This is in line with Kim (2001) and Meiland & Krausz's (1982) argument that realities are resulted by social activities and human actions, so that there is no truth in reality (Kukla, 2000), since people have different experiences, and everyone constructs his or her own reality, building on his or her early knowledge (Gergen, 1985). In relation to this study, the structure of the Chinese ads, the use of messages in the ads and the potential customers' meaning and reaction of the messages are seen as reality that need to be investigated. There is no right or wrong construction of the ads and opinions from the customers. All ads have their own way to use messages and all customers have their own understanding of what messages are attractive and effective. I will not seek a truth in the use of message or the customer answers, but believe that people from different social settings create and construct their realities differently.

4.1.2. Epistemology

Epistemology question is concerned with the nature of knowledge and how we know the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This is described by Guba (1990) as "the nature of the relationship between the inquirer and the inquired". Opposite to positivists' and postpositivists' objective position of conducting research, constructivists take a subjective stance to study knowledge (Guba, 1990; Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln, 1990). More specifically, an objective point of view means a social world can be known from outside as a stranger, but from a subjective perspective, a social world can only be understood from an internal subjective position, meaning that by people, who are involved in the specific social group (Kuada, 2010). This is in line with Guba (1990) and Von Glasersfeld (1995) that knowledge can only be known in interactions between individuals. When holding subjective point of view in this study, I will not keep distance to the research subjects, but using my early knowledge to influence the research, potential customers' answers. My meanings and knowledge are allowed to influence the research.

since I believe that knowledge can only emerge in interactions between me and my study objects or interaction among us.

4.1.3. Methodology

Methodology is the strategies, which guide us to discover knowledge, or the ways a research uses to know the researched (Guba, 1990; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). According to Guba (1990) and (Kuada, 2010) positivists aim to apply a methodology, which can help them of finding natural law and explanation of truth in order to control the natural law, whereas constructivists focus on a subjective view of methodology, which aims to collect different meanings of research objects, and the constructions of realities will be obtained after interpret individuals understanding of the world as they experienced. The final goal of a constructivist research is to find a consensus in the realities and reconstruct it in a better way. To fulfill this goal, appropriate procedures and techniques have to be followed and applied. In the followed section, I will describe the reason of using the selected methods and how they will be used in the research process.

4.2 Method

The research design and the methods in use are discussed in this section. Since the researcher holds a constructivist point of view and expects to make comprehensive interpretation in the study, an in-depth qualitative research will be carried out. To conduct such a research, thematic analysis is employed here to make a thorough analysis of the messages used in the selected Chinese ads. As a supplement to the thematic analysis, a questionnaire (deep into detail) will also be applied to ask some potential customers of the advertised product in the ads, for rating what kinds of messages are more persuasive, in order to analyze the effectiveness of the messages in the selected Chinese ads. First of all, how and why data is collected will be introduced following.

4.2.1. Data collection

As it is mentioned earlier, there are big differences between how a Danish ad e.g. Matas Natur ad and Chinese ads use messages. This study would like to use a Matas Natur ad as an example to investigate, why some Chinese ads similar to the Matas Natur ad are successful by looking at how the Chinese successful ads use messages. There are many Matas Natur ads and thousands of ads for foreign organic and natural personal care products in China, so that it is necessary to make a careful selection of the ads. I first need to choose one ad for one of the Matas Natur products as the example. Since the ad is only used as an example to show there is a big gap between a Danish ad and a Chinese ad, one typical Matas ad could be enough to do it. Matas Natur Aloe Vera & E-vitamin 24H Ansigtscreme as a product in the bestselling top 10 list according to Matas and a frequent used female facial cream, seems to be appropriate to be chosen as the example. The ad for the product can be downloaded from Matas' homepage www.matas.dk. To choose comparable ads to the selected Matas ad, some criteria are established. Ads are included if they have the following characteristics, it is an ad for imported foreign organic and natural personal care products with original package on the Chinese E-Commerce market, the advertised products have the similar price as the Matas Natur product. 4 ads for bestselling products on the 2 biggest Chinese E-Commerce platforms are included. The 2 biggest Chinese platforms are www.taobao.com and www.jd.com , and they shared respectively 57% and 20% market in China (Wichmann, 2016). Two ads for two bestselling products on each website will be selected. I used female organic and natural cream as the searching key words, since the Matas Natur cream is also for female and contained organic and natural ingredients, and then I sorted the products according to the sales. Regarding the product price, the Matas Natur cream costs 99.95 DKK (about 100 RMB), and Matas expects it will be sold at least as the same price in China, or higher. Actually, the foreign products normally sold in a much higher price in China than they are sold abroad (Gentlemen Marketing Agency 2016). For the above reasons, the Chinese ads have to be chosen from products cost from 100 RMB-200RMB. The product has to be imported with original package is because the Matas products will be imported with original package and this study also focuses on this kind of products. Choosing bestselling products is because that sales of the advertised product is one of the most important indicators to measure whether the ad is successful. Of course, success of an ad can also be measured by other criteria like customers' brand loyalty, and sales can also be influenced by other factors like price. However, this study does not aim to measure success of an ad, but to analyze the use of messages in ads. In this sense, sales of the advertised product should be able to indicate whether the ads are successful to a certain degree. We assume that successful ads contain persuasive messages, because they persuaded most consumers to buy the products. The selected ads are presented following.

Matas Natur ad for Aloe Vera & E-vitamin 24H Ansigtscreme (Appendix 1)

3 tor 2	Matas Natur Aloe Vera & E-vitamin 24h ansigtscreme ****** Se anmeldelser (24) Kun 12 dege tilbage - <u>Se alle</u>	
Actions and the second	kr. 99,95 ✓ På lager - Leveres inden for 1-2 hverdage LÆG I KURV OPTJEN 10 POINT hos Club Matas Ittej til onskelisten	På lager i 274 butikker se hvilke Lag ind for at se status i din favoritbutik
AUTORISERET FORHANDLER 24h ansigtscreme er en skøn plejende creme til ansigt og hals. Jojobaolie og økologisk aloe vera sikrer ekstra fugt til ansigtet og fremmer derved elasticiteten I din hud. Det virksomme E- vitamin har en beskyttende effekt på huden. Produktet er svanemærket og godkendt af Astmo-Allergi Danmark. Uden parfume, farvestoffer og parabener.	Detaijer Indholdsstoffer Levering & retu Indhold: 50/ml Enhedspris: kr. 1.999.00/l Maerke: <u>Matas Natur</u> Serie: <u>MBS - serie</u> Varenummer: <u>524.149</u>	umering

Matas Natur Aloe Vera & E-vitamin 24H Ansigtscreme is one of the top 10 bestselling products under Matas Natur. Such a female facial cream as a common used product for personal care is appropriate to choose, since the Matas Natur ad is included as an example to show differences between a Danish ad and the Chinese ads, and this study focuses on personal care products. Moreover, the ad for the product is present in a typical Matas way or even Danish way. All Matas Natur products contain a certain percentage of organic ingredients from natural plants. 4 Chinese ads for similar products are selected presented in the following.

四 演新大药房海外专营店商品 9.45 → 服务 9.44 → 时效 9.25 → 😓 联系客服 🛛 + 关注店铺 【新西兰澳洲直邮】 趣乐活Trilogy天然有机野玫瑰果油美肤去疤 保湿面 看了还看 霜60ml * 1罐 【京东全球购】政府资质实体药房,官方正品原装进口,直部包税,不发保税仓,联系客服提交身 ¥ 203.00 价格 ¥ 84.00 商家承担税费信息 🖬 形式 【演洲直廊】NATIO娜 奧 保湿补水面部护理 新西兰 至 北京朝阳区三环以内 - 有货 配送时间 🛛 配洋 trilogy 店铺单笔订单不满199元,收运费10元 运费 Vital Moisturising Cream ne Hydratante Esse 45ml * 1瓶 45ml * 2瓶 优惠装 20ml * 1瓶 【演洲直邮】Sukin苏芊 原装进口 正品保证 天然保湿喷雾爽肤水 敏 抗氧化 30ml * 2瓶 20ml * 2瓶 优惠装 保湿面霜60ml * 1罐 洁面乳液洗面奶 200ml * 1瓶 举报 加入购物车 ¥235.00 1

Ad 1 in China (Appendix 2.1)

The first selected ad claims the product is an organic and natural female facial cream form New Zealand and directly delivered by the Zelanian seller Anz Pharmacy abroad. The advertised product is the bestselling organic and natural foreign female facial cream costing from 100 RMB-250 RMB on JD on March 31st. One might notice that the price for product does not meet the requirement for price around 100 RMB–200 RMB. Preseason for increasing the price interval is because that I found most prices for product on DJ include freight. Therefore, the price interval is increased up to 250 RMB. As the bestselling imported foreign facial cream with original package in the particular price interval, this ad is chosen.

Ad 2 in China (Appendix 3.1)

	一 茜勒博士全球购旗舰店商品 9.62 ↑ 服务 9.70 ↑ 时效 9.69 ↑	○ 联系客服 + 关注店铺
DR.SCHELLER MINUMA KPACTURE 茜勒博士 全球购 保税地区发放 CRRANIC SKINCARE 保税地区发放	【德国进口】茜勒博士 紧肤抗皱日霜紧致去痘印淡化斑点保湿补水面霜 有 机护肤 别让你的女神过早老去!全场八五折,喂心奉献!	看了还看 1999年 1999年
	价格 ¥ 245.00 税费 商家承担 税费信息 ■ 优惠 愛文成志 満14,总的打8.50折 详信>> 配法 北京朝阳区三环以内 ▼ 有投 配法的词 ■	¥ 258.00 【傅圖进口】 鼓動場士 有机炉款走田以供施
DR. SCHELLER NATURAL & EFFECTIVE AGRANDL & AMARANTH AFAtten Right Temperature Wallend - anspructionalle Haut	运费 免运费 1 + 加入购物车	(何思出口) 武功博士
≤ A¥ C #it	说明 ◎ 不支持7天无理由退款 ❷ 京东全球购售后服务 更多服务说明 >	紅石榴頭時水接油 男女

The second ad is for an organic and natural facial cream imported with original package from Germany. The advertised product is the second bestselling product on JD on March 31st within the required price interval and other criteria. As same as the last ad, this ad is chosen within the price interval 100 RMB–250 RMB. It is clear that this ad is chosen, because the advertised product is an organic and natural German facial cream and the second bestselling product on JD. An ad for such a product is expected to tell the reason of success of the similar ads in China.

Ad 3 in China (Appendix 4.1)

羅	美国品牌 無外童件 Derma E/德归依天然维E面霜VE 补水保湿日晚霜男女滋润霜懒人霜 12000天然VE含量持久离保還不油腻	看了又看
	実調 間前前 全天道虫地商品通用 主割券 ● 价格 ¥ 258-00	¥89.00
derma e Menne Jacou Derme Menne Jacou Derme Men	本語活動 満60元(包部) 更多代題 / 进口税 南季季担 金約振動 运票 杭州 / 上地区 / 月時最 442 累计评价 11044	
12000天然VE含量 持久高保湿不油腻	化 広 品 () () () () () () () () () (29.UU
	立即购买 中加入购物车 服务承诺 正品保障 环球必达 7天放心退 赠运费险	¥128.00 学笔实2进1

The third ad is chosen form www.taobao.com, and the advertised product is the bestselling facial cream product on Taobao on March 31st within the criteria. This cream is imported from Germany with the original package, costs 128 RBM, contains organic ingredients from natural plants, and the product is the bestselling organic and natural facial cream on Taobao. However, the searching key words were not organic and natural cream, when search products on Taobao. The reason is that there were only a few products were found when used these key words. The most products highlight the main plant contained in the cream in the product names instead of "organic and natural", e.g. a product named German chamomile cream instead of organic and natural German cream. This results in that I could only find limited numbers of products when using organic and natural cream as the key words. I therefore used female facial cream as searching key words, sorted after the sales, and the first emerged product which contained organic and natural ingredients and meets other requirements is seen as the bestselling organic and natural facial cream.

