The role of cultural values on the perception of advertising as offensive: a case study of Chinese Tertiary Students in Auckland

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of

International Communication

Unitec New Zealand, 2013

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Abstract

This case study examines the influence of culture values on the perception of offensive advertising among Chinese tertiary students in Auckland. Previous studies examining advertising that can potentially offend have primarily centred on four basic aspects – the products being advertised, the creative execution used, the medium within which an advertisement is displayed and the audiences that are least and most likely to be offended. However, limited research has been conducted to address the influence of cultural aspects on the perception of offensive advertising.

The study uses a mixed research methodology by employing research methods from both the qualitative and quantitative paradigms. Survey questionnaire and focus group interviews were developed for this project. A survey was conducted initially among Chinese tertiary students at an Institute of Technology and a University in Auckland and some of these survey participants were invited to participate in a follow-up focus group interview after the questionnaire research was completed. The questionnaire survey enabled me, the researcher, to identify a possible trend about the phenomenon of perceived offence, and based on the survey findings, this phenomenon was further investigated by focus group interviews.

The findings reveal that the cultural value of Confucianism can potentially impact the perception of offensive advertising among Chinese tertiary students in Auckland. The Confucianism characteristics of Virtue, Ritual, Harmony, Filial Piety and Learning all take a part as contributing factors in the perception of offensive advertising among the participants. However, findings of the focus groups indicate that the influence of these characteristics in the perception of advertising is not apparent when participants are presented with the actual New Zealand TV advertisements. In general, Chinese tertiary students appear to have a high degree of acceptance toward New Zealand advertisements, and are unlikely to be offended by the advertisements which are targeted to the general public in New Zealand.
Declaration

**Name of candidate:** Dapeng Wang

This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master of International communication.

**Candidate’s declaration**

I confirm that:

- This Thesis represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.
  
  Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: 2012-1035

Candidate Signature: ……………………………………………….Date: …………………

Student number: 1314643
Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors Dr. Jocelyn Williams and Dr. Evangelia Papoutsaki for their support. Thank you so much, Joce, for your constant advice throughout the whole process.

Thanks to the people who have participated in this research, especially those who have taken part in the focus group interviews. Most of them are AUT and Unitec students. Thank you for your time and this project could not be done without your inputs.

Mostly, I would like to say thank you to my family, my wife Lin Ma and my parents. Thank you for your encouragement.
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Hargrave and Livingstone (2009) have pointed out that there is a growth in the number of advertisements that may potentially offend some segment of the audience, which is evidenced in a steady year on year increase in complaints about advertising. The number of formal advertising complaints received by the New Zealand Advertising Standards Authority has almost doubled in the last decade from just over 400 in the early years of 2000s to about 800 in 2010 (New Zealand Advertising Standard Authority, 2012). Although the complaints are not necessarily made by the audience who have been offended on a personal level, the increased complaints should at least indicate that, in New Zealand, a growing number of people have been negatively affected by advertising. Some of the reasons for this include an increased awareness among the audience of the harmful effects of advertisements (Waller, 2005) and some advertisers try to be more creative by creating ‘cut through the clutter’ effects to gain public attention and brand awareness (Waller, 2007; Prendergast & Hwa, 2003), which may cause offence by pushing the boundaries of perceptions of decency (Christy & Harley, 2008; Waller 2005).

Many well-known companies, such as Benetton, Pizza Hut and Calvin Klein have all “courted controversy as a strategy” in their marketing plan (Fam & Waller, 2003, p. 238). A typical example would be Benetton, an Italian clothing maker, which has run advertisements in billboards featuring prisoners with the slogan ‘sentenced to death’ in 2000 in major US cities (Prendergast & Ho, 2002). The company also published a catalogue which included interviews with the inmates and in which they discussed their views of the coming punishment. The campaign received severe complaints that the advertisements cause unnecessary pain “to the families of the people killed by the men the campaign intends to ‘humanise’” (ibid, p. 167).
Advertisements, as a form of human communication, are deliberate and consciously articulated messages (Mooij, 1997). Advertisers select the elements of advertisements according to their expectations about how the audience will respond, assuming the cultural conventions are shared. The audience, on the other hand, needs to share the same conventions to evaluate the stimulus in order to formulate the desired response (Mooij, 1997). This can only happen if both the advertisement producer and their audience are in the same cultural context. If not, the response may be different from that which the producers intended to generate. In a traditional environment, both advertisers and audience share the same culture, a common frame of reference (Gudykunst, 2005; Luzio, Gunthner & Orletti, 2001). However, in a multicultural society, the communication process becomes more complex as the audience may not necessarily share the same culture with the advertisers. Effective advertisements are those that can be successfully decoded by their audience, either viewers or readers (Mooij, 1997). This is easy to achieve if the advertisements are targeting a specific demographic group. However, advertisements produced in a certain cultural context may lose their effectiveness when they are intended to target the general public which is culturally diversified.

The purpose of this research is to contribute to knowledge and understanding of effective advertising by examining the relationship between cultural values and perceptions of advertising as offensive in the context of a multicultural society. Offence is something that outrages the moral or physical senses (Hargrave & Livingstone, 2009), and it is likely to cause resentment or hurt on a personal level (Oxford Dictionary, 2011). Perceived offence has been selected for study because it is a potential outcome of controversial advertising. As New Zealand is a cultural-diverse society, where the proportion of “ethnic minorities” has been continuously increasing (Statistics New Zealand, 2012; Immigration New Zealand,
It is noted that the number of controversial advertisements is increasing and audiences are more likely to be offended (Waller, 2005). Further, cultural diversity is being greatly accelerated by increased international migration which has amplified the chances of advertising on the local media to be exposed to a cultural diversified audience-base (Tierney, 2007). For these reasons, the present study was developed using a population of Chinese tertiary students in Auckland to explore the potential for offence caused by advertisements that are targeted at the general public. The case study was carried out in two phases. A questionnaire survey was initially conducted among Chinese tertiary students in Auckland, and some survey participants were invited to a follow-up focus group interview. The purpose of conducting a questionnaire survey was to generate some basic data, and based on these, the emerging themes relating to the perception of offensive advertising were further investigated in focus group interviews.

Research Questions

Based on the research purpose stated above, the following research question was developed:

RQ: In what way do cultural values have an impact on the perception of advertising as offensive by Chinese tertiary students?

In addition to the main research question, some sub questions were developed to facilitate this project.
1. What types of products/services and advertising themes are considered as offensive?
Sub question 1 was addressed in the initial phase of data collection through the use of questionnaire survey which has elicited the level of perceived offence among Chinese tertiary students towards a number of products/services and advertising themes.

2. What are the effects of the perception of advertising as offensive on purchase intention?
Sub question 2 was addressed through the use of questionnaire survey which has revealed the impacts of perceived offensive advertising on the purchase intention of Chinese tertiary students.

3. What particular cultural values among Chinese tertiary students could be related to the perception of offence?
Sub question 3 was addressed in the follow-up phase of data collection through focus group interviews as participants were asked to discuss and comment on the relationship of their cultural background and the perception of offensive advertising.

Chinese in New Zealand

Chinese people make up a major ethnic group in New Zealand and their population is only expected to increase in the coming years. According to the 2006 census (Statistics New Zealand, 2006), there are approximately 150,000 Chinese residing in New Zealand and about two thirds of them live in Auckland. Since the 1990s, together with migrants from a number of other Asian countries, the Chinese population has experienced rapid growth. This has made the growth of the Asian population the fastest among all the major ethnic groups, and the Chinese community is currently the largest Asian group in New Zealand (Tourism New Zealand, n.d.). Therefore, it is worthwhile to understand their perspectives on the
advertisements that are produced for the general public of New Zealand since they comprise such a significant proportion of the population.

According to Ng (2001), the settlement of Chinese in New Zealand could be categorised into four historical periods. The first period is the era of “sojournism by choice (1865 – 1900)”, when most of the Chinese immigrants were gold-seekers in Otago and on the West Coast of the South Island. Most of them were from the Guandong province. Then, it was the era of “sojornism by compulsion (1901 – 1950)”, a period when the initial migrants remained in New Zealand as sojourners but started to demand the settlement of their families from China. The third period is “the era of settlement (1951 – 1985)” when the general society was expecting that the Chinese minority should settle and eventually assimilate into the mainstream New Zealand culture. The fourth period is the “era of newcomers (1986-present)” when new immigrants have pushed the number of the Chinese population up significantly. A major contributor to the growth of this population segment is international students, especially since the late 1990s, the number of international students from China has grown rapidly and their presence is apparent in many tertiary campuses in Auckland (Skyrme, 2007).

The New Zealand Advertising Industry

Reflecting global trends, the expenditures on advertising in New Zealand has been continuously increasing (Interactive Advertising Bureau New Zealand, 2012). In 2011, TV advertising took the biggest part for advertising revenue which has attracted 28.4% of the overall advertising expenditures in New Zealand (ibid). The New Zealand market for TV advertising is dominated by the free to air broadcast operations, which is represented by two
major broadcasters. One is Television New Zealand (TVNZ), a Government owned organisation with two network channels, TV1 and TV2. The other is the Canadian Canwest Network (CCN) which operates TV3 and TV4. Recent research suggests that TVNZ’s share amounts to 68% of all New Zealand television audience whereas CCN’s share is about 21.5% (ibid).

Spending on internet advertising is fast closing in on the spending on traditional media of TV and newspapers. In 2010, the online media moved ahead of radio to put itself on the third place (The National Business Review, 2012). In 2011, the revenue for online advertising increased from $257 million, being 12% of total advertising spend, to $328 million (15.1%) (Interactive Advertising Bureau New Zealand, 2012). However, the growth of spending on this medium was explosive when we look back over a longer period. The graph compares the market share of advertising on different types of media in a nine-year period from 2003 to 2011 (ibid). While the market share on all other media has dropped, online media has managed to increase dramatically from being only 0.4% in 2003 to 15.1% in 2011 (The National Business Review, 2012).

Internet advertising has come to occupy a place as a critically important part of the advertising mix (Spilker-Attig & Brettel, 2010). The widespread of internet usage has become a major threat to the traditional media in terms of their attractions to advertising.
The growth of expenditures on online advertising is not only occurring in New Zealand, but globally. It is predicted that the global advertising spend on the internet would rise from 12.8% to 18.3% of the total advertising spending between 2009 and 2013 (Henningsen, Heuke & Clement, 2011). In the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands, the expenditures on online advertising have already surpassed the traditional media of newspapers and TV (Interactive Advertising Bureau New Zealand, 2012). It is therefore reasonable to predict that the same scenario will be likely to take place here in New Zealand.

Thesis Outline

The thesis is designed to study the impact of the Chinese culture on perception of offensive advertising by Chinese tertiary students in Auckland. Chapter One provides an overview of this thesis and discusses the purpose of this project. Chapter Two analyses the literature in the relevant academic areas of perception of offensive advertising and the characteristics of Confucianism. Chapter Three introduces the research design of a mixed methodology which was used in the project, and explains the data collection methods of questionnaire and focus-group that were selected. Research procedure and data analysis are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter Four presents the findings resulting from the questionnaire survey and the focus group interviews. Chapter Five discusses and analyses issues emerging from the results by linking key findings to the current literature. Chapter Six sums up this research project and provides some recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2

The present study lies in the broader context of cross cultural communication. The first part of the chapter presents some theories that are relevant to this study. Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions and Hall’s Low- and High- Context Culture were introduced in this part because they are used widely to analyse the perception, communication and behavioural patterns of people at the cross cultural encounters. The second part of the chapter provides the principal concepts of Confucianism, a philosophy which underlies a major part of the Chinese culture. Combined with both political and moral thoughts, Confucianism plays a vital role in the development of Chinese history as well as China’s national and cultural identity (Ren, 2010). The final part of the chapter explores what is known about advertising that is perceived as offensive. Specific focuses were given to the studies that have attempted to identify the construct of offensive advertising and the elements that have been identified which can potentially cause offence in advertising.