Ad 4 in China (Appendix 5.1)



The fourth ad is chosen, since the advertised product is the second bestselling product on Taobao on March 31st and meet all the previously set requirements. Similar to the third ad, this ad is the second emerged product which contained organic and natural ingredients in the products searched by key words female facial cream. Additionally, this facial cream is imported from German with original package and costs 115 RMB. The ad is for the above reasons chosen as an example to explore the reasons that make the Chinese ads successful.

After the empirical data is collected, the next step is to discuss how the data will be analyzed. As mentioned earlier thematic analysis is taken in the analysis process. The method will be applied to make a thorough thematic analysis of how messages are used in the Chinese ads. Before doing so, we have first make sure that the selected Chinese ads are really effective, otherwise, there is no reason to analyze some ineffective ads, which might not be able to explain what qualities make Chinese ads successful. For analyzing the effectiveness of the selected ads, questionnaires are used to ask some potential Chinese customers for rating the effective level of every single message included in the ads. Later all the messages will be coded and grouped into themes from taking the ELM into consideration. The last step is that all the themes and the messages included will be analyzed in details. In the recent stage, I will first focus on present thematic analysis and how this method will be used in the study.

4.2.2. Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is commonly used in qualitative research to examine, sort, summarize and record patterns from the rich textual material (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As Howitt and Cramer (2011) define that "thematic analysis is used to identify a limited number of themes which adequately reflect their textual data" (p. 328). This study aims to find patterns of how the successful Chinese ads for foreign organic and natural personal care products use messages to persuade their potential customers. It means that the research will be to a high degree depends on the empirical data, therefore, using thematic analysis which allows the empirical data to speak and show itself, has a great deal of advantage to dig into the texts and produce a thorough analysis. As this tool does not bind with any theory or method and has no accepted standardized approach to do it, different researchers do it in different ways. According to Howitt and Cramer (2011) a more systematical introduction of how to use the method to data is Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of thematic analysis. In this research I chose to follow Braun and Clarke's (2006) introduction of the method, which is illustrated in 6 steps to generate patterns or themes from text. Following is a figure of Braun and Clarke's model of thematic analysis.

Braun and Clarke's model of thematic analysis



Source: Howitt & Cramer, 2011: p.336

4.2.2.1. Step 1: Familiarization with the data

In the first step the researcher has to familiarize him/herself with the data, in order to make a better and deeper analysis. As I searched, read and chose the 4 ads self, I have already had an overall view of them. For a more thorough read of the data, the ads will be printed out and go
through a few times again. At this stage some interesting information and my thoughts about them (if there are any) will already be noted between on the ads. One thing has to be clarified is that all the Danish and Chinese ads are presented in the local language, but they will not be all translated into English in the coding process, because the original language may contain more details and pass more precise meaning of the ads compare to English. Coincidentally, the researcher understand both Danish and Chinese, this makes the situation easier to control. In the similar way, the questionnaires, which will be sent to some potential Chinese Customers, will also be presented in Chinese, but translated into English, when analyzing them. On the other hand, all the codes and themes derived from the data will be presented in English, and all the quotes, which are used to support codes and themes in the analysis, will be translated into English too.

4.2.2.2. Step 2: Initial coding generation

The goal of this step is to generate initial codes from the data set. To do so, I will read the ads again and the notes I took in the last step will also be re-read and thought over. Thereafter the initial codes will be generated from the notes or the original data. However, what a code actually is has to be clarified first. Boyatzis (1998: 63) defines a code as "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon", in other words, a code is a recap of what is said in a piece of information in the data. What I am going to do is that I will write a small coding on the top of the piece of data, referring to every one to two sentences, every picture or other information in the ads. The codes and the pieces of data are placed on the left side of the paper. These codes summarizes what the piece of initial data is saying. Such a coding process for all ads will take long time, but this is a good way to avoid losing any part of the data. Codes for all pieces of message in the ads will be obtained after this process.

After have done this, all the pieces of message with the codes on the top of them are placed on the left side of the paper in a questionnaire, and the right side is free for questions regarding the messages on the left. This will be introduced later, but now we have to take a break of doing the thematic analysis. Now the questionnaires have to be sent out to some potential Chinese customers. Until the answers have been collected and analyzed, we move back to step 2 of the thematic analysis again. All answers for one questionnaire are summarized into one blank questionnaire, and this paper with messages, codes and summarized consumer ratings will be cut into pieces, meaning that every code will be cut out. The pieces of codes will be then grouped together after what they are saying or mean, and codes that have the same meaning or within the same topic will be gathered into one group. The grouping will first conducted in each ad, and then mixed together. There are two ways to do the grouping, namely data-led approach or theory-led approach. In the first approach generating of codes and themes are guided by what is in the data. The second approach is associated with the theory in use, in order to produce codes and themes that are relevant to the theory. In this study the theory-led approach is taken, meaning that I will have the ELM and cultural dimension theory in mind, when doing the coding and creating the themes. After have grouped the codes, it will end of having many initial codes at hand, and the codes will be later put into different themes in the next step. This grouping does not mean that many codes are put together and transformed into a recapitulative new code, actually, there are only codes which repeat the same meaning or action are grouped together.

4.2.2.3. Potential customers rating for persuasiveness of the messages

4 questionnaires will be made for each ad in this step, meaning that all messages from the same ad and the codes for the messages will be put into one questionnaire. Krosnick's 5-point unipolar scale is applied. Here every piece of message and the code is asked to rate its attractiveness and importance of evoking the participant's positive attitude towards the advertised product. The participants will answer the questions after they are strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the persuasiveness of the messages. It is apparently that these questions can help me to see whether each message in the ads is persuasive or not.

The 4 questionnaires will be sent out to potential customers, every participant will voluntary choose one questionnaire to answer. Of course, the original ad is sent together to the participants, and they have to answer the questionnaires before they have read the ads, although the messages presented on the left side of the questionnaires show everything on the ads. Reading an ad as a whole in important for one to make judgement of the ad. Since all Chinese people are able to purchase products on Taobao and JD, there will be no requests for in which area of China the participants have to be recruited. Chinese female who are interested in purchasing imported foreign facial cream are included. All the respondents are voluntary to participant and the questionnaires are answered anonymous, so that there are no ethical issues with using the

answers in the study. In the beginning, around 10 participants for each selected Chinese ad were aimed to recruit from two Chinese companies, Shenhua Group (www.shenhuagroup.com.cn/) and Xinlian Chuangbo (http://a24143009.atobo.com.cn). Responders are free to choose answering one questionnaire from the 4 questionnaires. Finally, 6 valid questionnaires for ad 1, 11 for ad 2, 8 for ad 3 and 7 for ad 4 are collected. There are not as many as expected questionnaires are collected, because the questionnaires are too long (about 40-60 questions, more than 10 pages) according to the managers in the 2 companies. This question, however, has already be counted in the beginning. I therefore offered candies for people to answer the questionnaires, but there are still no enough people did it.

One might question that offering candies may unintentional rise the responders' elaboration level. This is actually an intentional action, since I aimed to test the ads not in a very low elaboration level, especially when it concerns ads on the E-Commerce market. We have to consider the differences between advertising in the Internet and advertising in traditional media, as Cho (1999) claims that people are usually exposed an ad in traditional media involuntary and/or incidental, whereas the advertising exposure in the Internet are often voluntarily accepted, when it requests consumers' will to open or search for the advertising. Consumers are often open the ads voluntarily in the Internet media, since consumers have to search the ad or click a passive exposed link to see the target ad (Cho, 1999). I will not test the ads under both high and low elaboration conditions and see whether the ads are more effective under high elaboration or low elaboration condition, as most of the researcher did. I would more like to test the ads under a practical level of elaboration, meaning that to test the ads by people who have the potential to buy the products. I therefore locked the participants as people who are willing to buy foreign products for facial cream. Together with the offered candies the respondents have a certain level of elaboration. It is not low but not very high either.

Another question here is that why questionnaires are used to test effectiveness of ads, which obviously contained emotional appeals. For example, one might become favorable for the advertised product, because his/she like the color used in one of the messages, but this kind of feeling is difficult to be obtained from a questionnaire. One might feel it is stupid to admit that he/she likes the product because of the color used in the ad, and also he/she might not be able to realize this feeling, since it happens subconsciously. I have also considered to make in-depth

interviews instead of using questionnaires. However, the above problem cannot be solved in an interview either, and I cannot make a face to face interview, when I am not in China. Some information can be lost in an interview on the Internet. I finally chose to use questionnaire is because every small piece of message can be included, and how the potential customers react on every small details in ads can be asked individually. In this way a systematic analysis of all the messages and how they work in persuasion can be conducted. There are methods which can test whether the use of color, picture or other peripheral cues influence a customer. For example, a message presented by different colors, with or without pictures and the like can be exposed to respondents for them to choose which one they are in favor, so that, the effectiveness the message can be tested. However, in this study, I aimed to make a thorough analysis of all the messages in the ads, not only focus on one or some aspects as the used of picture or color. I therefore chose not to deeply test every aspects of the messages effectiveness.

4.2.2.4. Step 3: Searching for themes based on the initial coding

Op to this step we already have numbers of codes at hand and had some potential customers to rate for effectiveness of the messages. We therefore have an overall view of how the messages work on the potential customers in relation to the ELM. Having this result and the theory in mind, I will categorize the codes into groups according to the topic they engaged in. These groups of codes are the initial themes, and they will be later re-sorted or transformed to the final themes. According to Oxford Dictionary (2017) a theme is "a topic or the subject of a talk, piece of writing, exhibition, etc." It means that I have to ensure that codes within the same topic or subject are put into the same theme. Here the codes form different ads will be mixed around in order to provide a general analysis of how the messages are used in the successful Chinese ads. How the themes are built can be illustrated by the following figure.



Relationship between text, codes and themes

Source: Howitt & Cramer, 2011: p.339

As the figure shows that different codes can be put into different themes, and different theme include different numbers of codes. This process of sortation might be redone many times until the satisfied groups are created. However, for a thorough analysis there is no code is discarded in the course. It is also possible that there might be different levels for themes, for example main themes and sub-themes.

4.2.2.5. Step 4: Review of the themes

In this step, the final themes will be settled by refining the initial themes form step 3. To refine the initial themes I have to consider whether the groups as initial themes have to be modified, whether the themes are relevant to the theory in use, and whether there is coherence among the themes. Themes have to be modified, if data extracts do not fit together with the theme, if there are no sufficient evidential extracts from the data can support the themes, or if there are some themes include a too big topic. Such themes will be re-categorized, merged together with other themes or separated apart into more themes. Since this study is theory-led, the theme creating process is guided by the ELM, and themes are relevant to the theory will be created, for example, argument messages (codes include messages which are processed as arguments) and simple cues (codes include messages which are processed as peripheral cues). At last, themes have to have a coherent relationship between each other. Otherwise, the themes have to be refined again.

4.2.2.6. Step 5: Theme definition and labeling

As the names for themes have already been given before is step, the crucial things here is to define and label the themes. Before doing so, the themes from step 4 have to be viewed once more to avoid more changes might happens after the definition and labeling. During the last view things have to be considered are what separated the themes, how much one theme should include, and what kind of an analysis it is expected. Since this study aims to analyze the use of the messages in the Chinese ads in detail form the ELM's perspective, a theme does not have to be too broader, and more themes have to be included to ensure an extensive analysis. With these criteria in mind, some themes can be considered to merge together or separate to more themes. After the themes are final sealed, they will be then defined with a few sentences according to the content the theme included.

4.2.2.7. Step 6: Report writing

At the end of a thematic analysis, a report has to be written to tell readers what happened and what has been found in the last 5 steps. In order to make it is easier to be understood how every step of the analysis has been done, I will take pictures to show the analytic process. That is I will write in this part in detail about what I did, and how I did in the last 5 steps. At last, I will write down what I found about the messages under every theme. A coherent and convinced report is as important as a good process of analysis, because without the report, the result of the analysis cannot be transmitted. Using sufficient data extracts, appreciate examples to support the themes and describing logically of the relationships between the themes is also a good way to ensure a good display of the analysis. Last but not the least, an analytic narrative of the process will be taken when writing the report, in order to give readers a smooth experience of reading.

5. Analysis

In this chapter, I will fist shortly analyze the differences between the selected Matas Natur ad and the 4 Chinese ads, and then I will move to analyze the effectiveness of the selected Chinese ads from the ELM's perspective. This can be done by the help of analyzing the questionnaires, the message characteristics in the ads, and the sales of products in reality. Thereafter, it should be able to see how the messages in the ads are effective. Later, by further analyzing of all the messages and the potential customers' meaning about the message effectiveness in detail, how the messages are presented in the ads can be answered, and eventually, we can find why some Chinese online ads for personal care products are successful. The ads will be analyzed by using thematic analysis, in the meanwhile, the analysis of the questionnaires will be done as a parallel line to the thematic analysis, and the results of the questionnaires will be used into the thematic analysis of the ads, when it is needed. Finally, an integrated analysis of the 2 parts will be obtained for answering why the Chinese ads are successful.

5.1. Differences between a Danish ad and the successful Chinese ads

Here I would like to briefly talk little about the differences between a Danish ad, which in this case used a Matas Natur ad (Appendix 1) as an example, and the successful Chinese ads represented by the selected 4 ads (Appendix 2.1, 3.1, 4.1 and 5.1).

On the Matas web shop we can see most of the ads are presented in a relative similar way. They usually start with one ordinary picture of the product, which is either professional or well-edited compare to the Chinese ads. The next thing we see is the product name and purchase information. Here the Matas ad posts the product name simply as what it is, whereas the Chinese ads include also other information in the name, e.g. the product effects. Moving on the next part there is a short introduction of the product effect on the left, and some basic information of the product, together with delivery and return information on the right. Thereafter, some consumer comments are presented below. This is the whole ad, which can be illustrated by the selected Matas Natur ad presented in the following.



Source: https://www.matas.dk

As we can see in this example, The Matas Natur ad is more briefly and does not use many pictures and colors to decorate the ad. It seems like the content of the Matas Natur ad focuses more on attribute information of the product, e.g. the product name, ingredients, effects and so on, presented by a piece of undecorated text. This kind of information is usually seen as arguments, which are used to evidence the product benefits to a user. Of course, there are also some cue information as customer comments, promotion and pictures, but they are not presented as much as the Chinese ads did. On the contrary, most of the Chinese online ads filled more than

10 pages pr. ad, and they all decorated with flowery words, professional pictures, colorful visual images, multiple product demonstration, detailed product introduction and thousands of consumer reviews. The selected Chinese ads will be later analyzed in detail, hence, I will not give examples her. However, it is easy to see that the ads used both more arguments and simple cues than the Matas Natur ad. It is obviously that the Danish ad and the Chinese ads used different strategies to advertising and different ways to persuade consumers. In the following parts of analysis, I will analyze how the Chinese ads for foreign personal care products used messages, and why they are successful in China.

5.2. Effectiveness analysis of the selected Chinese ads

As the goal of this study is to analyze the message use in some successful Chinese ads, the first task here is to make sure whether the ads are effective. This will be done based on 2 parts of data. One is the ads, and another one is the questionnaires. First of all, as the top 2 bestselling products on the 2 biggest Chinese E-Commerce platforms, the remarkable sales of the products can already prove that the ads are more effective compare with other similar ads. Additionally, the ads are double tested by exposing them to some potential Chinese customers, and the result shows also the ads are effective of appealing for consumer's positive attitudes towards the advertised products. This statement is concluded because that most of the messages are seen by most of the respondents as attractive and important messages, which can cause positive feelings towards the products, except the messages, which are promoting or recommending other products. All in all, the selected ads are successful.

When we now know the ads are successful, it is time to discuss how they are effective from the ELM's perspective. According to Rucker & Petty (2006) designing an ad guided by the ELM begins with considering the audiences' elaboration level, and then designing messages, which match to the target consumers' elaboration level and the advertiser's attitude change desire. Thereafter, testing and evaluating the effectiveness of the designed messages before the ad is posted. In this case the ads are already posted and tested in reality. The sales of the advertised products are good proofs to argue that the ads are successful in a certain degree. However how the ads persuade the audiences is a very important question to investigate. Fox example, are they more effective under high elaboration condition seeking for an enduring attitude change or under low elaboration condition chasing for an immediate attitude change? To answer this question we

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have to know the persuaded buyers' elaboration level. According to Petty & Cacioppo (1986) one's elaboration level decides how the person processes messages, and how he/she is persuaded. It means that a person has high elaboration level processes usually arguments through central route, and the attitude change is more enduring, whereas someone has low elaboration level is more likely to process simple cues through peripheral route, and the formed attitude is not persistent. In this sense, one's elaboration level, the received message characteristics and the followed attitude change are normally consistent (Rucker & Petty 2006). Hence, if we know the message characteristics of the ads, we can somewhat speculate the persuaded buyers' level of elaboration and the type of their attitude change. However such a speculation may not be reliable, since an ad usually contains both arguments and simple cues, it is difficult to evaluate one is persuaded by which kind of message. In this situation, the ads are tested again by some potential customers, who have a certain level of elaboration, namely, people who would like to buy an imported cream. As it is mentioned in the methodology chapter, this study aims to focus on a more practical situation of elaboration level. Therefore, the ads are not tested under both high and low elaboration conditions, as it is rare that people have very low elaboration level will voluntary open an ad in the Internet. Following I will go through the ads and the questionnaires one by one, for analyzing the message characteristics of the ads and how this messages work on potential customer with a certain level of elaboration. Since a real endurance of the attitude change has to be tested over time, this study will only focus on the message characteristics and elaboration level.

5.2.1. Analysis of ad 1

Every message in ad 1 was given a code and then classified into 19 groups of information according to the message topic and message characteristics. When following Petty & Cacioppo's (1986) definition of argument and cue information, argument here is accepted as a message that usually contains attribute information of the product and can provide evidence to generate favorable attitude towards the product, and cue is seen as information that evokes audience's positive attitude to the product with no help of arguments. Guided by the above definitions, the 19 groups of information were then categorized into argument and cue information. Following is an overall view of the messages in ad 1.

Arguments	Num		Cues	Num	Percenta
	bers	ge (%)		bers	ge (%)
Product basic information	2	91.7/91.7	Shop (advertiser) credit	1	50/66.7
			information		
Product name and purchase	1	50/100	Promotion for other	5	23.3/20
information			products		
Pictures of the product	2	83.3/75	Product source	1	100/66.7
Product function (effect)	1	100/83.3	Introduction of the seller	4	83.3/66.7
Skin problem introduction	2	58.3/33.3	Declaration of oversea	2	91.7/83.3
			direct shipping & official		
			customs clearance		
Skin problems that the product	3	94.4/77.8	Brand introduction	6	80.6/75
can solve					
How the product work on skin	1	100/100	Answers for common	2	83.3/41.7
			questions		
Organic and natural ingredients	1	83.3/83.3	Service commitment	1	83.3/66.7
contained in the product					
How and why the organic and 1		100/83.3	Announcement for special	1	100/33.3
natural ingredients work on skin			information		
			Customer comments of the	2	100/91.7
			product		

In this table we can see the characteristics of message included in the ad, the numbers of the messages under a topic, percentage of people who agree with the message is attractive on the left and percentage of people who agree with the message is important on the right. Here a few questions have not been answered, and they are counted as neither agree nor disagree. How the percentages are calculated is seen in appendix (2.5, 3.5, 4.5 and 5.5). One thing has to mention is that for some messages presented twice in the questionnaires (text form and text and picture form), only the text and picture form are counted in the numbers of the message, since this is the real one, which is presented in the ad, and the text form is only for showing different impacts on the respondents of the 2 forms. This will be further explained in section (5.4.13) in the analysis part.

If we only look at the table, it seems like there are more simple cues used in the ad. Actually, many argument-relevant messages are longer than a cue message, and these 2 kinds of messages take almost the same space in the ad. Also, some message, e.g. pictures for the product and brand introduction contained information that can both serve as an argument and a cue, depending on the receiver's elaboration level. At the meanwhile, we can conclude from the questionnaire that at least more than half respondents have positive attitude to all the messages, except messages that promote other products. It means that most respondents and probably also the persuaded buyers are influenced by both central arguments and peripheral cues. This makes the situation more complicated, since we cannot directly conclude whether the ad is argument information or simple cue dominated. In fact, it is rare that argument or cue solely influence a receiver. In the most situations, the both types of information are processed and work on audience, but one may dominate (Chaiken and Mahesearan, 1994; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Further, when the 2 types of information generate congruent attitude, they support each other in forming receiver's attitude, whereas arguments may dominate the information processing, when the 2 types of information generate incongruent attitude (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). However, when it is concerned with a collectivist culture as China, consensus cues play a great role in persuasion (Aaker and Maheswaran, 1997). One thing can be sure that the respondents have a certain level of elaboration, since they are all interested in foreign cream, and they processed both the argument and cue information in ad 1. In this case, I argue that the ad contained almost equivalent argument and cue information, and it is effective for people who have a certain level of elaboration.

5.2.2. Analysis of ad 2

Ad 2 is selected from the same E-Commerce platform as ad 1. They may therefore have more similarities, since a platform usually have requirements of what content an ad have to include for it can be improved for publishing. To study the messages characteristics in ad 2, the messages were grouped and categorized into argument-relevant information and cue information as well as what I did in ad 1. 16 groups of messages were generated in ad 2, and they are demonstrated in the below table.

Arguments	Num	Percentag	Cues	Num	Percentag
	bers	e (%)		bers	e (%)
Product basic information	2	81.8/72.7	Shop (advertiser) credit	1	72.7/63.6
			information		
Product name and purchase	1	27.3/54.5	Promotion for the product	5	27.3/20
information			and other products		
Pictures of the product	1	63.6/45.5	Service commitment	1	54.5/54.5
Knowledge about wrinkle	1	63.6/45.5	Announcement for special	3	63.6/39.4
			information		
Declaration of the product	1	100/90.9	Brand history and	7	76.6/67.5
effect on wrinkle			advantage		
Product function (effect) in	1	100/90.9	Logistics	1	63.6/54.5
detail					
Introduction of contained	1	100/90.9	Customer comments	2	90.9/81.8
organic and natural					
ingredients					
Knowledge about organic	1	54.5/27.3			
plant					
Organic certification of the	1	81.8/63.6			
product					

It seems like the ad used more simple cues than argument-relevant messages, if we only look at the above table. However, when looking at the ad, the length of these 2 types of messages is almost the same, and also some information contained in *Brand history and advantages* can be seen as both argument and cue message. We then move on the questionnaires, and here I found that most of the promotion information is still seen by most of the respondents as information, which is either attractive or important for favorable attitude formation. Moreover, information about *Product name and price* is accepted as important information but not attractive for consumer, while most of *Announcements for special information* are seen as attractive information but not important. The rest of the messages are most seen by most respondents that they can create positive feelings towards the advertised product. It means that the respondents

are persuaded by the ad. I then argue that ad 2 is also effective for people have a certain degree of elaboration.

5.2.3. Analysis of ad 3

Ad 3 is selected from another platform than the first 2 ads. The use of messages is a little bit different from the first 2, but the differences only limit in the way of presenting messages, and the meanings that the messages pass on are still similar. I used the same method as what I did in the last 2 ads to study the messages in ad 3, namely, grouping the messages and analyzing message characteristics. The messages were classified into 20 groups and divided as to categories.

Arguments	Nu	Percentag	Cues	Num	Percentag
	mbe	e (%)		bers	e (%)
	rs				
Product name and purchase	1	25/100	Shop (advertiser) credit	2	87.5/81.3
information			information		
Pictures of the product	2	93.8/87.5	Promotion for the product	5	35/15
			and other products		
Product basic information	2	50/87.5	Product sales and comment	1	100/100
			data statistics		
Product function (effect)	2	75/81.2	Service commitment	1	75/75
Introduction of the product's	1	87.5/87.5	Announcement of special	3	58.3/45.8
hydrating effect			information		
Contained organic and	1	100/100	Introduction of the seller	2	65.3/62.5
natural ingredients					
How the contained organic	1	100/100	Brand introduction	6	72.9/66.7
and natural ingredients work					
on skin					
Introduction of 12000iu	1	100/87.5	Customer comments	5	77.5/72.5
contained in the product					
Advantage of the product	4	78.1/59.4	Logistics	1	75/62.5
Use of the product	2	75/56.3			

Knowledge of skin problem	2	31.3/68.8		
and effect of the product				

Compare to the last to ads, this ad puts great effort into *Product sales and comment data statistics*, *Brand introduction* and *Customer comments*. Although it looks like many argument-relevant messages are used in the ad, cue information takes more space in the ad. Since for most of the messages, the respondents agree with they are both attractive and important for changing attitude towards the product, I argue that ad 3 used a little more cue messages, but the whole ad is still effective for people who have a certain degree of elaboration.