Cross Cultural Communication

Cross cultural communication has been defined as: “the symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation” (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 39). People from different cultures may have difficulties communicating with each other because individuals tend to use values and norms of one culture to explain the behaviours of individuals from another (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). The primary focus in cross cultural communication study is on how people from different cultures can understand each other (Vijaya & Tiwari,
2010; Bennett, 1998). It has been noted that most studies in cross cultural communication are based on the comparison and contrast of different cultural factors among different national cultures (Baraldi, 2009), which are important and useful for people to understand and communicate with each other at the cross cultural encounters.

**Theoretical Consideration**

In order to understand the process of cross cultural communication, Gudykunst (2005) has developed the AUM theory, which stands for Anxiety, Uncertainty and Mindfulness. He has applied the concept of “stranger” in his study which refers to people from other cultural groups who act in ways different from one’s own culture (Jandt, 2010). When communicating with strangers, people are likely to experience “anxiety” and “uncertainty” of how to behave. Uncertainty means being unaware of what the reactions of strangers will be and not knowing how to interpret the reactions of strangers. Anxiety occurs when an individual is apprehensive about the interactions. When anxiety is high people tend to avoid interactions, and when it is low, people tend not to care what happens in the interaction. People are anxious because of not knowing what is to be expected, thus they may focus on that feeling instead of being involved in the communication (ibid). To communicate effectively with strangers, it is important to understand their position which requires “mindfulness”. Mindfulness is an internal stimulation which involves creating new categories, being open to new information and recognising stranger’s perspective. Gudykunst (2005) argues that strangers tend to be more mindful in intergroup interactions than in-group members.

In addition to the concept of “stranger”, Young Yun Kim (2001) has introduced the theory of Cross Cultural Adaption. With reference from the concepts of Acculturation and Assimilation, her theory outlines the process of a stranger adapting into the host culture. She
argues that most immigrants and sojourners have gone through a similar process – assimilation. Her work has taken into consideration of various forces in the communication process which include “the conditions of the environment and the ethnic and personal predispositions of the individual” (Kim, 2010, p. 1). Essential to this adaptation process is ‘host communication competence’ which is the ability to communicate in accordance with the norms and practices of the host culture and engage in its social communication processes (ibid). This means that the strangers should choose to adapt and need to concentrate on acquiring different cultural communication practices. Kim suggests that, in order to be competent in the host communication system, individuals should actively participate in both the interpersonal and mass communication processes of the host culture.

With reference to the Adaption Theory, Milton J Bennett (1998) has introduced the Developmental Approaches. He outlines the stages an individual needs to go through in order to achieve effective communication across cultures (Bennet, 1998, p. 25 - 30). In the initial stage of Denial, individuals reject all interaction with other cultures and they may act aggressively in cross cultural situations. Defense refers to the stage where individuals consider all other cultures are inferior to their own culture and may criticise behaviour or thoughts by someone from a different culture. Individuals will start to believe that all cultures share common values in the minimisation stage. However, they may minimise the cultural differences by correcting people from other cultures to match their expectations. During the acceptance stage, while individuals may still see other cultures
negatively, they will tend to recognise that cultures are different and may become curious about cultural differences. In the adaptation stage, individuals gain the ability to adapt their behaviour more easily by willingly changing their own behaviour or communication styles. In the integration stage, individuals instinctively change their behaviour pattern and communication styles when interacting with other cultures. Bennett (1998) suggests that this stage could be achieved by living and working in the host culture for an extensive period of time.

Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions

One of the most influential works in the study of cross cultural communication was developed by Geert Hofstede, who introduced an approach to distinguishing culture difference (Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2011). This approach is referred to as Hofstede’s cultural dimensions which include (1) small – and large – power distance cultures, (2) weak- and strong- uncertainty avoidance societies, (3) collectivistic and individualistic societies, and (4) feminine and masculine societies (Hofstede, 2001). These cultural dimensions are often used in the analysis of national and ethnic cultures, and according to Hofstede, all national or ethnic cultures can be accommodated somewhere in these spectrums (ibid).

Power distance refers to the degree the power is unequally distributed among the members in a culture. While it can be argued that all societies are unequal, some societies are more unequal than others. Power distance index scores are higher for Asian countries where people in a less powerful position are more likely to accept their current status and are lower for most of the English-speaking countries where power is expected to be distributed equally.
Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which a culture programs its members to feel either comfortable or uncomfortable in an unstructured situation. Unstructured situations are “novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual” (Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2011, p. 25). Uncertainty accepting cultures are more tolerant of different opinions and try to have fewer rules. In contrast, uncertainly avoiding cultures tend to minimise the possibility of unstructured situations by strict behavioural codes and rules (Zhuo, 2012). It has been found that the level of uncertainty avoidance is higher in many countries in East and Central Europe and lower in English speaking and Chinese culture countries.

Individualism refers to the value pattern of a culture in stressing the importance of individual identity over group identity. Individualism cultures encourage the value of “self-efficiency, individual responsibility and personal autonomy” (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p.59). In contrast, collectivism refers to the broad cultural value in stressing the importance of the group identity over the individual’s identity. The cultural pattern of individualism is apparent in most West European countries, whereas the cultural pattern of collectivism is common in many Asian countries (Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2011).

Masculinity and femininity refers to the distribution of emotional roles between genders. Masculinity is societies in which social gender roles are clearly distinct whereas the feminine cultures emphasise flexible sex role behaviours. It has been revealed that the countries influenced by Confucianism tend to differentiate the roles between men and women, which request different genders to be sensitive to different kinds of behaviour (Bargiola-Chiappini & Haugh, 2009). In contrast, Western countries are more leaning toward the femininity end of the spectrum where social gender roles are more fluid.
Another important theoretical concept in the field of cross culture communication was developed by Edward T Hall (Zhuo, 2012). According to Hall (1989), human interactions can be structured into low- and high-context communication systems. High- and low-context culture indicates how much information is viewed as enough in a culture. Cultures differ across a continuum which ranges from low to high context. In low-context communication, the emphasis is on how intention or meaning is best expressed through explicit verbal or written messages. In high-context communication, the emphasis is on how intention or meaning can best be conveyed through the context and the nonverbal channels. The structure of language system may be more low-context in expression or high-context in verbal implication. High-context cultures include most of the Asian countries where communication relies more on the context (Gabriela, 2010). Low-context cultures include most of the English speaking countries where specific messages of the spoken or written words in communication are considered the most important (ibid).

There are some major differences in the communication manners between high- and low-context cultures (Hall, 1989). Firstly, information is often implicit in high-context cultures and people from these cultures tend to use an indirect style of communication (Zhuo, 2012). On the other hand, information and rules are explicit in low-context cultures which appreciate clear logic and a direct communication style (ibid). Further, high-context cultures tend toward closed systems of thought which discourage fundamental questioning. In high-context cultures the sign for something is seen as closely connected with its environment and referent. In contrast, low-context cultures tend toward open system of thought and to question the received cultural patterns (ibid).
Limitations

A few weaknesses of these approaches have been identified (Bargiela-Chiappini & Haugh, 2009; Wang, Hu & Cao, 2011). First, while admitting that culture is a dominant force that affecting communication in cross culture situations, they tend to overlook the aspect that culture itself is created in communication and actions are coordinated through interaction. Second, when culture is viewed as a disturbing factor in cross culture encounters, it might motivate both the senders and receivers to be actively involved in the communication process. It has been argued that while cultural differences may be the most apparent aspect among people from different cultures, they may not be the difference most likely to cause conflict (Jandt, 2010). Rather, they warn individuals to treat people “as members of cultural group without recognising their individuality and other identities” (ibid, p. 83).

Characteristics of Confucianism

Confucianism has been the mainstream of traditional Chinese culture and society, which is the ideology having the greatest impact on Chinese culture (Ren, 2010). Confucianism was founded by Confucius who lived in the period of 551-479 B.C. (Berling, 1996). It was the mainstream value in China for more than 2000 years, and therefore, its influence over the history, social structure and the people of China is significant (ibid). Confucianism is essentially a philosophy about obedient, non-competitive, harmonious, and tolerant (Ren, 2010). Its ideas in general consist of two structures (Yeh & Xu, 2010): first, the structure of five hierarchical relations of emperor–subject, father–son, husband–wife, elder–younger brothers, and friend–friend which defines people’s social roles; second, the structure of five virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness that look after people’s inner being.
According to Ip (2009), Confucian ethics is generally obligation based, humanistic and collectivistic in nature. It is obligation based because the morality of human conduct is presented in terms of obligations and obligation exchanges. It is humanistic because its primary concern is the condition of human beings. It is collectivistic because it emphasizes the importance of collective interests over individuals’ interests. Social relationships and their harmony are considered as the most important issue in human society. Family is viewed as the most sacred form of human institution, and as such, Confucian ethics can be seen as familial collectivism (ibid).

**Harmony**

Harmony is seen as the ultimate goal of personal and social life which is one of the central values of Confucianism (Ip, 2009). People should endeavour to achieve harmony with their own selves, and the community. Traditional Confucianism stressed harmony with respect to the human senses, such as harmony in music and art. Later, this principle evolved into the concept of balance in general (ibid). Harmony is the basic and ultimate goal of familial, organisational, communal, and political lives (Lim, 2009). Family treating their family members with virtue produces harmonious families. Undertaking virtuous acts and policies between states help to develop a harmonious inter-state relationship leading to peace and prosperity for all nations. The Chinese see the benefits of avoiding conflict as protecting the relationship between the parties and reducing the likelihood of revenge, since avoidance provides a calming down period which could prevent conflicts (ibid).

The collectivist preference for non-confrontational conflict styles is attributed to the influences of the Confucian value of harmony, which promotes tolerance of misbehaviour in interpersonal communication (Lim, 2009). In collectivistic cultures, people are concerned
with relationships with their in-group. Collectivism suggests that group membership is a central aspect of one’s identity, and valued personal traits such as willingness to sacrifice self-interest for the in-group and maintaining harmonious relationships with the in-group reflect the goals of collectivism (Wang & Juslin, 2009). The downside of this is to disadvantage the individual’s personality and rights. However, McDonald (2012) argues that if it is applied properly, the principle of harmony requires that different opinions be listened to, and different people being able to work together in a harmonious manner.

**Virtue**

Virtue has a range of meanings according to the traditional Confucian texts. In a broad sense, it refers to the behavioural codes that are a fundamental part of society (Lai, 2008). These behavioural codes are articulated more specifically in relationships including parent–child, teacher–student, ruler–subject, and ruler–official. These relationships help to maintain consistency in interactions and are a fundamental aspect of social organisation. Virtue provides a fundamental social structure within which individuals express themselves and interact with others. On an individual level, people should cultivate themselves morally, and act in the correct performance of ritual (Wang & Juslin, 2009). Confucianism believes that if we try to act virtuously towards others, then we will receive virtuous behaviour from others. Virtuous behaviour towards others lies in reciprocity which is the fundamental moral principle that guides a person throughout life. In modern life, it can be erected through charity and other social responsibilities (ibid). The Confucian reciprocity encourages people to behave in a reciprocal way according to social expectations and to return some wealth back to society (ibid). It should be noted that although reciprocity is emphasised by Confucianism, it is a moral discipline that is commonly seen in all major religions (Religious Tolerance, 2004). A well-known version of the concept of reciprocity is the Christianity's Golden Rule which encourages individuals to treat others with respect and fairness.
Ritual

Ritual is the key to harmonious and flourishing life for mankind. On the individual and familial levels, it is a method for the formation of personality and a way of expressing one’s concern for others (Stalnaker, 2010). Ritual is also the source of state power and authority, because it is more effective in knitting the people and government together than strict regulations or threats. It does this by creating trust and mutual goodwill among the public. Ritual has both narrow and wide senses. Its narrow sense refers to the practices of sacrifices, mourning rituals, and celebrations of passage into adulthood (ibid). The common meaning of ritual is broad which covers all issues of personal appearance, behaviour, dress, speech, and interpersonal manners (Tae & Strudler, 2012). According to Confucianism, excellent human relations are constituted by proper rituals, and that a high standard of morality is built on participation in these rituals (ibid). The teachings of ritual promote the ideas of filial submission, good faith and loyalty which in return have guided public expectations for moral behaviour such as respect to the elderly and loyalty to superiors (ibid). One may show respect for a person by engaging in appropriate ritual behaviour, and one may deserve respect by engaging in appropriate ritual behaviour. Respect is an outcome of a relationship of people acting together and both parties must collaborate in ritual for meaningful respect to occur.