5.2.4. Analysis of ad 4

Ad 4 is selected from the same platform as ad 3. As we can imagine that the last 2 ads have a similar style of presenting message. However, this does not mean that the message characteristics in the 2 ads are also similar. In the rest of this section, I will analyze the message characteristics in ad 4 and how the messages are effective. The messages were classified into 15 groups and then divided as arguments and cues. Following is an illustration of the messages.

Arguments	Num	Percentag	Cues	Num	Percentag
	bers	e (%)		bers	e (%)
Product name and purchase	1	85.7/85.7	Shop (advertiser) credit	2	71.4/57.1
information			information		
Pictures of the product	8	71.4/66.1	Promotion for the product and	8	42.9/28.6
			other products		
Product basic information	1	57.1//85.7	Product sales and comment	1	85.7/85.7
			data statistics		
Product function (effect)	2	78.6/57.1	Announcement of special	2	78.6/71.4
			information		
Contained organic and	1	100/100	Brand introduction	6	83.3/76.2
natural ingredients and					
their effect					
Advantage of the product	5	92.9/85.7	Customer comments	2	100/100

Usage of the product	1	100/100
Knowledge of skin	4	64.3/57.1
problem		
How the product work on	1	100/100
the problems		

Again, it seems like arguments are more used in ad 4, but there are many *Pictures of the product* serve as both arguments and cues. Also the arguments and the cues take almost the same space in the ad. In regard to the questionnaire, the data shows that most of the respondents agree with the messages used in the ad are attractive and important to create positive feelings to the product. I therefore conclude that the respondents influenced by both argument- and cue-relevant information. In other words, ad 4 is effective under the condition, in which the potential buyers have a certain degree of elaboration.

To include, all the 4 selected ads are effective in creating positive attitude under a somewhat high elaboration condition. By analyzing the messages included and the questionnaires, we also found how or in what way the ads are effective from the ELM's perspective. Since all the ads used almost equivalent arguments and cues, maybe for some ads cues are a little more than arguments, and most of the respondents mean that most of the messages are both attractive and important for promoting the product, I argue that all the 4 ads are effective for people who want to buy a foreign cream. Also, because all the ads contained a big amount of cue-relevant information, we accept that the customers are to a high degree influenced by simple cues, especially others' comments and brand information. I therefore also conclude that cue-relevant information is influential and important in the ads.

5.3. Thematic analysis of message use

After an overall analysis of the effectiveness of the ads, I will move on analyzing the concrete messages, in order to explain what qualities of the messages enabled the success of the ads, and how the messages presented in the ads. In the following, I will discuss the analytical process of the messages, which followed the first 5 steps of the thematic analysis. Thereafter, I will report the findings obtained from the first 5 steps in detail in the 6th step.

5.3.1. Step 1: Familiarization with the data

The goal of this stage in the thematic analysis is to get familiar with the data, namely the selected Chinese ads. This process started already when I found the ads on the Internet, read and selected them. I then printed the ads and read them a few time through again. It seems as a trifling matter, but it is as important as any other steps, as Braun & Clarke (2006) claim that becoming familiar with the empirical data has significant meaning to the whole research, since how well we know our data determinates how well we can analyze them. However, I do not solely read the data, and I also think about how to code the data. My way of doing this is to take notes regarding the possible codes, when reading the ads. We cannot simply put a few sentences randomly together and try to code them, instead, we have to think and note what information can be divided into one small piece, what the piece of information is saying and meaning, and how an initial code for it would be formed. For example, on the top and the middle of all ads some basic information about the seller is posted, like the name of the shop and the shop's credit information, where customers rate for quality of the advertised product, service of the shop and the speed of logistics. Ideas about coding emerged in my mind that these information can be translated as codes, Advertiser or seller Credit information, and I then noted this on the printed ads. After have done this I have already know every detail of the data and have thoughts about how to form some of the codes. However, this is only initial ideas for helping me to remember the thoughts showed up during the reading, and the actual codes would be generated in the next step, in which I will discuss and explain the coding process.

5.3.2. Step 2: Initial coding generation

In this step all information in the ads is coded piece by piece, and a code is given to every piece to provide a short and summarized understanding of the piece of information. How I did it is that I went through all the ads and my initial notes and coded according to what the data is saying and meaning. Every one to a few sentences, picture(s) or any other information within one small topic was classified into one block, which was then given one or more initial codes, and the final code was decided later. Every small block is copied from the ad to a new document and pasted on the left side of the document. The top of a piece of message is where to place the initial codes reflect the relevant data, and the right side of the paper is free for writing questions for some potential customers to answer later. The example below can show how exactly I did it.

No.	Information in the	ad	Potential customers rate for the attractiveness of the message.	
1	Advertiser/seller c	redit information		
	一 決新大药房海外专营店 。 联系容服 + 关注店	古 前品 9.46 ◆ 服务 9.45 ◆ 时效 9.26 ◆ 古補 演師大的房海外专套店 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○		
2	Product name and	basic purchase information		
	【新西兰澳洲直部】 趨乐; 霜60ml * 1罐 价格 民言	- 舌Trilogy天然有机野玫瑰果油美肤去疤 保湿面		

All information in the ads is coded, so that I did not leave any part out, and a thorough analysis of the messages is therefore possible to be expected. In order to explain the coding more concrete, 2 examples are presented following to illustrate how the coding processed.



澳新大药房ANZ PHARMACY隶属于内森集团NATHAN GROUP 旗下,新西兰政府注册,海外独资企业。销售的所有商品与海外实 体药房同步,并非针对国内市场的"改良商品"。澳新大药房ANZ PHARMACY为国内少数由海外药房直供的跨境企业,以海外直邮 高诚信方式赢得了国内消费者的认可。

Source: Ad 1 Questionnaire: no. 1-12

Government Registered Pharmacy

ANZ Pharmacy belongs to Nathan Group, which is registered by the Zelanian government. All the products sell overseas are exactly the same as the products in New Zealand, and not the "improved products" that only produced for pleasing Chinese consumers...the pharmacy is recognized by many Chinese consumers as its direct shipping model.

This extract tells about the background information of the seller including the advantages of the seller. The code for this message is *Introduction of the seller*. How the way of introducing the seller in the ad works on the Chinese consumers will be discussed later. Besides text, pictures in ads are significant to evoke consumers' positive attitudes towards the product. Another example regarding pictures can better illustrate how pictures were coded.

Master thesis



Source: Ad 1 Questionnaire: no. 1-11

This picture shows how the pharmacy looks like in New Zealand, or from where the products will be sent to the Chinese consumers, and how the products are selling and displayed etc. The code for such a picture is *Picture of the (seller's) Pharmacy*.

After all the ads were coded in the similar way, the given initial codes were viewed again, and an actual code was then decided. Every ad is consisted of around 50 extracts, and they all coded and were given a code. It ended up with approximately 50 codes for each ad and approximately 200 codes for all ads. Although it is produced a verity of codes, some general similarities can still be seen in the differences. These similarities or some common rules are what I aim to find first in this research, and then to study whether they result in the success of the Chinese ads, also how and why they can lead to it.

At this point I have all codes at hand gathered in a word document for each ad, as they are mentioned earlier. These documents were transformed to questionnaires, which were sent to some potential customers in China for rating the attractiveness and importance of the messages. The full questionnaires can be found in the appendix (2.2, 3.2, 4.2 and 5.2). One thing should be noticed is that some messages were asked twice in the questionnaires, one presented with only text and another presented with both text and picture, in order to see how the two different forms of advertising affect consumers. This can also reflect the differences between the Matas Natur ad and the Chinese ads, as the first one is presented with mainly text and the second one is displayed with colorful visual depiction. An example of this is shown below.



Source: Ad 2 Questionnaire: no. 2-12, 2-13

The first question asks the respondents to answer how the text described product function affect them, and the second one aims to know how the same content described by same text together with a picture appeal to the respondents. The effectiveness of these 2 different ways of display message will be discussed in section 5.4.13.

Now it time for sending questionnaires. Thereafter, the collected answers were gathered into one blank questionnaire, one for each ad. Numbers of supporters of each option were written beside the option. I then ended up with one document for each ad with all pieces of messages in it and the codes and gathered consumer attitudes reflect the messages at hand. Following is an illustration of how the documents look like. The full summarized questionnaires can be found in appendix (2.4, 3.4, 4.4 and 5.4).



These documents have been a good help for analyzing the messages and the consumer attitudes of the messages. In order to find connection between the messages, I then cut the messages into piece. It seems to be messy to have about 200 pieces of paper at hand and searching clues in them, but this is an easy way to move the messages around, since they have to be grouped and revised many times. In this way I am able to separate the messages and group the similar information and further search for themes in the separated messages. Following is an overview of the cut pieces for ad 1 to ad 4.



The messages are first grouped within each ad, in order to show the message characteristics in every ad. The result of the grouping has already been shown in the effectiveness analysis of the ads. It should be noticed is that the groups within every single ad has nothing to do with the grouping of themes, which are generated from all the messages and cods. The in-ad grouping is only for demonstrating the message characteristics in the ads.

For a more general analysis not only limited in analyzing each ad one by one, the pieces of paper were then mixed together for creating themes. One might question how I keep track on so many small papers, when doing the analysis. In fact, every piece of paper was labeled with a number, e.g. 1-1 means the first message in ad 1, and 2-3 is the third message in ad 2. These numbers can help me easily track back to the ad that the message belongs to. In the next section I will explain the details of how I built the themes.

5.3.3. Step 3: Searching for themes based on the initial coding

In this phase, I focus on generating themes, which can provide a recapitulative short overview of the data, and which are supported by numbers of extracts (messages) from the data together with codes reflect the extracts. Since this research aims to explain the success of the ads from the ELM's perspective, I took the ELM as a start point, when grouping the codes. In the ELM, a message is seen can serve as an argument or a cue, and the 2 types of messages can influence audience in different way depending on the audience's elaboration level (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Thus, separating the 2 kinds of information from each other can facilitate the further analysis. I therefore considered both topic and message characteristics, when searching for themes, meaning that codes that put into one theme group have to discuss the same topic and also to serve as the same type of message (argument or cue). This grouping process sounds confused, also the numbers of pieces of paper can make it more complicated. To illustrate how I grouped codes together, the following examples are presented.



Source: Ad 1 Questionnaire: no. 1-1

Source: Ad 2 Questionnaire: no. 2-1

贺本清官方正品旗舰店

源自德国百年天然护肤经典品牌 🔩



4.8 4.8 4.8 Source: Ad 4 Questionnaire: no. 4-1

天猫4年店

描述 服务 物流

These 4 extracts are all telling the *seller's credit information*, as what certificates they have and how other customers comment on their service, speed of logistics and description of the products. For the first, all information is concerned with the same topic, the seller's credit. For the second, all the information included in the messages is cue-relevant information. In this way, the codes are grouped in the theme, *Seller credit information* and the theme is categorized in the categorization, simple cues. Having the above criteria in mind, I classified the codes into 13 theme groups. However, this is only a rough distribution of the codes, and a more thoughtful grouping will be done later during the analytical process, where the initial themes will be viewed many times, and they may be changed or redone. Because of the above reasons, it is no need to give names to the initial themes at this stage, since the grouping does not finish yet. The below picture can illustrate the groups in this early stage.



As it is mentioned earlier these initial themes have to be reviewed and changed, even more, this step might be redone many times. I went through all my groups and the codes included in them to make the necessary changes. Some themes were divided into 2 themes, since it included too broad subject, and some themes were merged together, since they present alike content, also, some codes were moved aground from one theme to another. I finally ended with the following 12 themes, and they are listed here.

Product name and purchase informationProduct picture displayProduct basic informationIntroduction of the seller and product sourceProduct function (effect)Customer service informationKnowledge of skin careCustomer commentsContained organic and natural ingredientsBrand informationSpecial point comparisonpromotion



Although the themes are given names and divided into categories depending on the message characteristics, the themes are not settled yet. They will be viewed again and revised when it is needed in the next step.

5.3.4. Step 4: Review of the themes

As the title of this step, the earlier named themes were reviewed again, in order to see whether any revise is needed. This was done by looking through all the themes and the codes they included. During this process I was thinking whether there are themes include too much or too diverse, whether the themes are relevant to the theory in use, and whether everything is in correlation. To measure whether a theme included appropriate numbers of codes, I tried to describe every theme in one to two sentence. If the theme can be recapitulated, they are qualified. If not, I have to consider whether some codes have to be moved out from one theme to another. When viewing the themes, I realized that some overall impacts of the ads were also very important, but they did not include in the themes, e.g. visual impact of the whole ad. This kind of image can also make sense in persuasion. Similarly, how the used numbers of the arguments contribute in the costumers' attitude formation is also worth to analyze. I therefore added 2 themes, visual impact and numbers of arguments. However, this themes are concerned with the customers' overall understanding of the ads. They are therefore resulted by all the information in the ads. In this sense, there are not codes that divided into the 2 themes, but the respondents in the questionnaires have told their feelings about such overall effects of the ads. So the 2 themes are supported by data in the questionnaires. At the end of this step, the themes were added up to 14, which are illustrated in the table below.

Messages serve as arguments	Messages serve as cues
Product name and purchase information	Customer comments
Product basic information	Customer service information
Product picture display	Brand information
Product function (effect)	Introduction of the seller and product source
Knowledge of skin care	Promotion
Contained organic and natural ingredients	Visual impact
Special point comparison	Numbers of arguments

5.3.5. Step 5: Theme definition and labeling

The main goal of this step is to define and label the themes. Before doing so, I went through all the themes once again. This is for considering whether I have to merge some themes together or divide any theme into more themes, depending on what kind of an analysis I expected. It is no doubt that this study aims to conduct an extensive analysis, but it does not mean as diverse as better, so that I decided to not divide any theme further, but for a thorough analysis of the ads, 3 themes were added in the last step. Thereafter, the themes were defined and labeled.

Product name and purchase information is the first theme and consists of 4 codes. They all tell the information about what the product is, the product's price and how to purchase the product.

The second theme is *Product basic information*, which is set up by 8 codes, which tells basic information about the product, e.g. the name, expiration date, contained ingredients, product content, original country etc.

The next theme, *Product picture display* contains 13 codes. They are all product pictures, which show the product by image in different ways.

Product function (effect) is a theme, which includes 26 codes that tells what effects people can get by using the product.

Knowledge of skin care is a theme created by codes that tells knowledge about skin problems relevant to the product, and the way to take care of them. The theme includes 12 codes.

The theme *Contained organic and natural ingredients* is made up by codes that are concerned with the organic and natural ingredients contained in the product, and the way and reasons the ingredients work on skin. There are 12 codes in this theme.

Special point of the product is a theme formed by 9 codes, in which the special points that make the product different from its competitors are displayed.

Customer comments includes 2 parts, the credit customers gave to the seller, and the comments customers gave to the product. This code consists of 19 codes.

Customer service information consists of 3 parts, answers for common questions from customers, seller's service commitment and announcement for special information. Here 19 codes are represented.

Brand information as a theme includes 40 codes. They are all about history, concept and advantages of the brand the product belongs to.

7 codes are included in the theme, *Introduction of the seller and product source*, in which information about the seller, the shop and how the seller sourced the product are presented.

In the theme *Promotion*, 21 codes have been given. They are all about discount information for the advertised product or other product in different ways.

Visual impact is another theme, which includes no concrete code, but is supported by customers' answers about an overall feeling of visual information in the ads.

The last theme is *Numbers of arguments*, which again has no concrete code included, but an understanding of customers' thoughts about the length of arguments are provided in the questionnaires.

5.3.6. Step 6: Report writing

When all the last 5 steps have been done, it is time to write the report of what I found. When I come to this stage, the rest things I have to discuss in this step is to go through every single theme and the messages they included, in order to explain how and why the messages are presented in the way they were presented, and how they contribute in the selected Chinese ads' success.

5.4. Message analysis

As it is mentioned earlier, the messages are divided into 2 parts, depending on whether the messages serve as argument or cue. Of course, there are also some messages serve as both argument and cue. In this section, I will provide all the finding by analyzing the themes one by one.

5.4.1. Product name and purchase information

Product name here refers to the title of an ad. This is a very important part, since it is the first information a potential customer reads, and it can provide an overall view of the advertised product. This view may lead a receiver to make an assessment about whether to reader the ad further. What the product is and how much it costs are almost the crucial information for a person to make a purchase decision. When this information can evoke an audience's favorable attitude, his/her interest for knowledge about the product and motivation for reading the rest of the ad increase. Additionally, the words included in a product name also determinates how big the chance is for the product can be searched by potential customers. For example, if a cream is imported, but this information does not include in the title or the name, hence, people who searching for imported cream may not find the ad, or the ad may be placed very behind other ads, which include the key word imported. So to name the product with a better title can help with

reaching more potential customers. What the 4 Chinese ads did in this part might tell what a better title in China is.

【德国进口】茜勒博士 紧肤抗皱日霜紧致去痘印淡化斑点保湿补水面霜 有机护肤 Source: Ad 2 Questionnaire: no. 2-2	[Germany imported] DR. SCHELLER, tighten skin, anti-wrinkle day cream, dilute smallpox in india, anti-spot, moisturize cream, organic skin care
美国品牌 海外直供	Derma E/Derma E (in Chinese), vitamin E natural
Derma E/德玛依天然维E面霜VE 补水保湿日晚霜男女滋润霜懒人霜	cream, moisturize day/night cream, male/female
Source: Ad 3 Questionnaire: no. 3-3	smoothing cream, cream for lazy people

The first example shows the title for ad 2. We can see that 8 points of information are mentioned, including the product is imported from Germany, the product brand, all the effects of the product and the cream is organic. It seems like the ad tries to present very much information in one name, and the rest of the ads did the same. This can be further supported by the second example from ad 3, where the title includes also information as much as possible. It expresses the product name in both English and Chinese, highlights the cream contained natural ingredients and vitamin E, and claims the cream can used as both day and night cream to both male and female and lazy people, who haves less time to take care of their skin. The more information is integrated into one name, the more kinds of customers might be attracted. However, it is not saying that a title is as long as better. People can be irritated by a long title, especially for them, who have low elaboration level. Also, every E-Commerce platform has a limitation for the length of title, it is impossible to make an extremely long title. A long title is more effective to customers, who have high or at least little elaboration.

Price and other purchase information is another part of this theme. Here an audience is exposed price of the product, information for shipping, the location of the seller etc. There are no special ways of display this information, but it is very important for customers to know. This can be supported by that many respondents of the questionnaires agree with that product name and purchase information do not contribute very much in forming their positive feelings towards the product, but they are very important to be presented in the ads.

Ouestionnaire: no. 2-6

5.4.2. Product basic information

This information is usually found in 2 places in the ad. First it is placed under the name and purchase information with small size and black color of the words, providing information like, product name, item no., name of shop, product weight, original country, main effect of product etc. In all the selected ads, this kind of information is included and presented in a similar way. An example of this information shows in the following.

商品详情	评价(20+)	服务说明	同店	推荐	¥245.00	加入购物车
商品名称: 商品毛重:1	【德国进口】茜勒博士	- 紧肤抗皱日霜紧	致	商品编号:1959757538 商品产地:德国	店铺: 茜勒博士全球舰 货号:405142455032	
性别:通用				功效:提拉紧致 , 控油平衡	「分类:面霜	Source: Ad 2

This information does not stick out, at least not as showy as the menu bar on the top, but it is very important according to the respondents. The bar, which shows the menu of the ad, price of the product and shopping cart, follows a reader during the whole reading. This is designed by the E-Commerce platform, same for all ads, and it will not be analyzed. Besides this, the product information is usually posted again in the beginning or the middle of the ad, in a more attractive way with one or more professional pictures of the product, but the included items are differs from the last one. Following is above information for same product presented in the second way.



Source: Ad 2 Questionnaire: no. 2-17

Here in this part, the advantages of the product are most focused on compare to the last part focusing on basic information. According to JD and Taobao, the platform where the ads selected, there are requirements to what information has to expose in the first part but no limitation for the second part. This might be a reason that the similar information is posted twice, since in the second part the advertiser can highlight the advantages of the product, instead of posting pure indicator information of the product. People may notice that the most eye-catching thing in this example is actually the picture of the product. So there is a reason to think the highlighted picture works on the audiences. This guess is proved in the questionnaire (Appendix 2.2: no. 2-16 and 2-17), where the message is asked in two ways (presented with only text and presented with both text and picture) of its attractiveness and importance. For the text form 5 out 11 respondents mean that the message is attractive and 4 respondents agree with the message is important. However, for the text and picture vision, all 11 respondents think the message is attractive and 10 mean it is important. Pictures play a great role in the ad. In the next section, how product pictures were displayed in the ads will be discussed.

5.4.3. Product picture display

According to Wu et al. (2015) pictures tell much more than words and capture better attention from the audience, since they can enable a potential customer to visualize the product. Pictures used in many ways in the ads, but only the pictures for product display will be analyzed in this section. Of course, the rest of pictures will also be analyzed later in visual impact section (5.4.13). Since picture is significant for capturing attention and further creating favorable attitude to a product, how the pictures are used in the ads has also important meanings for answering why the Chinese ads are successful.

Pictures for the product is first displayed beside the product name and purchase information. 1 to 6 pictures are normally used here, and people can easily flash them from one to another with the mouse. Usually, there are also outstanding slogan or/and headline placed within the picture to pass on some key information to potential buyers. Following is an example of this kind of pictures.



Source: Ad 1 Questionnaire: no. 1-4

The first picture is usually the default option of the pictures, if you do not move the mouse to show another one. That is also why the slogan or/and headline are normally presented within the first picture. In the above example we can see the red banner with text says that the product is directly shipping (from New Zealand), the price includes tax to the Chinese Customs, the product is imported with original package, and the quality is guaranteed. Why this kind of information is so important to be highlighted will be discussed later. In this section I would like to focus on the pictures. Another place, where the product picture is used, is in the middle of an ad, and this part is usually called product display. Here some clear big size pictures are used to provide potential buyers a good experience of visualization.



Source: Ad 4 Questionnaire: no. 4-44

Source: Ad 3 Questionnaire: no. 3-36

After study the pictures from the 4 ads, I found that the pictures all have a high quality, taken from different angles of the product and very clear, that we can read the words on the product itself. When saying high quality picture, it does not only mean the picture, but also photography techniques that make the photographed product as a high quality product, at least high quality in package. And Chinese people have a tendency to judge a product by its package (Lab Brand, 2009). This makes sense of why so many pictures are used in the Chinese ads. In the meanwhile, more clear pictures from different angles can also support the claim that the product is imported with original package, which is important to a Chinese customer. However, the effect of the product is still the core of the creams. The next section will focus on how the advertisers' display the product effect in the ads.

5.4.4. Product function (effect)

This type of information is important to people, who have a certain degree of elaboration or at least little elaboration, since this is the crucial attribute information of the product and needs effort to process. The selected ads prefer to start with claiming the effect shortly with rhetoric diction, and then get deeper to how the product works on and change one's skin. It is easy to see that this part has a close connection with the knowledge of skin care part and the part regarding the contained organic and natural ingredients, since the last 2 parts are evidencing and supporting the claim of product effects. The last 2 parts will be gone through later, now I would like to first deal with the ways of product effect claiming.



Redness · Clogged pores · Dryness – goodbye Moisturizing, relief and smoothing Remove problems, leave you healthy and beautiful skin

Source: Ad 4 Questionnaire: no. 4-15



The fist example is a short claiming of the product effects, and the second one is about how the product actually works. As mentioned earlier, many places in the ads, text was directly presented within the picture, we can see the same way is used in the above examples. Actually, in all the 4 ads, products are displayed in a similar way and used similar methods. The way of editing picture and text will be discussed further in section (5.4.13) visual impact.