Filial Piety

The concept of filial piety is a key principle in Confucian ideology. The original version of this concept was limited to immediate family (Cheng, 2011), but it evolved to include important relationships outside the family, such as friends and colleagues (McDonald, 2012). The Confucian virtue of filial piety is held in the highest regard in China, especially in the old days, family patriarchs demanded filial piety from their sons and daughters. Chinese people used to acknowledge that filial piety is the first among all virtues.
of human relationships, which has dominated all other human relationships in traditional China (Ip, 2009). Filial piety covers the attitudes of respect for one’s seniors and a reciprocal attitude of affection on the senior's part to the junior (Cheng, 2011). Confucianism requests people to respect their parents and the elderly. The children of a Confucian family are obliged to fulfil their moral duty, and the children’s filial duty would become a moral responsibility of reverence and care when they become adults. “They are to take care of their parents, maintaining good links with them while upholding the value of filial piety” (ibid, p.131).

Children show their respect to parents by complying with their wishes and following their teachings in both everyday life and crucial decisions for life. Challenging parents’ authority is treated as a lack of sense of filial piety. In traditional Chinese society, rebellions against parents are viewed as a sin (Liu, 2012). When parents get old, children have obligations to support their parents economically. After the death of one’s parents, it involves religious obligations in ceremonial worship (Cheng, 2011). On the other hand, parents are supposed to make dedication and sacrifices for their children (Liu, 2012). Parents also have the duties to make efforts to support children economically for their education, marriage, even helping them with raising the grandchildren. Parents work hard and live economically so that they can save money for future generations (ibid). A Confucian family-based community determines the priority in terms of one’s duty and obligation to others (Ip, 2009). Confucianism stresses family relationships which embrace all social and political relationships (ibid). The wellbeing of family is seen as the foundation for the wellbeing of a society.

Learning

Learning is considered as a moral practice and obligation in Confucianism. Learning and study is an important aspect of Confucian ideology as it is believed that learning
“prevents one from being narrow minded” (Cheng, 2011, p. 133). Through learning one creates oneself as a better community member, a better disciple, and a moral person. The importance of learning is presented in the Confucian context as a necessary component in world structure. Confucianism takes learning as a prerequisite for the ability to reflect because when learning “is perfected by reflection the outcome is morality” (ibid, p. 244). Appealing to the past appears to be a key feature of the Confucian tradition, which has laid grounds for opponents to criticise (Patt-Shamir, 2009). Learning discussed in Confucianism should be distinguished as opposed to the Western understanding of education which often refers to critical thinking and innovation. Confucianism stresses learning with regards to regularity and repetition, and as such, while it is important to be able to accept new ideas, learning refers first to learning the traditions (ibid).

**Further Consideration**

The above listed are some of the basic characteristics of Confucianism. They do not represent the Confucian as a whole, and even within the school of Confucianism, contradictory understandings and interpretations still exist. Further, Confucianism does not stand for the Chinese culture as a whole, especially in the globalised age where it is narrow-minded to understand cultural issues from a single perspective. However, it is important to note that culture is reflected through people’s daily life. People from the same cultural background tend to follow a similar code of practice. Confucianism has been influencing Chinese culture for over two thousand years and is deeply rooted in the daily life of the Chinese people. As argued by Liu (2012), the “Chinese familiar character is indivisible to the influence of Confucian culture” (p.97), the above mentioned aspects could be seen, to a certain extent, as the cultural characteristics of the Chinese people.
Advertising Perceived as Offensive

Christy and Harley (2008) have argued that the subject of offensive advertising is overall an understudied area and more research is needed to address such an “enigmatic phenomenon”. The present literature review has corresponded well with their claim as many aspects of offensive advertising have remained untouched (Cui, Chan & Annamma, 2008). Studies examining advertising that can offend have primarily centred on four basic aspects – the product being advertised (e.g., Phau & Prendergast, 2001; Waller, 1999), the creative execution used (e.g., Christy, 2002; Phau & Prendergast, 2001), the medium within which an advertisement is displayed (e.g., Mittal, 1994), and the audiences that are least and most likely to be offended (e.g., Shavitt, Lowrey, & Haefner, 1998).

Some products and services have been found as likely to offend by their nature, and the presence of these products can inherently offend some people. These products were originally described as “unmentionables” by Wilson and West (1981): “. . . products, services, or concepts that for reasons of delicacy, decency, morality, or even fear tend to elicit reactions of distaste, disgust, offence, or outrage when mentioned or when openly presented” (as cited in Waller, 2005, p. 6). Katsanis (1994) has further extended the definition of offensive products, as being “offensive, embarrassing, unhealthy, harmful to the environment, sexually oriented, or controversial to some significant segment of the population” (as cited in Christy & Haley, 2008, p. 272). Products that have been identified as offensive include those of feminine hygiene, undergarments, alcohol, contraceptives, birth control and pregnancy tests, and drugs for terminal illness (ibid). The potential of an advertisement to offend depends not only on the products and services, but also on the type of appeals and the manner of the presentation. Some products are not “inherently” offensive, but the way they are presented can still stir feelings of being offended (Prendergast, Ho & Phau, 2002). Studies have identified that sensitive subjects, such as violence and death, sexual
suggestiveness, nudity, depictions of inappropriate behaviour, derogatory and prejudiced portrayals, racial stereotype, as well as profanity and religious references, are more likely to offend (Christy & Haley, 2008).

Current Research

Recent research (e.g., Christy, 2008; Beard, 2008; Christy & Harley 2008) has started to recognise that offensiveness is stimulated by the combination and interplay of various factors including products, executions, media, and audience. Beard (2008) has analysed the relationships between different variables which have been identified as potentially offensive in advertising. Using content analysis, he studied the complaints received by the Advertising Standards Authority of New Zealand, and his findings suggest that the offensiveness of an advertisement is the result of a combination of the four factors above. Christy and Haley (2008) were of a similar view and suggested that the offensiveness of an advertisement should be analysed through its overall context. In contrast to those who have attempted to analyse offensive advertising in contexts, some scholars study the elements of products, executions, media and audiences separately. They have more or less taken the traditional method of assessing an individual variable in advertising while being more specific with the subjects being examined. For example, Waller (2007) examined the perceived offensiveness of products which he defines as “gender related”, such as condoms, feminine hygiene products, men’s and women’s underwear, and Christy (2006) specifically analysed women’s perception of offensive advertising through detailed interviews.

Research in Asia

Research on advertising being perceived as offensive was initiated in the West, particularly the United States, Australia and some European countries, where a culture of
consumerism is dominant. It has been noted (Phau & Prendergast, 2001), till 2001, nothing is known about consumer reactions to advertising perceived as offensive in Asia. However, many (e.g., Phau & Prendergast, 2001; Prendergast, Ho & Phau, 2002; Fam, Waller & Yang, 2008; Prendergast, Cheung & West, 2008; Zhao & Wang, 2008; Fam, Waller, Ong & Yang, 2008; Huff, 2010) have started to analyse this phenomenon in Asian countries in the last decade. This is probably due to the outstanding economic performance of some Asian countries (Fam & Waller, 2003), together with the move of Asian consumers from more conservative financial behaviours to contemporary consumerism where citizens are encouraged to spend rather than to save (Meng, Elliott & Hall, 2010).

Research on advertising with potential to cause offence conducted in Asia started with stressing the East–West differences in perceptions of offence around various products (Christy & Haley, 2008). The approaches which have been undertaken in these studies were using the same research methods of questionnaire survey which have traditionally been used in the West. Phau and Prendergast (2001) were the first to conduct research on offensive advertising in Asia. They have edited some of the questionnaire content with considerations to the specific characteristics of Singaporean culture, which include a “sense of modesty about using sexy stimuli, a wide range of superstitious beliefs such as the belief in lucky and unlucky numbers and the prohibition of the consumption of alcoholic beverages by Muslims” (ibid, p. 76). The result has revealed that chat-line service is the most offensive product/service in Singapore, whereas the advertising appeals with the content of sexual related and culturally sensitiveness are the most offensive themes. Prendergast, Ho and Phau (2002) have applied the same research method of questionnaire survey to identify the offensive products and themes in Hong Kong and the similar method was applied again to analyse the offensive products on the internet in the following year (Prendergast & Huang, 2003). The variables being assessed in their research include a range of products/services (e.g., alcohol, chat-line services, condoms, dating services, female contraceptives, feminine hygiene products, funeral services) and reasons for finding the advertising offensive (e.g.,
sexual connotations, evoking unnecessary fear, sexist, cultural insensitivity, indecent language, subject too personal, nudity).

Demographic Profile of Audience

The demographic profile of audience members is one of the latest components being explored in the literature of perception of offensive advertising (Christy, 2006). Offensiveness often relies on the interpretation of individuals as the perception of offensive advertising is primarily subjective. For this reason, different demographic groups tend to have different perceptions toward an advertisement (Waller, 2007). The age range has constantly been identified in the literature as having a strong influence on an individual’s experience with advertising offence. For example, in the US, Shavitt, Lowrey, and Haefner (1998) found that 57% of individuals aged between 35 and 54, are often or sometimes being offended by advertisements whereas only about 40% of 18 to 34 year-olds are likely to be offended by advertisements. The same phenomenon has also been identified in China. After analysing different generations, Fam, Waller, Ong & Yang (2008) have reiterated that the level of offensiveness varies in accordance to audience’s age. Further, people from different geographic locations may have different views toward offensive advertising. Yu and Zhou (2010) conducted a regional comparison in China to analyse the different behaviour patterns of the coastal and inland young-consumer, and suggested that marketers need to devise different marketing approaches to targeting various consumers in these two markets.

Cross Cultural Analysis

Due to the rapid globalisation of business, many companies are required to market their products and services across national borders and often in markets with which they are unfamiliar. Therefore, measurements of consumer attitudes toward marketing and advertising
in a range of cultural contexts are needed for cross cultural comparisons (Cui, Chan & Annamma, 2008). Most research in this trend has adopted a method of cross cultural studies in which data are collected in different countries using the same method and then compared to assess the differences and similarities. For instance, Wah (2005) conducted his research between Singapore and Malaysia; and An and Kim (2006) drew a comparison between Korea and the US. The findings of cross cultural analysis suggest that the levels of tolerance towards the same products and advertising appeals vary among audience from different countries.

Garcia and Yang (2006) were among the first to bring cross cultural analysis into the field of perceptions of offensive advertising. They investigated the role of cultural values in cross cultural consumer responses to sex appeals in advertising. Their focus was to examine how consumer’s uncertainty avoidance index influences their responses to sexual appeals in advertising. Using students as subjects, they concluded that the role of culture as a perceptual lens is important in the perception of sexual appeals between audiences in America and Mexico. Their findings have supported the presumption that cultural values may influence the effectiveness of advertising appeals in cross national advertising. The cross cultural variations in consumer attitudes have clearly indicated that the differences in cultural values have an effect on the perceptions of offence in advertising (Cui, Chan & Annamma, 2008).

Although, little research has been conducted with consideration to multicultural issues in the field of perception of offensive advertising, comparisons of different cultural groups in the same locality are nothing new in the area of advertising and marketing studies. In the US, Meng, Nasco and Clark (2007) measured country-of-origin effects in consumption behaviours of Caucasians, Chinese, and African Americans; while Meng and Venkatapparao (2010) have conducted similar research measuring the consumer’s usage of web-service on Chinese and African American consumers. In Asia, Ong and Moschis (2009) revealed that
consumers of Malaysia’s three main ethnic subcultures (Malays, Chinese, and Indians) of different religions (Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus respectively) differ in consumption activities in response to stress-induced life events.

**Gaps in the Literature**

Firstly, the research conducted in the area of perception of offensive advertising in relation to cultural issues is very limited. Most of the research mentioned in this section were conducted with the data collection method of survey with only one researcher being an exception, Christy (2006), who has adopted an qualitative research method of interviews to assess women’s perception of offensive advertising. Christy (2008) argues that although studies have consistently noted the influence of demographics on perceptions of offence, but characteristics associated with cultural norms and values are largely unexplored. Further, the research methods being applied by others studying this phenomenon have mainly taken the quantitative approach of questionnaire survey. With the absence of qualitative research, quantitative research alone is insufficient to provide a sound analysis about such a complex social phenomenon. As such, more research with the qualitative research methods are needed to further explore the perception of offensive advertising.