By looking at the content in the above examples, we can see that the ads prefer to use flowery fancy words, combining with the professional pictures. A potential buyer is then provided a graceful image of the product. However, when translating the text into English, the beauty of language is lost, since the researcher is not able to write English as a poet. Another thing is worth to mention is that the advertisers have a trend to extend the effects of the product. Fox example, when talking about a moisture cream, it is effect does not only focus on moisturizing, but also relief, reducing clogged pores problem and preventing wrinkles etc. Another example can also show this (from ad 2: no. 2-20), in which the product is an anti-wrinkle cream, but the effects are extended as anti-wrinkle, tightening, diluting smallpox in india, anti-spot, smoothing and moisturizing. Such a powerful cream is really attractive to a woman, as if one cream can solve all problems. However, the advertisers will tell you that the powerful effects are evidenced by knowledge not something they made up. In the next section, knowledge of skin care, I will talk about this.

5.4.5. Knowledge of skin care

Here the "boring" knowledge about skin care within the product effects area is presented. If we say a person with a certain level of elaboration can be motivated to process product effect information, a higher level of elaboration is required for the person to process skin care knowledge, when he or she is interested in the cream, not directly in the knowledge. However, if the knowledge is processed by a potential buyer, it will strengthen the person's attitude towards the product. According to the answers to the questionnaires, more than half of respondents mean that this kind of information is both attractive and important of appealing to positive feelings. While this kind of knowledge is meaningful, we will discuss how this kind of knowledge is used in the ads in the following. In order to show how the skin care knowledge is used to evidence the effects that is claimed in earlier part in this analysis, I will therefore also choose examples from ad 4, as the product effect examples are chosen from ad 4.



Source: Ad 4 Questionnaire: 4-26



Source: Ad 4 Questionnaire: no. 4-27



Source: Ad 4 Questionnaire: no. 4-29

The above 4 examples start with introducing problems like dryness, redness, clogged pores and small wrinkle can be reasoned by the lack of water in skin, and it is not a good idea to deal the problems with simple ways that have no long term benefits. Moisturizing is the best way to solve the listed problems from the root. In this way, a potential customer is led to a solution that you buy the powerful moisture cream, all the above problems will be solved. This kind of information is used in all the 4 ads in the similar way. The introduced knowledge about skin care is usually relevant to the problems the product can solve or a better skin status the product can help a person to reach. Thereafter, the product is introduced as the perfect solution. This part is mainly used to support and enhance a potential buyer a positive attitude towards the product. As well as the following part, contained organic and natural ingredients contributes also to the same goal.

5.4.6. Contained organic and natural ingredients

This part focuses on introducing the organic and natural ingredients contained in the product, including from what plant the ingredient are extracted, how and why they work, sometimes also information about where the plants are grown, and the purity of the organic plants. Since organic and natural personal care product becomes a warm topic in China nowadays, how some successful Chinese ads for similar foreign product presented this information seems to be interesting to study. This would also be a good argument to persuade people, who have a high level of elaboration. I still chose an example from ad 4, as this can also answer how introduction of the contained organic and nature ingredients reflects the product effect and skin care knowledge parts.



In this part pictures of the organic plants are usually displayed, in order to provide a visualized image of the plant. Also the clean and bright plants can provide people a positive connection with the product. Another kind of information is presented around the plan pictures is the effect of the plant or how the valuable ingredients work on skin.

One thing has to be noticed is that the introduction of the organic plants most focuses on its effect on skin beauty value, sometimes healthy benefits are also mentioned. However, things like
animal welfare and environmental benefits are rarely involved, which are some of the most important reasons for European people to choose organic and natural products (Kumar, 2005). This might be the reason why the Matas Natur ads claimed more than once that the production of the product takes great consideration to environment. All over the 4 ads, only one message in ad 1 (Ad 1 Questionnaire: no.1-20) mentioned the brand resists to do experimentation on animals and 2 messages in ad 3 (no. 3-44, 3-45) mentioned the product is environmental friendly, when telling about the safety of the product. One might question if this means that Chinese people are not interested in environment and animal protection. This has to be further investigated, and this research cannot provide evidence to answer this question. Also, as the ads for organic and natural product, the selected ads do not place emphasis on the organic and natural aspect, but other parts, like brand introduction and customers comments, which will be presented later.

5.4.7. Special point comparison

补水保湿: ★★★★★
VE 含 量: ★★★★★★

性价比: *****

性价比: 🔂 📩

It has to be clear that all advertised products have their own special points, but this part will only focus on messages, which directly claim something in the ads that makes the product different from its competitors. This is also seen as a kind of argument-relevant information, since this is arguing why this product is the special and better one. There are different ways to claim how the advertised product is different from others. An aggressive comparison between the advertised product and its competitors is used in ad 3. It is illustrated in the following example.



Source: Ad 3 Questionnaire: no. 3-24

This kind of information usually focuses on one or more strong sides of the product, and then compares the product with other products in these sides. One way of doing this is as what in the above example, comparing specialties that the advertised product and the contrast both have, but the first one is better than the last one. Another way to compare is to choose specialties that the advertised product has, but the similar products usually do not have. As what is in the next example the contained organic plants originates in the nature reserves in Thuringen in Germany.



The above example emphasizes on the strong side, which other product normally do not have, namely, the cream contained ingredients originates in nature reserves in Germany. Here safety and purity of the organic plant is claimed, as what can also be seen in many places in the other ads. Following is 2 examples, but they are extracts for supporting the statement of the safety and purity claim not a comparison between products.



Claiming that the products under the brand are safe, because they do not contain Parabens, mineral oil, SLS, pigment...

Source: Ad 1 Questionnaire: no. 1-20





Claiming the products under the brand passed sensitivity tests and produced after European standard.

Source: Ad 2 Questionnaire: no. 2-23

To frequently make such claims about safety is because of the continuous scandals in food products and other industries (Huang, 2012), together with air pollution (Shao et al, 2016), soil pollution (Greenpeace, 2016), water pollution (Shao et al., 2016) in China make people concern more about what they eat and use. People care very much about the purity of organics and whether there are chemical components contained in the product. By claiming the product is produced in a foreign country, especially a well-developed European country is implying that the product of the product is safe enough and unpolluted. Even more the materials used in the product are obtained from nature reserves area in a European country proved the purity of the organic plants.

After have analyzed the argument-relevant messages in the 4 ads, it shows that the messages focus most on attribute information of the product. They usually start from presenting basic information of the products, and then move to product effects. Thereafter, it argues what the product can, how and why it works, and what makes it special. The arguments used in the ads made thorough explanation of the product effects and responded the social problems the Chinese consumers are worried. Also the result of the questionnaires shows that most respondents are agree with the ads provided overall persuasive and quality arguments. Beside arguments peripheral cues have also played an important role in the ads. In the following sections I will discuss the use of simple cues in the ads.

5.4.8. Customer comments

According to Aaker and Maheswaran (1997), a customer comment is a kind of consensus information, which mainly contains opinions from others about something. A consensus message is presented by some people else than the message sender, in this case the seller or advertiser self.

It could be a buyer who tells about his/her experiences of using the product, a professional within the particular area recommends the product, or any individual or organization express any their own attitude about the product. If someone only influenced by consensus information, meaning that the person does not make a judgment through his/her study of the product itself, but other people's experiences. Consensus information is usually seen as cue information, which is more persuasive under low elaboration condition Petty & Cacioppo (1986). However, Aaker and Maheswaran (1997) proved in their study that people from collectivistic culture e.g. Chinese people are likely to be influence by consensus information under both high and low elaboration conditions. This is in line with Holfstede's cultural dimension theory, in with a person with collectivistic cultural background concerns more about other people's opinions. Since we are talking about advertising on E-Commerce market, where consumers cannot see the product in real, other peoples' opinion about the product might be more important. In the second part of the analysis (5.2) we have already mentioned that consensus information in the ads are influential. Here I will focus on how this kind of message is presented in the ads, and how they influence potential customers.

In the selected ads, customer comments consist of 2 parts. One is comments from customers on the seller's service, the extent to which the seller's description of product match the real product, and the speed of logistics. Another one is comments from the buyers on anything about the product and the purchase. In this case, the comments can only be given by a buyer when he/she logined. The first kind of comments is placed both on the top of the ads and somewhere in the middle, indicated by a scale from 0-5 or 0-10, depending on the requirements of the platform. The followed 2 examples can show how these comments look like.

🔄 澳新大药房海外专营店 商品 9.46 ↓ 服务 9.45 ↓ 时效 9.26 ↓

澳新大药房海外专营店				Product description: 9.46↓ Service: 9.45↓ Logistics: 9.26↓
商品 9.46 ↓	服务 9.45 ↓	时效 9.26 ↓		
🗖 进店道	甘油店逛逛 + 关注店铺		Ad 2: no. 2	-1

Source: Ad 2 Questionnaire: no. 2-1



Source: Ad 3 Questionnaire: no. 3-1

In the examples, the rows of credits I underlined are placed on the top of the ad. This information presented not only by the 4 selected ads, but all ads on the 2 platforms, I therefore make an assumption that this is the information every shop has to expose. This information is important, since it can pass on a first impression to a potential buyer about the seller, before he/she read anything about the product, and this impression might influence one's attitude towards the product in the very beginning. As the exposure of the shop credit information cannot be avoided, and the scores cannot be controlled, some sellers try to present other positive information next to the credit information. As what we can see in the second example of the above two, the advertiser emphasizes that the brand has a long history, and it is originated in the USA. In this way, an audience is not only influenced by the credit, but also the positive messages passed by the advertiser. For a high credit shop, this information can strength the audience's positive attitude to the shop and further to the product, whereas for a low credit shop, this information can remedy or maybe change the audience's opinion in a positive way to the product.

The second kind of comment regards customers' opinion about the product itself. This is usually presented at the end of the ad, but an audience can also find them by clicking the comments bottom on the menu bar placed in the beginning of the ad. Many people chose to make a comment of the product, as there are more 80 comments showed in ad 1, 11,014 in ad 3 and 1975 in ad 4. Consumer comment is not something strange for us, and what a customer will write is not what an advertiser can control. However, many of the sellers try to reply the comments by responding the problems exposed by customers or thanking for the customers' comments and purchase. In this way, the exposed problems can be explained and a potential buyer's negative

feeling reasoned by them might be able to be discounted. Following is 2 examples to illustrate the replies.



It's not the same as the one I bought abroad. I don't know if it is a copy product. Logistics is too slow.

Dear customer, the old package is no longer used. You can find the relevant information on the official homepage. Thanks for your understand and support.

Source: Ad 1 https://item.jd.hk/1975449905.html#comments-list



化妆品净含量:113g 豆***子(重名)

Moisturizing effect is very good, and it can be absorbed very fast. Smells good, like milk. I like it.

My dear, this cream contained natural VE and can moisturize and smooth your skin. The milk smell comes from the contained natural ingredients. Welcome for your next visit.

03.22

解释:亲亲,这款里面会有丰富的天然维E,保湿效果特别好,所以比较湿润哦!看朱是因为 采用的是天然成分,萃取天然植物稿华,会有一股天然植物成分的味道的呢,期待您的再次光

Source: Ad 3:

https://detail.tmall.hk/hk/item.htm?spm=a230r.1.14.122.5prn40&id=527667741189&ns=1&abbucket=11 &skuId=3139886711109

In this example, the customer even posted the picture of the product she received to provide a reader a visualized image of the "real" product (different to the professional pictures the advertiser posted). The seller then thanked the customer. To answer the customer comments is pervasively seen in all the 4 ads, and it is a good way to communicate with customers of concrete problems of the product and the purchase.

As we can see in the first example of the above two, the customer concerns about the product package, so that any differences in the package can lead her to suspect whether the product is a counterfeit. You might wonder why the customer is so sensitive if the package is same as the one she bought overseas. It is because there are too many counterfeits produced in China, and Chinese people trust more a foreign sourced product than a Chinese one. This can be supported by a piece of news from ABC that around 70 % of cosmetic counterfeit products of foreign brands come from China, and this counterfeiting leads to about \$20 billion profits lost yearly for the foreign companies (ABC news, 2016). Since Chinese customers are sensitive to product quality, they are more likely to search for details to prove the quality of the product. Except package, there are also other things that can lead a potential buyer to doubt the quality of the product, for example, logistics (whether the product is delivered from a country overseas) and price (a product with a lower price than its price in the original country can somehow make people to doubt). A part of the next section will discuss how the advertisers respond with these problems in the ads by announcing them as customer service information.

5.4.9. Customer service information

This part includes 3 kinds of information, announcement for special information, answers for common questions and service commitment. In the first part announcement for special information, I focus on how the advertisers deal with changes in product package, logistics, price etc.



Source: Ad 2 Questionnaire: no. 2-28

Shipping procedure, 7-15 days							
Delivered from the bonded area							
Application to the Chinese Customs \rightarrow Customs clearance \rightarrow local logistics \rightarrow customer							

In this example, we can read that the advertiser explains in the ad about shipping procedure. The product is delivered from a bonded area (a domestic zone, in which foreign goods can enter without paying duties, taxes before they are sold, but kept bonded) in China, and this is implying that the goods are stocked in a bonded area by the seller in a big quantity, they are therefore

cheaper in price and faster to be delivered. The following example is an explanation of change in package.

DERMA·E	中文組
25	2016年10月18号
Dctober 18. 2016	尊敬的德玛依客户: 为了让我们的产品更加有效且贴近您的需求,我们 常会在包装,设计和配方上进行一些变动和调整。 据修改类型不同,可能会导致与您之前购买过的产 有显著性的不同,比如包装的重新设计。但是通常 况下,我们只会对现有版本做出轻微调整,比如加 色调和变位。对此可能对您带来的任何疑感,我们 感抱歉。
beer DERMA t [®] Coloment: In an effort to keep our products an relevant and effective as possible for our valued customens, we often make madifications to the postaging capy, design and/or formula impowements, and/or product and the second second second second second second second second product particular to the second second second second second second second get to reflect a mixer change to threngthen the postaging capy and/or layout, the equipaging term and cause the second second second second products and the second second second second second second incorrely.	

Dear DERMA E Customers:

In an effort to keep our products as relevant and effective as possible for our world customers, we often make modifications to the packaging copy, design and/or formula improvements. Depending on the level of change, these modifications can appear significantly different form to previous purchase, as in the case of a packaging design, in most cases, the revisions are usually sight to reset a minor change to strengthen the packaging copy and/or layout.

We apologies for any contusion or concern this may course you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Linda Miles D.O.M.

President Co-Founder and Chief Formulator of Derma E

Source: Ad 3 Questionnaire: no. 3-37

Since looking at the package is an easier and effective way for a person to evaluate whether a received product is a counterfeit, many Chinese customers like to compare the product package with the one, which is purchased overseas or in physical shops. In this case, any change of the product package can cause a customer to doubt the quality of the product. To avoid customers question the product quality because of any change of the product, the advertisers usually post an announcement when there is any detail change of the product. This is a good way to avoid a buyer to post misunderstood negative statements of the product.

Similarly, there are many common questions, which are frequently asked by the customers. These questions are also answered in the ads, in order to save time and avoid negative customer comments. For example, some customers are not satisfied about showing personal ID number for purchase the product. The advertisers therefore explained this in the ads, as the following example shows.



商品发货,需要清关后入境,根据海关要求,请您配合填写身份证号码, 进行个人物品入境申报,身份证信息我们会严格保密,决不对外泄漏。

Source: Ad 2 Questionnaire: no. 2-37

About oversea shipping from Customs

1. Personal ID number

For oversea shipping, the buyer's personal ID number has to be shown to the Customs, for the product can be delivered into China. Please support us and fill your ID number. We promise the information will be confidential.

Of course, there are also many other common questions, as when the product can be delivered, how to keep track on the parcel etc. Many advertisers chose to answer these questions directly in the ads.

The last part of this section is about service commitment, which is usually posted by the E-Commerce platform, regarding what the buyers should notice, when purchasing on the platform. Many ads include this information, in order to prove that the shop is formally managed, and controlled by the platform, because the platform is accepted as big company, which has better credibility compare to a small shop opened on a platform. And the platform's credibility means the platform is accepted by many of the social members, whose opinion can be seen as a kind of consensus information, and can to some degree influence a Chinese customer under both high and low elaboration conditions. In this sense, this kind of information is important to be included in the ads regardless the level of customers' elaboration level. Similar with the platform's credibility, the brand's credibility is even more influential. In the followed section, how the ads used messages about the brand information are presented.

5.4.10. Brand information

All the 4 ads used a lot of space to present information about the brand, and also more than 66% of the respondents of the questionnaires mean that the posted brand information is both attractive and important for appealing to positive opinions to the product. Brand information can prove or strength credibility of the brand, further brand credibility can lead a potential customer to form his/her attitude towards the product. As all the ads put effort on introducing the brand, instead of recalling people's memory about the product, we are implied that the advertised products might not belong to a world well-known brand, and it therefore need to be introduced, as same as the Danish brand Matas Natur. When organic and natural personal care product is still not a mainstream industry and not developed for very long time, it is normally that the brands within this area are not well-known. For the above reason, an unwell-known brand might require a higher elaboration for a person to process the messages, since people need motivation to process an introduction of a new brand. Nevertheless, for people who already know the brand, their early knowledge about the brand might help them to make a quick assessment of the product. So this information can both be effective under high or low elaboration conditions, depending on the receiver's elaboration level and early knowledge about the brand.

As the advertisers highlight the brand information in the ads, and the respondents of questionnaires also accept the information is important to them, I will in this section analyze how this kind of message is used the ads. Introducing brand history and bran strength is a common way that used in the ads to start of introducing the brands, and this is then followed by brand concept and advantages. Following examples are presented to explain this way of introducing brand. In order to show a coherent analysis of this topic or theme, the examples will be taken from the same ad, ad 3.

关于德玛依

品牌历史 Our Heritage

1973年,大卫斯特恩和琳达迈尔斯博士成为用自然疗法护肤品发展成解决肌肤问题的先行者。基于对键 康的追求,他们在加利福尼亚南部的健康食品商店和维生素店里引进了一种简单、多效的维生素E霜。人 们惊讶于产品对皮肤的惊人效果。随着产品的热销,市场的不断扩大和新产品的不断出现,根据需求, 1984年斯特恩和迈尔斯正式命名他们的产品品牌为"dermale""。

品牌实力 Our Strength

在全美国有超过12000家零售店铺同步销售,年销售额达 6亿 美金,产品遍布全球 28个 国家。澳大利亚 英国 香港 韩国 台湾 日本 新加坡 巴林 伯利兹 加勒比 洪都拉斯 印度尼西亚 约旦 科威特 墨西哥 挪威 巴 基斯坦 菲律宾波多黎各 罗马尼亚 俄罗斯 沙特阿拉伯 南非 特立尼达和多巴哥 土耳其 阿拉伯联合酋长国 乌克兰 越南。

Source: Ad 3 Questionnaire: no. 3-40

Brand history

In 1973, Dr. David Stern and Linda Miles became the foregoers of developing natural product to solve skin problem...They then introduced a simple and multi-effective VE cream, which surprised people by its wonderful effects. Along with the increase of the product sales, new products and market emerged. In 1984, David Stern and Linda Miles named their brand as "Derma|e".

Brand strength

The brand is sold in more than 12,000 retail stores in the USA, has annual sales as 600 million and is sold in more 28 countries over the world. Australia, UK, HongKong, Korea, Taiwan, Japan...

After have taught people the brand to know, more deeper knowledge of the brand will be introduced later. However, to keep people's interest in the followed parts, the content included in the first part is very important. The selected ads usually focus on introducing a long history of the brand and how big the market of the brand is, in order to convince people that the brand is well-known and strong enough, and further believe that such a big company could be able to produce good products. With confidence to the brand, it would be able for a potential customer to read the next part, brand concepts.



Dermale believes that we are not only improving skin, since we will never throw the most important part away. That is health. We believe that our products can bring you beautiful healthy skin and also a healthy world.

Source: Ad 3 Questionnaire: no. 3-42

Here the brand is raised to a higher level that it is not only care about skin beauty, but also health, skin health and the user's healthy beautiful life. To improve the health concept of the brand, more evidences are then provided.



The above 2 examples explained why the products under the brand are healthy to use. They focus on the products do not used any unhealthy materials, meet health standards and passed many tests. Appealing to health is usually seen as an argument message when it is an ad for organic and natural product, and this kind of message is more effective under high elaboration condition. However, as early mentioned, the first part of brand information are inclined to prove the credibility of the brand, and this type of information are more like simple cues, which are mainly processed under low elaboration condition. Other messages in the ads may influence receivers under low elaboration condition is information about the seller and the product source.

5.4.11. Introduction of the seller and product source

Who is selling the product and where the seller sourced the product can influence a potential buyer's attitude toward the product, since Chinese people care about whether the product is a counterfeit, and a trustworthy seller with trustworthy sources of the product can to a certain degree ensure the product's quality. For example, a big store might have more credit than a person who is sitting home selling the product, it is more reliable to buy product from a friend than from a stranger, and oversea direct shipping is more trustworthy than delivery from a Chinese bonded area, since there is lower chance to make a copy product abroad and then send it to China. This kind of source information is usually seen as pheripheral cues, as receiver influenced by this information and made a judgement on the product through the sources not the product attribute. How the 4 ads used messages about introduction of the seller and product source to persuade the potential customers will be presented in the following.

In ad 1 we are told that the seller is a Zelanian pharmacy, named ANZ, which belongs to Nathan Group, a Zelanian government registered company. The extract has already presented earlier, I show it agin for making it easier to read.



澳新大药房ANZ PHARMACY隶属于内森集团NATHAN GROUP 旗下,新西兰政府注册,海外独资企业。销售的所有商品与海外实 体药房同步,并非针对国内市场的"改良商品"。澳新大药房ANZ PHARMACY为国内少数由海外药房直供的跨境企业,以海外直邮 高诚信方式赢得了国内消费者的认可。

Source: Ad 1 Questionnaire: no. 1-12

Government Registered Pharmacy

ANZ Pharmacy belongs to Nathan Group, which is registered by the Zelanian government. All the products sell overseas are exactly the same as the products in New Zealand, and not the "improved products" that only produced for pleasing Chinese consumers...the pharmacy is recognized by many Chinese consumers as its direct shipping model.

Here a potential buyer is informed that the product will be directly delivered from New Zealand and is exactly the same as what is selling in the local pharmacy. This is a really strong proof to evidence the seller credibility, because the seller is not a Chinese person or store, but a Zelanian pharmacy, and the product is sourced from their own pharmacy. To provide a more visualized image, some pictures of the pharmacy are presented.



Source: Ad 1 Questionnaire: no. 1-13

Such information provides a great trust to the seller, since buying products from this seller means one will buy the product directly from a foreign seller, not from a Chinese seller, who brought the product from a foreign seller and resells them in China. Besides introducing the foreign seller, the ad also explains their way of delivery goods and applying Customs clearance.

海外直邮正规清关 Oversea Direct Shipping & Official Customs Clearance ▼ 为了维护产品质量,澳新大药房ANZ PHARMACY坚持只做海外直邮 ,正规海关清关,拒绝国内保税仓,拒绝第三方仓管,拒绝国内发货。 销售的所有商品皆为政府注册药房的备案商品,官方正品保障。

Oversea Direct Shipping & Official Customs Clearance

In order to ensure product quality, ANZ PHARMACY only offers oversea direct shipping and official Customs clearance. We reject delivery from the bonded areas, a third party warehouse keeper and delivery from anywhere inside China. All our products are registered in the authority, which guaranteed the quality of the products.

Source: Ad 1 Questionnaire: no. 1-14

An official channel of importing goods into China and the oversea direct shipping model avoid again problems that might happen inside China. However, it is not every seller has a foreign background, and most of them are actually Chinese. The example below shows how a Chinese seller introduces his/her store.



Here the shop claims that it is an authorized retailer for selling the products. This also makes sense that the store has powerful strength to be authorized by the producer and the goods they are selling are therefore quality products. In this part both foreign and Chinese sellers try to evidence their relationship with the foreign producer, product agents or retailer and how officially the goods are sourced and delivered.