**Conclusion**

Three major themes were covered in this chapter. Firstly, theories in the field of cross cultural communication were reviewed. This is to locate the present study into a broader theoretical context. These theories have provided guidance for understanding the relationship between Chinese tertiary students and the host culture of New Zealand. Secondly, the
Chinese traditional culture of Confucianism was reviewed. These Confucianism characteristics presented in this chapter are also believed as the “typical” characteristics of traditional Chinese culture (Ren, 2010; Ip, 2009), which will be used for the purpose of analysis in the later part of this thesis. Lastly, the existing knowledge in the field of perception of offensive advertising was reviewed.
CHAPTER 3

This chapter presents the chosen methodology and research methods appropriate to the investigation of the relationship between cultural values and perceptions of advertising as offensive. A mixed research methodology has been applied in this project as both qualitative and quantitative research could bring benefit to the present study. Survey questionnaire and focus group interviews were developed for this project. A survey was conducted initially among Chinese tertiary students at an Institute of Technology and a University in Auckland and some of these survey participants were invited to participate in a follow-up focus group interview after the questionnaire research was completed. The questionnaire survey enabled me to identify a possible trend about the phenomenon of perceived offence, and based on the survey findings, this phenomenon was further investigated by focus group research.

Methodology

After considering the characteristics of both qualitative and quantitative research, a mixed methodology is more appropriate to study the perception of offensive advertising among Chinese tertiary students. King, Keohane and Verba (1994) have described quantitative research as using numbers and statistical methods:

It tends to be based on numerical measurements of specific aspects of phenomena; it abstracts from particular instances to seek general description or to test causal
hypotheses; it seeks measurements and analyses that are easily replicable by other researchers (as cited in Murray, 2003, p. 2).

Quantitative research is often conducted on existing theoretical frameworks and follows highly structured methods (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Quantitative research retains more popularity in the area of advertising studies. It is often seen as a fast and economical research approach which is consistent with modern business practice. Keller and Casadevall-Keller (2010) have suggested that quantitative research should be used when the researchers do not know enough about a situation because it is effective in producing general trends about a social phenomenon.

Although quantitative research has its strengths in analysing a phenomenon, its statistical based research philosophy in itself is a limitation when it is employed to explain a social or cultural issue. The cultural values of Chinese tertiary students in New Zealand are a key criterion for assessment in this project. Further, the perception of offensive advertising is fundamentally subjective as it is based on each individual’s personal interpretation. Therefore, quantitative research alone is inadequate to address the research question “In what way do cultural values have an impact on the perception of advertising as offensive by Chinese tertiary students?”

On the other hand, qualitative research focuses on the richness and depth of social phenomena. It is often conducted in the ‘real-world’ as researchers have no intention to control the objects (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (1994, as cited in Murray, 2003) have argued that qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. “This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret
phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (ibid, p. 2). With reference to the purpose of the present study, perceive of offence occurs on the individual level, both experienced and remembered by the persons who have encountered the advertisements. Therefore, qualitative research would be appropriate to elicit the feelings and perceptions of each individual.

Quantitative and qualitative research have often been seen as on the opposite ends of a spectrum. While quantitative research has followed a strong scientific tradition, qualitative research was originally derived from the area of social science. Both approaches have their distinctive strengths and weaknesses in analysing a social phenomenon, and even being used to examine the same object, they tend to generate distinctive insights from different perspectives (Keller & Casadevall-Keller, 2010). They can be complementary and are not naturally exclusive. A study with an overall quantitative approach can employ qualitative methods, and vice versa. Yet both methodologies have their distinctive attributes, a mixed methodology was used in this project by implementing both quantitative and qualitative research methods that will generate complementary types of data. A survey questionnaire was conducted initially, and some of the questionnaire participants were then invited to participate in a follow-up focus group interview in order to investigate the phenomenon further.

According to Denscombe (2010), the present study could benefit from the approach of mixed methodology in several ways. First, the research can develop its accuracy through the use of different methods to investigate the same phenomenon. This particular research design provided an opportunity for me to cross-check the findings from one method against the findings from a different method. Second, the use of more than one method can also enhance the findings of research by providing a more complete picture of the subject being studied. Different research methods will result different perspectives and when combined, will provide further insight toward the subject being studied. The use of two research method
provides an alternative perspective for the researcher to view the phenomenon of advertising perceived as offensive. Further, complementary methods can be used as a means of moving the study forward. In the present study, the focus group was introduced as a way of building on what has been learned through the use of survey questionnaire. Lastly, data from the survey are used as the basis for selecting a sample of people to participate in the research through the focus group. Participants were asked to provide their personal and contact information when collecting the questionnaire data which has guided the selection of participants in the focus group interviews, based also on their informed consent and willingness to volunteer.

Data Collection

Survey

Questionnaires are often used to gather information about attitudes, behaviours, activities, and responses to events (Wisker, 2001). They are particularly effective when looking for patterns of activity within groups of people and are very useful for linking findings with specific social classes, age-groups, sexes and ethnic backgrounds (Denscombe, 2010). Therefore, the questionnaire survey was selected at the initial stage of the data collection process. The research project aimed to study a specific demographic group of Chinese tertiary students in Auckland, and as such, questionnaire survey was deployed to determine possible trends about the view of people in this specific group. In addition, data from the questionnaire were used as reference to conduct further investigations.
The questions listed in the questionnaire (Appendix 1) are closed questions. This specific design of using closed questions is on the one hand, convenient for the participants to respond to and on the other hand, it is easy for the researcher to analyse. The data generated from the questionnaire survey is primarily quantitative and is been presented in terms of numerical figures. Multiple-choice, yes/no questions, Likert scales and rating scales occupy a major part of the questionnaire. Specific variables in the questionnaire were chosen based on previous research (e.g., Phau & Prendergast, 2001; Prendergast, Ho & Phau, 2002) where products/themes were intentionally selected to represent items that vary in potential offensiveness. Variables in these research have been used in the present study because they were conducted in Hong Kong where it has a similar cultural environment with mainland China where the participants are originally from. A few items have been altered to fit the New Zealand context, for instance, the product for terminal illness has been removed from the questionnaire because this product is not permitted to be advertised in New Zealand. The questionnaire is composed of five sections and the table below illustrates the actual format of the questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Title</th>
<th>Question Types</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Information</td>
<td>Multiple choice, rating</td>
<td>To assess participants’ attitudes toward various types of media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>scale, Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products &amp; Services</td>
<td>Likert scale</td>
<td>To identify participants’ views on a variety of products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising Themes</td>
<td>Likert scale</td>
<td>To identify participants’ views on a variety of advertising themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>Multiple choice, yes/no</td>
<td>To assess the impact of offensive advertising on the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Comments</td>
<td>Multiple choice</td>
<td>To establish the participants’ identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: structure of the questionnaire
Section 1 is intended to understand the time participants would usually spend on certain types of media and their attitudes toward advertising on these types of media. Section 2 and 3 are intended to assess the participants’ attitudes toward a number of products/services and advertising themes which have been identified as having the potential to offend. Likert scales have been used in these two sections. Section 4 is designated to assess the impact of offensive advertising on the participants’ purchase intention with a number of multiple-choice and yes/no questions. Section 5 is to establish the participants’ personal details, such as gender and age range. The purpose of this section is met by using multiple choice questions.

Focus groups

As the questionnaire survey was designed to provide some general information about how offensive advertising is perceived, a qualitative method based on the outcomes of the survey enabled me to hypothesis the reasons for some advertisements being perceived as offensive by Chinese tertiary students in Auckland. The focus group is especially effective as a method for obtaining information relating to people’s thoughts, perceptions, ideas and experiences (Wilkinson, 2000). They are used to gather data “relating to the feelings and opinions of a group of people who are involved in a common situation” (Collis and Hussey, 2003, p. 166). This specific research method provided an opportunity for me to gather and observe the collected viewpoints from the demographic group of Chinese tertiary students (Wisker, 2001).

The focus group interviews were constructed by three parts. The structure and guiding questions of the focus group interviews are attached in Appendix (2). Loose questions (Thomas, 2003) were taken as the questioning approach in the first part of the focus group interviews. By taking this approach, the researcher was able to explore the diversity of
participants’ interpretations of some concepts, such as ‘culture’, ‘media’, and ‘offensive’.
Participants were also encouraged to talk about their personal experiences with feeling
offended by advertisements in this part of the interview.

After discussing their experiences and views about what contributes offensive
advertising in general, the participants were shown a series of images (in Appendix 3) with
the contents of different products/services and advertising themes. The images were selected
in relation to the products/services and themes which have been identified as being offensive
in previous research conducted in other countries. They include images of alcohol, gambling,
funeral services and sexual suggestiveness. Exposure to these images was intended to
facilitate discussion and assist those who had difficulties recalling experiences with being
offended by advertising (Christy, 2006). The questionnaire findings were also presented to
the participants in this part of the interview, through PowerPoint (Appendix 3). They were
encouraged to interpret the findings from their perspective and asked to give comments on
the relationship between the questionnaire findings and their cultural background.

Response-guide approach was taken in the final part of the interview as the
participants become familiarised with the topic. In a response-guide approach, “the
interviewer begins with a prepared question, and then spontaneously creates follow-up
queries that are logical extensions of the answer the interviewee has given to the opening
question” (Thomas, 2003, p. 65). This interviewing approach can give participants more
freedom to express their personal experiences and enable the researcher to elicit their
personal viewpoints.

In the final part of the interview, participants were shown a number of TV
commercials. Two requirements were imposed in selecting these advertisements. Firstly, they
had already been presented to the public in New Zealand so that a level of familiarity with them could be expected. Further, these advertisements should contain at least one aspect, either its product/service or the advertising theme, which has been identified as being potentially offensive by the questionnaire findings. Participants were asked to comment after watching each of these advertisements. It is important to assess the participants’ tolerance on the actual New Zealand advertisements as all previous discussions were based merely on their assumptions or memories of advertisements that are perceived by them as offensive. Discussions in this part of the focus group were centred on specific advertisements after watching each of these four.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Description of the ad</th>
<th>Reason for being selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funeral Services</td>
<td>A number of aged couples discussing their funeral plans</td>
<td>This product was rated the highest in terms of the perceived offence in the survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tui Beer</td>
<td>Three males trying to steal beer by sneaking into a beer factory of many female guards dressed in bikinis</td>
<td>The theme of this advertisement is related to gender stereotype which was rated as being highly offensive in the survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Seconds</td>
<td>An Asian character introducing the product with a strong accent</td>
<td>The manner of portraying the Asian character could be seen as ethnic stereotype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAB</td>
<td>Two male adults recalling experiences of bad decisions made by one of them</td>
<td>The product is related to betting/gambling which was rated as being highly offensive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: TV advertisements being used in the focus group interviews
Participants

The survey was conducted on the campuses at Unitec and AUT where tertiary students are easily approachable. Due to limitations on time and resources, the survey was conducted with a relatively small sample of 50 people. It is important to acknowledge that a small scale survey may lack validity. However, given that Chinese tertiary students are a very specific demographic group with many common characteristics, 50 people should be sufficient to indicate a trend. The sample composition is driven by participants’ age range, gender and the time they have been living in New Zealand. The sampling strategy was designed so that it includes an equal number of female and male participants of whom half have lived in New Zealand for less than two years and the other half have spent a reasonable amount of time in New Zealand (for two years or more). This data collection approach was planned in order to generate deeper insights into the findings, by potentially being able to compare groups of participants to assess whether there were any differences or similarities between them.