When reading an ad for a product, we often see that there are similar products, which are also recommended to the customers, in both foreign and Chinese ads. However, the promotions in the Chinese ads are posted much more than the foreign ads.

5.4.12. Promotion

There are various ways of promotions for both the product itself and other products in the store. This kind of information is obvious simple cues, for people might become interested in a product because of discount in a promotion. One thing has to be mentioned is that there are only around 30 % respondents on average think the promotion messages are attractive and important for evoking their positive opinions to the advertised product. In the last section I mentioned that much more promotion information is included in the Chinese ads. I calculated how many times the ads show up in the ads, and it is 5 times in ad1, 4 times in ad 2, 5 times in ad 3 and 7 times in ad 4. It is understandable that sellers want to promote products to the potential buyers, but too much promotion information might irritate a person, especially promotion for other products, when the person is interested in the one he/she is looking for. Following is some examples of how the 4 ads promoted products.



Source: Ad 1 Questionnaire: no. 1-8

The first form of promotion is a discount, which is valid in all the shops on the platform, as the example shows that you pay 100 when you buy goods more than 199 in total, and pay for 2 when you buy 3, including purchases in different shops. This kind of discount sponsored by the platform, but only in special times. Since participating this promotion can enable customers to buy different kinds of goods from different shops in one transaction, one might be attracted by such a discount. The next form of promotion is recommendations for the hot-selling products in the shop.



As Chinese customers concern more about other people's opinions, they might also become interested in hot-selling products. The above example displays the bestselling products in the shop. Another way to promote products from other customers' point of view is to display the products which are also seen by the people who have also viewed this ad.



Source: Ad 3 Questionnaire: no. 3-7

So people who have viewed ad 3 have also seen the above displayed products. This may give suggestions to the reader about what he/she may also be interested. Except other customers' opinion, the shop has also its recommendations of products form a seller's perspective.





In this example, the seller recommended the products that are worth to purchase from his/her point of view. Nevertheless, these promotions focus more on other products than the advertised. The following examples are more relevant to the current product.



Source: Ad 3 Questionnaire: no. 3-2

This is a form of discount that the seller directly gives cash coupon to customers, when they purchase a certain value of product. The next one is also a discount about packages offered by the seller.



When buying the product in packages with other product, a customer can get a discount price for the package. All these promotions are not some unfamiliar ways of giving discount and promote products, and they are seen in both foreign and Chinese ads. However, according to the result of the questionnaires, it seems like the promotions are not welcomed or not very attractive to the respondents. Maybe it is because they are shown too many times in similar ways, but this is only a guess, and the real reason has to be further investigated.

At this point all the messages included in the ads are analyzed, but one thing we have noticed during the analysis has not been discussed. That is the overall impact of visual images, which will be analyzed in the next section, together with the influence of the numbers of arguments.

5.4.13. Visual impact and Numbers of arguments

As we concluded in the first part of analysis, the Chinese ads used many professional pictures and colorful art words when presenting the messages. The use of pictures and colors can provide a receiver visualization of the product and grabbing wide attention of the receiver. This kind of information can stir people's emotions and lead people to make a judgment or decision by following their emotional feelings. For example, since red color has a great significance for Chinese people, because it means good luck and happiness (Lab Brand, 2009), using of red color in an ad might appeal to a Chinese customers positive feelings towards the product. This is obviously simple cues, which are more effective under low elaboration, because they persuade one by influencing his/her emotion rather than directly arguing the product is worth to purchase.

As an overall saying, pink color is used as the mainly tonality in ad 1, green is used in the rest of 3 ads. In regard to ad 1, it is advertising a beauty product, which can solve many skin problems

of girls, e.g. black spots, small wrinkles, acne etc. and young girls appear as models in it. In this case, pink color is appropriate to use, since it is a favorable color for young girls, and to be associated with beauty. Moving to the other ads, they are all advertising for organic and natural products. As all the 3 ads used pictures of the natural plants contained in the product, and green can remind people of nature, the use of green color match well with the organic and natural products. Similar with color, picture can also appeal to people's emotional feelings. There are 3 ways of using pictures, which are mainly used in the ads to advertise the products.

The first way of using pictures is to display something to the potential buyers, e.g. the look of the product, the seller, a certificate of the product and so on. This kind of picture usually has big size, is clear enough to see all details of the displayed object, and sometimes some important small details can be zoomed in or are zoomed in and posted in or next to the picture.



Source: Ad 2 https://item.jd.hk/1959757538.html



Source: Ad 3 Questionnaire: no. 3-13

These pictures aim to persuade audiences by showing them details of something, which can prove an advocacy, so that there is normally no extra text edited on the pictures, since it may cover any details on the picture. Maybe some important words are presented next to the picture, as it shows in the above example, or at least in a corner of the picture, but any detail in the picture is not covered.

The second way of using picture is about editing text or other pictures directly into a picture. This is normally happened when introducing the product basic information, ingredients and effects, skin care knowledge and the likes. Here an attractive picture with big size is usually used to grab the reader's attention, and then the text presented within the picture is with better chance to be read. Since the text is normally relevant to the picture, one's previous established favorable attitude towards the picture can influence the person to agree with what describes in the text. In order to make the picture more attractive, other pictures may also be edited into the main picture. As the following extract shows that picture of organic argania spinose is inset into the picture of the product, since the product contained organic argania spinose oil.





The text on the top of the picture tells that small wrinkles can appear on a woman's face after she became 25 years old, and then the text under the picture tells that oil from argania spinose can smooth and tighten skin. When the reader looks at the message, the picture is very striking to be seen, and then the picture of argania spinose plant can remind the person to associate nature and health with the product. Further the text, which might be the next thing than the picture to notice, tells the person that the organic and natural plant can provide her beautiful and healthy skin. This is a good way to make text more interesting to read.

Master thesis

坚持天然 不忘初心

上世纪的坚持,坐落于塞纳湖畔的herbacin,坚持用

天然灌溉美丽,让你洗尽纤尘,纵想温馨的美肤盛宴

The third way of using picture is to post pictures next to the text that the picture relevant to. This is usually used when talking about some abstract things e.g. brand concept. Since abstract things are not easy to be visualized, a picture can put a preconception into a reader's mind, and further leader him/her to the advocacy that the advertiser expected. Following is an example.



Keep faith, insist to be natural

Start from the last century, Herbacin (the cream) originates in Germany along the River Seine. We insist providing you beauty from nature...

Source: Ad 4 Questionnaire: no. 4-41

In the above example, I highlighted "Germany" and "the River Seine", because it is a big mistake, as the River Seine is not in Germany but France. I guess the advertiser's intention is to use a beautiful picture of the Seine to remind people's imagination of all beautiful and romantic things that can associate with a European country, and then to connect all the fantasy with the product comes from the country. However, the advertiser mixed Germany and France. The surprised thing is that so many buyers are persuaded by an ad with mistake, and 100 % of the respondents of the questionnaires answered that this message is attractive and important for evoking their positive attitude towards the product. Maybe it is because the words in the text are too small that the readers do not notice the mistake, but it can also be that they did not even read the small words, and only attracted by the picture.

For the above reasons, it is not irrational to argue that pictures play a great role in the Chinese ads. In the questionnaires, many messages are asked twice about their attractiveness and importance, one presented only with text, another presented with both text and picture. It clearly shows that the way messages presented with both text and picture is more effective to generate favorable attitude towards the products.



Source: Ad 2 Questionnaire: no. 2-16

Source: Ad 2 Questionnaire: no.2-17

Here is the same message presented in 2 ways in the questionnaire, where the first way is seen by 5 out of 11 respondents as attractive message, and 4 out of 11 mean it is important to create their favorable feelings. Nevertheless, all respondents think the second way of presenting message is attractive, and 10 out of 11 mean it is important to create their positive feeling.

Besides pictures, numbers of message is another kind of cue information, which is asked in the questionnaires. For an overall view, more than half respondents think the numbers of massage used in the ads is with positive meanings for generating favorable feeling to the product. However, there are still around 20 % respondents for the first 3 ads think the ads used too much messages, and most respondents for the last ad mean the ad used too much messages.

After have analyzed all the cue information in the Chinese ads, it is clear that the simple cues have a strong significance for the customers, even for people who have a certain degree of elaboration. Here consensus information which is included in customer comments and brand information takes a lot of space in the ads, and plays an important role in forming customers' attitude towards the product. This is in line with Aaker and Maheswaran (1997) that consensus information is more influential for people from a collectivistic culture, such as China. Product source information and credibility of the brand, producer, seller etc. also influence customers with a great deal, especially for Chinese consumers, since there are many counterfeits, and credibility information can somehow help to make a quick judgement to the product. In the same way, customer service information can also contribute to build credibility of the seller. Additionally, the overall used pictures and colors work positively for advertising the products. However, promotion and discount information has a trend to be seen as unfavorable information by the questionnaire respondents, also they think there are too many messages used in the ads, although more than half of them still mean the numbers of the messages used in the ads has positive meanings to the product. At last one thing has to be emphasized again is that some of the cue information works as arguments under elaboration condition, depending on the receiver's elaboration level.

6. Conclusion

In this study, I aimed to discover why some Chinese online ads for imported organic and natural personal care products are successful through investigating how the ads use messages to persuade the customers. It is expected that the study can provide inspirations about message design to some Danish brands when designing ads for products on the Chinese E-Commerce market. With this purpose, I proposed the following problem formulation.

Why some Chinese online ads for foreign organic and natural personal care products are successful from the ELM's perspective combining cultural consideration.

To answer this question, I chose one Matas Natur ad as an example and selected 4 successful Chinese ads for similar products as study objects. I first analyzed the effectiveness of the 4 Chinese ads and then analyzed the messages used in the ads in detail from the ELM's perspective. In the first part, I tested the effectiveness of the ads under the condition, in which the potential customers have a certain level of elaboration. In the meanwhile, I analyzed the message characteristics in the ads. I found that the 4 ads include almost equivalent argument-relevant information and simple cues, but some of them used more cues than arguments, especially consensus information regarding other people's opinions. And the messages are effective under the tested condition of elaboration, meaning that both arguments and cues are effective for Chinese people who would like to buy imported cream, and these 2 kinds of information are both important in an ad for Chinese E-Commerce market.

In the second part I focused on analyzing the messages used in the ads in detail. It is turns out that the argument messages put emphasis on presenting attribute information of the product. It starts with displaying the product with a long name (included also information, e.g. product effects, content, source etc.), and then explaining the product effect through introducing some skin care knowledge, the contained organic and natural ingredients and how the ingredients work on one's skin. By contrast, the simple sues focus on presenting consensus information, as customer comments, the brand and seller credibility, promotion, visual impact etc. These cues are proved as both attractive and important messages for evoking positive attitudes towards the product, except promotion, which is inclined to be less favorable. What has to be highlighted is that Chinese ads used a large extent of simple cures, but the ads is still effective under a

somewhat high elaboration condition. This may be understood as arguments and simple cues are both important to Chinese people, who have a certain level of elaboration.

7. Appendix

The appendix is organized in the following way.

- 1. Matas Natur ad
- 2. Ad 1 folder
 - 2.1. Ad 1
 - 2.2. Ad 1 Original Questionnaire
 - 2.3. Ad 1 Questionnaire Answers (1-6)
 - 2.4. Ad 1 Questionnaire
 - 2.5. Ad 1 Analysis
- 3. Ad 2 folder
 - 3.1. Ad 2
 - 3.2. Ad 2 Original Questionnaire
 - 3.3. Ad 2 Questionnaire Answers (1-11)
 - 3.4. Ad 2 Questionnaire
 - 3.5. Ad 2 Analysis
- 4. Ad 3 folder
 - 4.1. Ad 3
 - 4.2. Ad 3 Original Questionnaire
 - 4.3. Ad 3 Questionnaire Answers (1-8)
 - 4.4. Ad 3 Questionnaire
 - 4.5. Ad 3 Analysis
- 5. Ad 4 folder
 - 5.1. Ad 4
 - 5.2. Ad 4 Original Questionnaire
 - 5.3. Ad 4 Questionnaire Answers (1-7)
 - 5.4. Ad 4 Questionnaire
 - 5.5. Ad 4 Analysis

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