During the survey research, participants were offered the option to leave their names and contact details for further research. Those who left their contacts were invited to participate in the focus group. Two focus groups were arranged with one group for those who have been here for less than two years (hereafter known as “2-)” and another group was held among those who have been in New Zealand for two years or more (hereafter known as “2+”). The focus group participants were selected based on the information in the questionnaire which contains a section for personal details. Six candidates were contacted for each group, and attempts were made to balance the gender ratio in each group. Three male and three female participants took part in the first group, whereas two male and two female participants were taken part in the second group.
Research Procedure

Questionnaire

The survey was administered by the researcher with the participants in person. This practice was feasible because it was a small scale survey of 50 people. It was anticipated that this approach could encourage a higher response rate than for example online survey, which is important for this project as the sample size is small and the research design is based on the expectation to generalise from the sample to population. A pilot was conducted with five people and the actual survey was completed in July 2012. During the survey research, most people approached were willing to assist by completing the questionnaire, although there were a few exceptions (e.g. being busy with their studies). There were three selection criteria: age range, gender and time being spent in New Zealand. The age range of 18-25 was fixed in order to increase the validity of the findings, thus this criterion applies to all participants. The first selection priority was given to the gender aspect because it is easy to identify.

After the gender criterion was met, the selection of participants was concentrated on the criterion of ‘time they have spent in New Zealand’. Participants were categorised into two groups (2- and 2+), and the research was designed to recruit an equal number of participants in each group. The number of participants in the group of 2- slightly outnumbered the group of 2+ when the initial lot of 50 questionnaires was obtained. Questionnaires were numbered from 1 to 50 as they were completed. The questionnaires labelled with the smallest number in the group of 2- were taken out from the quota, and then, follow-up questionnaires were administered to participants who could fall into the group of 2+. The qualified follow-up questionnaires were put into the quota to ensure that the number of questionnaires remains capped. The follow-up questionnaires were only conducted to participants of the same gender of whose questionnaires have been taken out. This was to ensure the gender ratio is not disrupted while new questionnaires were entered into the quota.
Focus Group

Ten of the survey participants who volunteered initially to participate agreed to take part in the focus group interview. Both focus groups were conducted in August 2012 in a meeting room at Unitec’s library. Six participants who have been in New Zealand for less than two years (2-) attended the first focus group. Two participants in the second focus group from those who have been in New Zealand for two years or more (2+) decided to withdraw when they were sent a text reminder a day prior to the interview. Due to the short notice of these withdrawals, the second focus group comprised four people.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire

Most of the questions were structured to invite responses using Likert scales and all questions in the questionnaire were coded. For example, in the section of potentially offensive products/services, participants were asked to rate the level of perceived offence on a number of products/services. Participants were given five options ranging from not offensive to extremely offensive. In this case, the answer of not offensive is coded with the number ‘1’, and the answer of extremely offensive is coded with ‘5’ being the highest number. The answers from all participants can then be added up to produce a sum for a certain product/service. The sum stands for the overall level of perceived offence toward a particular product/service. Mean (m) and Standard Deviation (sd) were then produced. The product with the lowest rating, or the smallest sum or mean, is taken as the lowest level of
perceived offence. In contrast, the product with the highest rating, or the largest sum or mean, was taken to be the product/service that is most likely to offend.

The collected data were input into an Excel spread sheet to facilitate the analysis. As the questionnaire covered several aspects of potential offensive advertising, the findings are able to illustrate some tendencies in relation to the participants’ attitudes towards different types of media, products/services and advertising themes, and the impact of perceived offensive advertising on purchase intentions. Further analysis has been conducted to bring out the differences among different demographic (or sub-) groups of Chinese tertiary students, which include two gender groups and two groups for different time participants have lived in New Zealand. All the processed data were then put in tables for the purpose of presentation.

**Focus Group**

Conversations in the focus groups were conducted in Mandarin. Given that all participants are from China with Mandarin as their mother tongue, it was expected that some of them may have difficulties, especially those who have been in New Zealand for less than two years, expressing their attitudes and feelings accurately in English. In this way, participants who have difficulties with English would not feel discouraged from revealing their views in a Chinese speaking environment. The focus group interview was recorded with a voice recorder and some notes were taken in order to obtain the key information. Data were transcribed from the voice recorder and then translated into English.

Analysis of the focus groups’ data was taken the instructions provided by Collis and Hussey (2003). Three steps were followed to process the translated script - 1) condense, 2) categorise and 3) convert. The interview transcripts were initially condensed and some
information such as conversations that are irrelevant to the subject was filtered out. The data was then summarised into a manageable size. In the following stage, the key words were highlighted and the relevant themes were established. The condensed data have been rearranged to fit into different themes to structure the research findings. Because the data was elicited from focus group conversations, it was in a form of casual and oral language. Therefore, the last stage was to convert the data into appropriate wording for the presentation of the thesis.

Ethical Issues

The study covers some sensitive issues, such as the advertising content of violence, alcohol consumption, and cultural practices in funerals. Therefore, the purpose of the research was informed to all participants in a clear manner while assuring them of confidentiality and anonymity. An information sheet was handed over to the focus group participants before collecting any information. They were advised that their name and information that may identify them would be kept completely confidential. Further, it was made clearly that participating in this research is voluntary and they could refuse to take part or stop at any time without giving a reason. As all data were collected by direct personal encounters with the participants, I was able to cautiously observe their reactions and take instant measures to prevent and minimise discomfort or harm that may have been caused by the research.

Authorisations to use the content of the interviews for the purpose of this research were gained from all participants before collecting the data. During the survey research, participants who have expressed interest in to participating in the focus group were asked to
leave their names and contacts for further research. They were advised that their names and contacts would not be recorded in the thesis or in any other reports. For those who chose to participate in the focus group, they were assured both verbally and in written form that information that may identify them will be kept completely confidential. Questionnaire, interview notes, audio records and transcripts which may contain their personal information are stored on a password protected file which is only permitted for me and my supervisors to access. Physical files are stored in a locked drawer at the researcher’s home.
CHAPTER 4

This chapter presents the results of both the questionnaire and the focus group. The first part of the chapter summarises the findings of the questionnaire, obtained at the initial data collection stage. The second part presents the findings of the focus group which were gathered at the follow-up stage in the data collection process. The chapter presents the material according to the order of the sections of the questionnaire and interview topics.

The logic of the research design was to conduct the questionnaire initially which will then help to determine the approach used in the focus groups. In practice this meant that the outcomes of the questionnaire research were discussed in the focus group as a means of seeking clarification of the questionnaire findings. The questionnaire findings reveal that the internet is the most favoured medium for Chinese tertiary students, compared with the traditional media of TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. The findings of questionnaire have also identified the level of perceived offence towards a number of products/services and advertising themes. In the focus groups, participants were asked to describe their experiences with advertisements which they considered as offensive. At the end of the focus group interviews, participants were shown four TV advertisements (funeral services, Tui beer, TAB and 30 seconds mould killer) that have been presented on mainstream TV channels in New Zealand. Participants were asked to comment on whether they consider these advertisements offensive and why they were (or were not) offended by them. This chapter now sets out the detail of the questionnaire results and then the focus groups.
Questionnaire Findings

Following a specific selection procedure, out of the 50 participants in the sample, half were female and half were male. Half of the sample have lived in New Zealand for less than two years, and half have lived in New Zealand for two years or more. All participants were tertiary students who were enrolled with Unitec or AUT at the time when the questionnaire was conducted. They were all within the age range of 18-25.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Lived in NZ for less than two years (2-)</th>
<th>Lived in NZ for two years or more (2+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Participants’ Profile

Time Spent on Different Types of Media

In the first section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to select one out of six media types that they spend most of their time on. Thirty-three out of 50 (66%) indicated their preferred type of media is the internet (browsing), fourteen (28%) selected internet (social network), while the remaining three (6%) selected radio. In other words, the majority of the participants (94%) selected the internet as the medium which they access the most. None of the respondents selected newspaper, magazine or TV.

Participants were also asked to indicate the number of hours they usually spend on different types of media on a daily basis. The findings from these questions reveal that a significant number of participants either have no access to, or choose not to access
newspapers, magazines, radio and TV. In particular, 30 participants have indicated that they do not spend any time on reading newspapers and 29 have indicated that they do not spend any time on reading magazines whereas the rest would only spend a limited time (less than one hour) reading newspapers and magazines. In contrast, all participants would spend a certain amount of time browsing online each day, ranging from less than one hour to more than four hours. Similarly, 41 participants would spend some time every day on the internet for social network related activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Newspapers</th>
<th>Magazines</th>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>Internet (browsing)</th>
<th>Internet (social network)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours per day</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Average hours spent on each type of media on a daily basis

In terms of the volume of time being spent, internet (browsing) is the highest, followed by internet (social network). TV was ranked as being moderate, whereas newspaper and magazine are at the lower end.

Gender

Seventeen male participants have selected internet (browsing) as the medium which they spend the most time on, while 16 female participants have selected the same type of medium. Seven participants selected internet (social network). Only one male participant selected radio as the medium which he spends the most time on a daily basis, while two female participants have chosen the same medium. The average hours that each gender group spend on different type of media has been aggregated as follows:
Table 4.3 suggests that both male and female participants spend a lot of their time on the internet (browsing). Each group spends minimal time every day reading newspapers and magazines. The hours spent on newspaper, magazines, and internet (social network) between these two groups are similar. The major difference incurred on the medium of TV, where female participants would spend much more time on. Female participants in average spend 2.24 hours each day watching TV, and male participants would only spend 0.8 hours being involved in this activity.

Time in New Zealand

A comparison was then drawn up on the aspect of different periods of time participants had lived in New Zealand. The purpose of this is to assess whether the length of time living in New Zealand have an impact on participants’ behaviour in relation to media consumption, and their attitudes towards different types of products/services and advertising themes. As before, an aggregation of the total hours of media consumption across the whole group was performed to simplify the data. The findings reveal that both the group that had lived in New Zealand for less than two years, and the group that had lived here for two years or more, said they spent most of their time on internet (browsing) and internet (social network), and limited time on reading newspapers and magazines.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Newspapers</th>
<th>Magazines</th>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>Internet (browsing)</th>
<th>Internet (social network)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Average hours spent on each type of media by 2- and 2+

On a daily basis, both groups would spend most of their time on internet (browsing), although the average hours spent by 2+ is more than the average number of hours spent by 2-. The second highest number of hours spent, for both groups, is on internet (social network). The hours spent on reading newspapers and magazines are the lowest for participants in both groups. Participants in 2- spend an average of 0.36 hours reading newspapers and 0.52 hours reading magazines daily, whereas participants in 2+ spend an average of 0.48 hours reading newspapers and 0.36 hours reading magazines.

**Products/Services**

Participants were asked to rate the level of perceived offence toward different types of products/services in the second section of the questionnaire. They were given 12 variables, and were asked to rate each of them using a Likert scale, ranging from 1, not offensive, to 5, extremely offensive. Thirty out of the total fifty participants (60%) responded that the advertising of charities is “not offensive”. It is the only product/service that more than half of the participants selected as being “not offensive”. Similarly, half of them (50%) selected the products/services of alcohol and political parties as “not offensive”. Fourteen of the fifty participants selected chat-line services as “offensive”, six participants selected weight loss as “very offensive” and four participant have selected funeral services as “extremely offensive” which were respectively the most responses received under each category. Table 4.5 presents summary data of the ratings on all the products:
Table 4.5: Level of offensiveness for all products/services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products (Variables)</th>
<th>All Participants</th>
<th>Male (n=25)</th>
<th>Female (n=25)</th>
<th>2 - (n=25)</th>
<th>2 + (n=25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n= 50)</td>
<td>(n=25)</td>
<td>(n=25)</td>
<td>(n=25)</td>
<td>(n=25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine hygiene</td>
<td>SD 0.93</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M 1.78</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwear</td>
<td>SD 0.97</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M 1.92</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>SD 0.89</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M 1.76</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condemns/birth control</td>
<td>SD 0.91</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M 1.9</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funeral services</td>
<td>SD 1.22</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M 2.14</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political parties</td>
<td>SD 1.08</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M 1.84</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious denominations</td>
<td>SD 0.99</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M 1.92</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charities</td>
<td>SD 0.76</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M 1.52</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating services</td>
<td>SD 0.95</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M 1.96</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat-line services</td>
<td>SD 1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M 2.06</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling/Casinos</td>
<td>SD 1.12</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M 2.08</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight loss</td>
<td>SD 1.01</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M 2</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Likert scale was the only questioning strategy in this section. Thus all the questions are close-ended. Under each product/service, participants were asked to select one
out of five responses representing “not offensive”, “a little offensive”, “offensive”, “very offensive” and “extremely offensive”. “Not offensive” was coded with the number “1”, “a little offensive” was coded “2”, “offensive” was coded “3”, “very offensive” was coded “4”, and “extremely” offensive was coded “5”, the highest level of perceived offence. The responses consisting of a total of 50 numbers for each product/service were added up to produce a sum, and then to calculate the mean (M) and the standard deviation (SD) for each product/service. The higher the mean is for a particular product/service, the higher the level of perceived offence that has been generated among the participants.

Table 4.5 indicates that funeral services are the product/service which has incurred the highest level of perceived offence among the participants. Gambling and chat-line services have been rated as the second and third highest respectively in terms of the level of perceived offence. In contrast, charity has received the lowest rating. The level of perceived offence for alcohol and feminine products were also rated as being low compare to the rest. The level of perceived offence for all the other products is similar which could be considered as being in the medium range.

Table 4.5 also shows that male participants experience a higher level of perceived offence than female toward all products being listed in the questionnaire. In some cases, the difference is marginal such as in the case of charities, feminine hygiene and chat-line services, whereas in other cases the difference is more apparent. Examples of this more marked difference include political parties and religious denominations. Both males and females rated charities the lowest in terms of the level of perceived offence being experienced. The level of perceived offence for charities is much lower compared to all the other products. According to the ratings, funeral services, chat-line services, and religious dominations are perceived as the most “offensive products/services” by male participants,
and chat-line services, gambling/casinos, and weight loss are perceived as the “most offensive products/services” by female participants.

The level of perceived offence for some products is similar across the two groups of those respondents who have been in NZ for less than two years (2-) and those who have been in NZ for two years or more (2+). Comparing these two groups, the products that have a similar level of perceived offence are feminine hygiene, alcohol, underwear, condoms/birth control and funeral services. Perception of offence among the participants of 2+ is higher on the products/services of dating services and chat-line services, whereas among the participants of 2-, perception of offence registers more strongly in relation to products/services of political parties and gambling/casinos.

Advertising Themes

In the questionnaire, participants were also asked to rate the level of perceived offence on different types of advertising themes. They were provided with 12 variables in this section, and were asked to choose one of five responses on a Likert scale from 1 (“not offensive”) to 5 (“extremely offensive”). Twenty-four participants selected “not offensive” for the advertising theme of health and safety issues, which is the largest number of “not offensive” responses among all the themes. Only six participants selected nudity as being “not offensive” which is the smallest number of responses in this category. On the opposite side of the spectrum, seven participants selected “extremely offensive” for the advertising theme of violence, which is the largest number of “extremely offensive” responses among all the themes, while no one has selected health and safety issues as being “extremely offensive”.
Data relating to prejudiced portrayals, and racial and ethnic stereotypes, show the highest levels of respondents’ perceived offence among all the themes. These two are followed by inappropriate behaviour, gender stereotype, and anti-social behaviour, ranking from the third to the fifth place. Health and safety issues register the lowest levels of perceived offence, significantly lower than all the others as shown in Table 4.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes in Advertising</th>
<th>All Participants n=50</th>
<th>Male n=25</th>
<th>Female n=25</th>
<th>2- n=25</th>
<th>2+ n=25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>SD 1.28 M 2.6</td>
<td>1.48 M 2.52</td>
<td><strong>1.07</strong> M <strong>2.68</strong></td>
<td>1.39 M 2.88</td>
<td>1.14 M 2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>SD 1.34 M 2.36</td>
<td>1.41 M 2.6</td>
<td>1.24 M 2.12</td>
<td>1.35 M 2.64</td>
<td>1.29 M 2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual suggestiveness</td>
<td>SD 1.05 M 2.5</td>
<td>1.19 M 2.44</td>
<td>0.92 M 2.56</td>
<td>1.11 M 2.64</td>
<td>0.99 M 2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nudity</td>
<td>SD 1.03 M 2.54</td>
<td>0.95 M 2.64</td>
<td>1.12 M 2.44</td>
<td>1.06 M 2.64</td>
<td>0.99 M 2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate behaviour</td>
<td>SD 1.16 M 2.64</td>
<td>1.11 M 2.64</td>
<td>1.22 M 2.64</td>
<td>1.13 M 2.88</td>
<td>1.16 M 2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prejudiced portrayals</td>
<td>SD <strong>1.19</strong> M <strong>2.74</strong></td>
<td>1.31 M 2.84</td>
<td>1.08 M 2.64</td>
<td><strong>1.21</strong> M <strong>3.04</strong></td>
<td>1.12 M 2.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial and ethnic stereotype</td>
<td>SD <strong>1.17</strong> M <strong>2.74</strong></td>
<td>1.33 M 2.88</td>
<td>1 M 2.6</td>
<td><strong>1.24</strong> M <strong>3.04</strong></td>
<td>1.08 M 2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender stereotype</td>
<td>SD 1.12 M 2.62</td>
<td>1.15 M 2.8</td>
<td>1.12 M 2.6</td>
<td>1.25 M 2.64</td>
<td>1 M 2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious references</td>
<td>SD 1.05 M 2.5</td>
<td>1 M 2.48</td>
<td>1.11 M 2.36</td>
<td>1.08 M 2.6</td>
<td>0.97 M 2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-social Behaviour</td>
<td>SD 1.23 M 2.7</td>
<td>1.04 M 2.92</td>
<td>1.35 M 2.32</td>
<td>1.27 M 2.88</td>
<td>1.15 M 2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Safety Issues</td>
<td>SD 1.13 M 1.98</td>
<td>1.2 M 2.12</td>
<td>1.07 M 1.8</td>
<td>1.12 M 2</td>
<td>1.17 M 1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indecent Language</td>
<td>SD 1.12 M 2.58</td>
<td><strong>1.24</strong> M <strong>2.96</strong></td>
<td>0.96 M 2.2</td>
<td>1.08 M 2.56</td>
<td><strong>1.26</strong> M <strong>2.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: Level of perceived offence for all advertising themes
The biggest difference between male and female participants’ perceptions occurs with the themes of indecent language and antisocial behaviour. These two themes were rated on the highest of all by males, while the ratings of these themes were moderate among female participants. The level of perceived offence toward inappropriate behaviour is the same for both genders. In general, males are more likely to be offended by advertising themes, as is apparent in the data on ten of the 12 themes listed in table 4.6. However, there are two themes that were considered as more offensive by females. They are sexual suggestiveness and violence. Health and safety issues were rated the lowest in terms of the level of perceived offence by both genders. The themes of sexual suggestiveness and gender stereotype received a relatively lower rating from the male participants, whereas death and indecent language received a lower rating from the female participants. According to Table 4.6, male participants consider indecent language, antisocial behaviour and racial and ethnic stereotype as highly offensive, and female participants consider violence, inappropriate behaviour and prejudiced portrayals as highly offensive.

The level of perceived offence is higher among participants of 2- on most of the advertising themes being listed in the questionnaire. The only exception is indecent language where it generated a marginally higher offensiveness rating among 2+ than to 2-. Therefore, compare with 2-, 2+ holds a more moderate view toward most of the advertising themes. There are some similar trends in terms of the level of perceived offence among these groups. For example, the ratings for the advertising themes of health and safety issues, indecent language and gender stereotype are all very close. Participants of 2- consider racial and ethnic stereotype, and prejudiced portrayals as being the most offensive, whereas participants of 2+ consider indecent language as being the most offensive among all the advertising themes on the list.
Impact on Purchase Intention

Participants were also asked questions in regard to the relationship of their purchase intention to their perception of offence in advertisements. Twenty-nine participants out of 50 indicated that the impact from offensive advertising could be described as a feeling of being “disturbed”. Twenty-eight revealed that the impact of an offensive advertisement would only last on them for a short period of time. Thirty-six participants believe that most “offensive advertising” is created with the purpose of attracting attention. Twenty-four respondents indicated that an advertisement that has offended them would lead them to stop purchasing its products/services. Thirty participants revealed that they have had the experience of not buying a product/service because they think its advertisements are offensive. More than half of them (29) would stop buying the product/service in the future, if they think the advertisements are offensive. Eighteen participants indicated that they will encourage their family and friends to stop purchasing a product/service if they think its advertisements are offensive.

More female participants selected “interesting” in the questionnaire as the likely impact of a perceived offensive advertisement, whereas the influence on male participants tend to be “disgusting”. The impact of advertising being perceived as offensive would last longer on male participants than on females. Fourteen male and 12 female participants disclosed that offensive advertising could stir their interest in the products. Nineteen male and 17 female participants are of the view that most “offensive advertisements” are created with the purpose of attracting attention. Twelve in each of the gender groups indicated that an advertisement which is considered as offensive would urge them to stop purchasing its product. Seventeen males responded that they had decided not to buy a certain product in the past because they think its advertisement is offensive, while 13 female participants reported the same experience. Seventeen female participants stated that they would still buy the product if it could offer them attractive benefits, even though they found its advertising
caused them offence. However, 12 male participants would buy the products if it could offer them attractive benefit. In cases where they find an advertisement offensive, more female participants (11) would encourage their family and friends to stop buying the products compared to male participants (7).

Eighteen participants from the group of 2- indicated that the impact of an “offensive advertisement” would only last on them for a short period of time, and ten participants from the group of 2+ provided the same answer. Twelve participants from the group of 2- and 14 participants from the group of 2+ indicated that an “offensive advertisement” would stir their interest in the products. Sixteen participants in the group of 2- are of the view that most offensive advertisements are produced on purpose to invite attention and 20 participants from the group of 2+ held the same viewpoint. Fourteen participants from the group of 2- indicated that they would stop buying a product/service in the future if they think its advertisements are offensive, whereas 15 participants from the group of 2+ provided the same answer.

Summary

The questionnaire findings have been summarised above in line with the structure of the questionnaire. The time participants spend on different types of media was presented initially, with the results showing that the internet is the most favoured form of media among Chinese tertiary students. Participants’ perceptions in response to different products/services and advertising themes show that funeral services has the highest level of perceived offence among the participants. Racial and ethnic stereotype and prejudiced portrayals are the advertising themes for which the level of perceived offence is the highest. The resulting impact on purchase intention was then summarised.
Focus Group Findings

Two focus group interviews were conducted after the questionnaire. One was with students who have been in New Zealand for less than two years (2-), and the other one was with those who have been in New Zealand for two years or more (2+). Six students participated in the first focus group (2-) while four students took part in the second group (2+). The focus group interviews were structured into three sections – general questions, survey findings, and case analysis. The findings of the focus group are presented in the same order as the structure of the focus group interviews.

General Questions

In the initial part of the focus group interviews, participants were asked to define a few terms that would be used frequently in the interviews. This practice was to draw the participants and me, the researcher, into the same context, enabling me to understand the comments from their perspective.

Defining “offensiveness”

Participants in both groups mentioned in the discussion that offensiveness could occur ‘mentally’ and ‘physically’, by which they were referring to the harm that is caused by abusive language and violence behaviours. Those in the 2- group, in particular, stated that it is the uncomfortable feeling created by someone’s actions or language, and such harm is often directed to a specific proportion of the population. Participants in the 2+ group brought up the issue of harassment, which refers to both verbal and physical harassment. In their
view, making fun of, or holding prejudiced views toward a particular group could be seen as potentially causing offence.

Participants in both groups raised the issue that to continuously repeat an advertisement in a limited timeframe is offensive. Audience may easily lose their patience, thus they are more likely to get irritated. Participants in the 2- group stated that “this kind of advertising approach is meaningless and it is hard to understand the actual message they are trying to deliver. It is an insult to the audience’s intelligence”. Similar comments were received from participants in the 2+ group. In addition, participants in the 2+ group brought up the issue of pop-up advertisements online, which they think are very offensive. One participant started the conversation by giving an example to demonstrate how he could be offended:

When you are on YouTube, an ad pops up all of the sudden and it is often quite loud. Another example would be, when you go onto a website, a lot of ads will come out before doing anything on the site.

Although this appears to be an experience of being irritated, regular pop up advertisements could lead to constant disruption, thus the feeling of being offended could occur. In addition to the above comments, another participant added that: “it is more annoying when you cannot find the close tab. You think you may have found the “cross” button, however when you click it, it will take you to another site.”
Experiences of being offended by advertisements in NZ

Participants in the 2-group listed a few advertisements they found offensive. A female participant pointed to a billboard advertisement that she considers offensive:

It is a billboard advertisement with a lady being featured and there are many circles on the billboard. Each circle is a ‘hole’ and it exposes a part of her body, even her breasts were disclosed. It makes me feel uncomfortable.

Another participant in this group talked about the posters at bus stops that promote giving up smoking. His complaint about these advertisements in particular is about the way they are designed:

In fact, every smoker knows the harms associated with smoking. However, it makes you feel uncomfortable when you watch them. I do not think it would work. We are all grownups and it is alright as long as we do not affect others. It may work better for the youths if these ads look better.

Participants in both groups expanded on the subject to compare advertisements between New Zealand and China. They commented that advertisements in China are generally less creative and the same advertisements are presented in a TV channel repetitively for a very long time. Participants in the 2+ group stated that although they do not have much experience watching the local advertisements, they have found that those in New Zealand are funnier and more interesting.
Differences between advertisements in NZ and China

Participants in both groups are of the view that advertisements in New Zealand are more creative, whereas the advertisements in China are “boring and repetitive”. A participant in the 2+ group commented that the content of TV advertisements in New Zealand is more implicit in which “they usually do not encourage the audience to purchase their products directly”, whereas advertisements in China are straightforward as the advertisers would tell the audience to purchase their products in a straightforward manner. A participant in the 2+ group brought up a major drawback of advertisements in China, saying that it usually takes a long time for advertisers to change the content of their advertisements and in some channels, the same advertisements are shown over a long period of time.

Sometimes, it is suffering to watch TV in China. In New Zealand, it is probably because of the language, or the words they use in the advertisements, you feel something is different. Further, the way an ad is presented in New Zealand is quite different. Sometimes, it is interesting to watch ads here. However, it still starts to irritate you if you watch the same ad too many times.

A participant in the 2- group added that the advertisers in China are more in favour of using celebrities in their advertisements. “They tend to use stars to promote their products, get them to hold onto a product and tell you it is good”. Another participant in the same group attempted to explain the situation saying “you may not recognise them even if they are popular figures here in New Zealand.” He further added that some advertisements are only applicable to those who understand the local culture, and because of that, it is different for those from other cultural backgrounds to comprehend the actual messages underlying some advertisements in New Zealand.
Time spent online

Participants in both groups indicated that they would spend a considerable amount of their time online on a daily basis, but have minimal access to other forms of media. Participants in the 2- group considered magazines, TV, newspapers as the alternatives to internet, whereas participants in 2+ stated that they may only choose to listen to radio or watch TV when they are involved in other activities, such as listening to radio when driving or watching TV while cooking. Most participants in the 2- group indicated that they would spend more than four hours on the internet on a daily basis, and when they are online, they are involved in a number of activities. These include browsing the news, Weibo (the Chinese version of Twitter), video clips, and shopping. Most participants in the 2+ group would also spend a considerable amount of time online every day. Their usual online activities were online games, watching videos, Weibo, and reading news.

Comments on Survey Findings

The questionnaire findings were presented to the applicants in a PowerPoint presentation in the second part of the focus group interviews (refer to Appendix 3: PowerPoint File). They were asked to comment on a number of significant findings elicited through the questionnaire survey. These were: the products/services and advertising themes which have been identified as the most and least likely to offend them, and the relationship between perceived offensive advertisements and purchase intention. The participants were also shown a number of images which were used to facilitate discussion.

Products/services (2-)

Questionnaire findings on the level of perceived offence towards different products/services were shown to the participants and in general, they agreed that the ratings
received on these products were reasonable, which are close to their expectation. Participants in the 2-group commented that the ratings met their expectation for advertisements for charities to be rated the lowest in terms of the level of perceived offence. A participant in this group mentioned that compared with other products, charity advertisements have a better quality and usually have a narrative in the content. Another participant added that this result is probably also related to the pressure from others “because although you may dislike charity ads, you do not want to say so.”

According to the questionnaire findings, the level of perceived offence on alcohol was relevantly low compared to other products, and the participants were of the same view. They believe that alcohol is an important part of the Chinese culture, directly associated with people’s daily life in China. The function of alcohol in building relationships was stressed a number of times in the conversation. A 2-male participant stated: “In China, you cannot live without alcohol, in either business or political activities. Especially for businesses, negotiations are usually carried out on the tables”. When the 2-participants were asked about whether they related alcohol with issues of dangerous driving or domestic violence, they responded that it may lead them to think about the negative impacts of drinking, but it will not be the first impression when they watch an alcohol advertisement.

In terms of feminine products for which the level of perceived offence was rated relatively low in the questionnaire findings, the 2-female participants commented that they are simply necessities and the male participants submitted that they didn’t have a problem with watching them. They also gave reasons why the rating for chat-line services was high in terms of potential for causing offence:
It is a charged service. They try to trick you to spend more time on the phone, so that they can charge you more. In fact, it is useless. It is not a psychological service. All what they are doing is to trick you. Therefore, people eventually will start dislike it.

Further, gambling advertisements are offensive because they encourage people to gamble. A male participant stated that: “people may find gambling attractive by watching the ads, and will start to gamble. They will then get addicted to gambling. It brings a negative impact to the audience.”

Products/services (2+)

The conversation was mainly centred on the products/services of funeral services, gambling and charity. One participant provided a reason why funeral service was rated the highest in terms of the level of perceived offence. She emphasised the point that this particular group (Chinese tertiary students) are not used to watching advertisements about funeral services. Therefore, the content of advertisements for funeral services is based on their assumptions as it is something they are unfamiliar with. Another participant pointed out that the result is related to the participants’ culture. He commented that while Western people may take death and funerals as a natural endurance, conversations about funerals in the Chinese traditional value system is a taboo. When they were asked about why conversations about funerals are unacceptable in China, they offered explanations relating to the differences in beliefs and value systems.

In relation to advertisements for casinos and gambling, participants stated that casinos often present themselves as a place for entertainment whereas they tend to avoid the issue of gambling. Advertisers usually try to attract potential consumers by creating an enjoyable atmosphere in the advertisement and highlight the entertainment function of their service.
Participants pointed out that gambling should be differentiated from lottery because gambling and lotteries are completely different in nature. They are of the view that gambling is harmful whereas lotteries are not. The major difference between these two concerns the chances of winning. People are well aware that the chances of winning a lottery are very small; hence they will not buy tickets often. The chances of winning in casinos are much higher compared to lotteries, and as such people are more likely to get addicted to gambling. A participant commented that their views on gambling are shaped primarily by their educational background. They were taught in their school years the harms associated with gambling, which can destroy an individual’s life as well as his/her family’s lives.

Advertisements for charities received the lowest rating. Participants provided a few reasons why they thought the product/service of charity is unlikely to offend. First, advertisements for charities are often associated with goodwill. “People are aware that the intention of charity ads are not only for the benefit of the advertisers, and because of this, viewers cannot blame them even if the ads themselves are of a poor quality”. Second, the number of charity ads is much less compared to the number of commercial advertisements. It is rare, thus it is interesting. Third, a female participant brought up the point that charity advertisements are a positive way to remind the audience that there still are people in need.

Without these ads, you probably will not think to make a donation. However, after watching these ads, you will be reminded that there are other places to use your money, for goodwill (welfare). It reminds me about charities, or otherwise I will not think about it.

In general, they were of the view that culture has a role to play in the perception of offence. Despite the role of culture, they further indicated that the perception of offence is
also related to some other factors, such as individual viewers’ personal background and the belief of humanity that is universally shared. They referred to charity and stated that the perception of charity is related to an individual’s morality which in a way is universal for all humankind. The context of where the research is conducted is another important aspect affecting the outcomes of the questionnaire research.

I think it is related to the social condition and the actual environment of a country as well. If the research were conducted in China and the subject is regarding the Red Cross of China. People will find it quite offensive.

China’s Red Cross has recently suffered a severe PR crisis in relation to their credibility, stirred by a young lady showing off her wealth on the internet who claimed to be a manager in the Red Cross.

Advertising themes (2-)

Participants in this group gave comments on a number of advertising themes that received a high rating for perceived offence. They agreed that both advertising themes of racial stereotype and prejudiced portrayals are very offensive because they cover sensitive subjects and the “targets” (victims) are barely individuals, but often a whole demographic group. They commented that their concern on the advertising themes of racial stereotype and prejudiced portrayals is primarily because that they are likely to reinforce the misguided attitudes towards other racial and ethnic groups.

They also commented on the advertising themes of antisocial and inappropriate behaviours, which were rated as “highly offensive”. Their concern about advertisements with
the content of inappropriate behaviour or antisocial behaviour was that children may be
influenced negatively by watching these kinds of advertisements.

The biggest worry is that children, especially those going through puberty may imitate
these behaviours, because they have not built a sense of ‘citizenship’ yet. It can be
quite concerning when children imitate these behaviours, such as car racing, or riding
a motorbike at a fast speed.

Participants then referred to how they were taught by their parents and teachers during their
school years.

We were told by our parents that you cannot act ‘abnormal’, nor to ‘annoy’ other
people. We were told to follow a specific ‘code of practice’ since we were little.
Many children in China are told in this way. Therefore, we will get irritated when we
see anything that is contradicting to the ‘code of practice’ of which we were told.

In China, parents tend to regulate their children’s behaviour strictly, whereas in Western
countries, children are encouraged to express their individuality. The participants believed
that education plays an important role in shaping of individuals’ attitudes towards
inappropriate behaviours which in turn have affected their views on advertisements with the
content of inappropriate behaviour.

Advertising Themes (2+)
Members of this group commented that the advertising theme of stereotypes and prejudiced portrayals would surely offend some people. A participant stated that: “their customers (viewers) are not limited to a specific group. They should try to avoid these themes, as stereotypes and prejudiced portrayals could lead to racism which is a sensitive subject in all countries.” Participants indicated that they would lodge a complaint immediately if they were offended by this kind of advertisement. They were asked whether they would be offended if the prejudiced portrayals or stereotypes were about other ethnic groups. They responded that they would still be offended “because this is overall a negative thing, and if this could be done on one ethnic group, it can be done to others.”

In relation to advertising themes of antisocial behaviour or violence, participants also brought up the issue of the negative influences on children and young people. However, they did not think that this specific advertising theme is necessarily related to the cultural background of Chinese tertiary students. “No matter where you come from, you will find this offensive. It may lead others to imitate. This issue may not have a direct connect with the participants’ cultural background.”

Opinions on Funeral Ads

The product/service of funeral services was discussed specifically in the focus group interviews because it received the highest rating in the previous questionnaire data, in terms of the level of perceived offence. Participants in the 2- group believe that it is inappropriate to have commercials for funeral services on TV because they are “a sign of bad luck”. A participant advised that in China there were people trying to advertise funeral services on TV. However, it did not last because so many people lodged complaints against it.
I quite like watching TV commercials. However, you will not feel good when you see ads about funeral services. It is probably contradicting to our traditional values. The Westerners should be fine with it, as they do not even mind living next to cemeteries. Different value systems. I have never seen this kind of ad on TV nor the printing media. It is not appropriate to promote these products, because it is bad luck.

They have then provided reasons why people in this demographic group dislike advertising about funeral services. Some of them have stated that the difference in beliefs may be an important aspect shaping their views about funerals. A participant stated that: “many people in Western countries have a religion whereas in China, some people believe the existence of ghosts. They do not have a religion and ghosts for them are scary things.” Another participant added that she is not offended by the product itself, but rather by the avenue through which it is advertised. She suggested that it would be inappropriate to advertise funeral services on TV, but a small section in the newspapers would be more appropriate.

The participants further suggested that the perceptions about this particular product are related to Chinese culture.

In China, children are supposed to take care about the funerals of their parents. If children do not take care of their parents’ funeral, they will be seen as being impious (no obedience). This is an important part of our family value and the topic of funeral should be avoided in a family’s conversation.

They think that Western people hold an open mind about death and take it as a natural and inevitable occurrence. They think that the views of Chinese towards advertising of funeral
services may eventually change. However, it would still be difficult to see advertisements about funeral services on TV in the near future.

Participants in the 2+ group hold a slightly more open mind toward the advertisements of funeral services. Although they agree that discussions about funerals should be avoided in daily conversations, they indicated that the information provided by these ads could be helpful in times of need. They pointed out that it is important to choose the appropriate media to advertise funeral services, and commented that TV is not appropriate. The way an advertisement is presented is another aspect determining whether it causes offence. One participant indicated that advertisers should show a high degree of respect and sympathy in their advertisements. “If it is not presented in the appropriate manner, it is likely to stir anger among the audience. However, people may accept it if it is presented in an euphemistic manner.”

Purchase intention

Participants in both groups advised that an advertisement that has caused them offence would have a longer lasting effect on them. However, they also indicated that a longer memory about an advertisement which has offended them would only remind them to not purchase their product for a longer time. In contrast, being offended by an advertisement will put them off buying its products, as a female stated in the conversation: “I will not buy the products if their advertisements have offended me. Not only that, I will tell others to not buy their products. I will tell them that their ads are disgusting and do not buy their products”. The participants were then asked about what if the offensive advertisements are for products they have been using, such as a particular type of drink that they are used to consume. Some participants responded that they would still consume the products, whereas others advised that they would change it. In general, their buying intentions are primarily
based on the quality of the products and whether these products can be easily replaced by other similar products.

Case Analysis

In the final part of the focus group interviews, participants were shown four TV advertisements which all have been broadcast in New Zealand. They were asked to provide comments on the advertisements after watching them, and their responses are summarised below. Links to these ads are attached in Appendix 3.

Funeral Services

This advertisement presents a number of elderly couples discussing their funeral plans in a peaceful and relaxed manner. The advertisement for funeral services was chosen because it was rated the highest in terms of the level of perceived offence in the previous questionnaire research. Feedback from the participants was unexpected as none of them found this advertisement offensive. In contrast, some participants liked the way this service was presented and were impressed that the funerals are discussed in such an open manner.

After watching the advertisement, participants advised that neither the product itself nor the conversations held in the advertisement offended them. On the contrary, some participants gave this advertisement positive feedback: “it feels that death is a natural thing, and you do not feel uncomfortable hearing them talking about funerals.” They commented that the content of the advertisement is acceptable:
I did not find it offensive, especially in the early part when they were talking about their funeral plans. However, when it comes to the costs and how the fees can be arranged (in the second half), I was a little uncomfortable. It is like they did not take the issue of funerals seriously, but the early part was quite touching.

Further, they pointed out that the differences of lifestyle and purchase behaviours in China and in New Zealand could be an aspect making this particular advertisement unacceptable in China. “It seems that they are taking up a mortgage (the purchase option provided in the advertisement), and people in China will not even consider buying a funeral service in this way. They will surely not purchase funeral services in advance.”

Participants indicated that they all had an open mind toward the matter of funeral plans. However, they further commented that the feedback could be completely different if this advertisement was shown to the elderly in China. The participants in both groups pointed out that the concern toward the elderly family members is a major issue in this case. They are worried that elderly members of their family may get upset by watching it. “You cannot even talk about death and funerals with the elderly in your family, or otherwise they will get really upset.” The participants commented that the elderly in China are sensitive toward these kinds of topics, and are emotionally vulnerable when it comes to conversations like this.

It is probably all right for them to start the conversation and talk about their death, but you should not start the conversation. If you start the conversation, they will think that you are trying to get rid of them and are tired of taking care of them.

Participants advised that, according to their experiences, they had never seen a funeral advertisement in China and they believed that it would take a long time for these kinds of
advertisements to be seen on TV in China. They commented that although advertisements for funeral services would eventually be accepted by future generations, advertisers may need to change their strategies when they choose to advertise to present day Chinese audiences in New Zealand.

I think the younger people will not mind about it, however when it comes the elderly, it will be a different case. Probably, in a number of decades, when this issue become more relevant to us, we will then start to accept it, only if they change the advertising styles and make it more acceptable.

TAB Betting

Gambling was also rated “highly offensive” from the previous questionnaire. To assess the result of the questionnaire and to put it into the New Zealand context, an advertisement for the TAB was selected. This advertisement presents two young adults deciding on who to bet on in a coming sporting event, through one recalling his experiences with the other who constantly makes silly decisions.

None of the focus group participants saw this advertisement as causing them offence. Some participants in the 2- group stated they had difficulties understanding it, while the other half found it quite creative. One stated: “I think the content of this ad is typical for ads in this country. They are quite creative. They do not tell you to bet directly, rather, they try to bring their products up from an indirect way.” Similar feedback was received from participants in the 2+ group as some participants had difficulties understanding the content while the others found it interesting.
The focus group participants were also asked about whether this advertisement would be accepted if shown in China.

I think it should be alright. The content of this ad is basically about two people holding a conversation. My impression about this ad is that it is quite creative. Further, little kids will only find it funny, but they will not realise about what the actual product is about.

30 Seconds Mould Killer

This advertisement presents a “strange” Asian character introducing the product of Mould Killer with a strong “accent”. It was chosen because an Asian character was presented in a way that his “strange” look, behaviour and accent were intentionally highlighted. The advertising themes of prejudiced portrayal and ethnic stereotype were rated as the “most offensive” through the questionnaire research. Therefore, this advertisement was selected to assess the validity of the questionnaire findings in the actual context. Similar comments were received from both focus groups, as they more or less found this advertisement offensive.

Before giving comments, a participant in the 2+ group asked who the advertiser was and whether the business is Asian owned:

I want to find out whether the business is Asian owned, or is it Kiwi owned, and why they have chosen to present the Asian in this way in their ad. I will not mind if the advertiser is an Asian. However, if the advertiser is an European, I think they have decided to present the Asian character in this way with an (ill-) intention.
Participants indicated that a major concern about this advertisement is that the message it is sending out is misleading. “It gives people a wrong impression about Asians, especially the kids. I think I have seen this ad before. I was irritated the first time when I saw it.” The aspects that the participants disliked were the way the Asian character is presented which includes his accent, actions and look. They found that both the accents and his look have been exaggerated in the advertisement. A participant gave his thoughts after watching the advertisement, and why he was offended:

People who use English as their second language may have some negative experiences caused by their accents, from the time they started to learn English to when they were trying to find a job in New Zealand. They may have many unpleasant experiences. Surely, you do not want other people to make fun of your painful experience, especially when you are trying hard to change your accent so that you can speak their language. It may sound funny to them, but for you, it is a pain.

A participant who was not offended by the advertisement attempted to explain her position by indicating that similar advertising approaches are used in many places, and is not unusual. She brought up an example of an advertisement in China, in which a foreigner is trying to promote a product with a “strange” foreigner’s accent. However, the other participants were not comforted by her explanation and stated: “when you were watching the ad in China, you were a member of the majority group. However, when you come to New Zealand you will not feel comfortable watching it because you become more sensitive about the ethnic issues.”

The participants were then asked about whether this ad would be offensive to other ethnic groups. One said:
I think it will be specifically offensive to Asians. When you see Kiwis in the ads, the characters being shown are often being bright and optimistic, or a fatty doing funny stuff, or a professional looking guy with glasses. And now, when it comes to this Asian guy, although he is in a ‘professional’ dress, but he acts like a clown. Personally, I think they are trying to make fun of the Asian.

TUI beer

This advertisement covers the aspect of ‘gender stereotype’. It features three male adults trying to steal beers by sneaking into a beer factory with full of sexy female workers and guards in bikinis.

Responses on this advertisement separated male and female participants into different positions. While male participants found this advertisement funny and interesting, the females were a little offended. A female participant stated that: “it has objectified females. A lady guard was distracted from her work by a pair of high heel shoes.” A male participant agreed and added that it may upset some female members of the audience. “It is a little disgraceful to females. It seems that they are making fun of females. It is like tricking the dogs away with a bone (referring to the scene where a male has tricked a female guard away with a pair of high heel shoes)”. However, this participant further commented: “although it is a bit disrespectful to females, the ad itself is quite creative”. Another female pointed out that female figures have often been misrepresented in advertisements.

Whether it is in China or in New Zealand, there are many ads trying to present females from a specific (limited) angle, as being mindless and sexy. Women have often been portrayed as being sexy in the ads. Why don’t they do the same to males?
Summary: Focus groups

To sum up, the focus group interview conducted with two groups was divided into three sections. In the first part, participants were asked to provide their definitions of “offensive advertising” and personal experiences of whether they had been offended by advertisements. In the second part, the discussions were around significant issues regarding the level of perceived offence toward different products/services and advertising themes which were elicited from the questionnaire findings. Participants provided their opinions and reasons as why and how these products/services and themes were rated. They also commented on the relationship between their feeling of being offended and subsequent purchase intention. In the final part of the focus groups, participants were shown four New Zealand local advertisements that represented an aspect of the previously identified products/services or themes with the potential to cause offence – funeral services (product), TAB (product), 30 seconds (theme/ethnic stereotype), and Tui beer (theme/gender stereotype). Participants provided their thoughts and responses after watching these advertisements.

Conclusion

The questionnaire findings, presented in the first half of the chapter and the focus group findings were presented in the second half. The questionnaire survey was conducted with the expectation to identify the participants’ behaviours toward different types of media, the level of perceived offence toward a number of products/services and advertising themes and the impact of perceived offensive advertisements on audience’s purchase intention. After
the questionnaire data were processed, focus group interviews were conducted to explore the meaning of the questionnaire data in greater depth. The focus groups were conducted with an intention to address the “why” and “how” of the questionnaire findings. In the focus group interviews, participants also viewed and discussed some New Zealand advertisements in order to expand the discussion and generate further insights. Key findings from the questionnaire and focus groups summarised in this chapter will be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5

Data from the present study summarised in the previous chapter are now analysed with reference to current literature, focusing on key findings arising from the survey and focus groups. This chapter is divided into four sections and it is designed in such a way as to address the sub questions and the main research question.

Discussion in the first part of this chapter is centred on the products/services and advertising themes which were identified in the survey as being likely to offend. This section is also constructed to provide a concise answer to the first sub question: *What types of products/services and services/advertising themes are considered as offensive?* The second part discusses the effects of perceived offence on purchase intention. The effectiveness of online advertising is also discussed in this section because internet is the medium which has the greatest exposure to Chinese tertiary students. This section is able to respond to the second sub question: *What are the effects of the perception of advertising as offensive on purchase intention?* The third part analyses the relationship between cultural values and potential for offence on a number of products/services and advertising themes which were rated as highly offensive in the survey. This section is able to address the third sub question: *What particular cultural values in the Chinese tertiary students stimulate the perception of offence?* The main research question will be addressed at the end of this chapter: *in what way do cultural values have an impact on the perception of advertising as offensive by Chinese tertiary students?* The main research question is discussed within the context of actual New Zealand TV advertising.
Products, Services and Themes Considered Offensive

The level of perceived offence towards different products/services and advertising themes, using data summarised in chapter four, will in this section be discussed. Further, key findings in relation to the products/services and advertising themes which are perceived as offensive in the survey could assist in providing a concise answer to the first sub research question: *What types of products/services and services/advertising themes are considered as offensive?*

**Products/Services**

Findings indicated the level of perceived offence towards a range of products/services and advertising themes by Chinese tertiary students who agreed to participate in this study (refer to table 4.5 in chapter 4). Among all the products listed in the questionnaire, funeral services, gambling and chat-line services were perceived as being highly offensive. This is very similar to Phau and Prendergast’s (2001) study conducted in Hong Kong in which the researchers identified that, out of 14 products/services, funeral services were considered the most offensive whereas chat-line services and gambling fell into second and third places.

A reason given by the focus group participants in the present study for why funeral services were rated the highest in terms of the level of perceived offence is that people in China are not used to advertising about funeral services, and funeral related conversations are a taboo because this signifies bad luck in the view of Chinese people. Phau and Prendergast (2001) explained that chat-line services have been rated as the most offensive in Hong Kong because they often mean telephone-sex in Hong Kong. Views toward chat-line services are similar among the participants in the present New Zealand study because the services provided by chat-lines are the same in mainland China. Because several participants are
relatively recent arrivals to New Zealand, especially those who have been in New Zealand for less than two years, the mainland China views are still prevalent. Further, findings from the focus group reveal that gambling has been rated as offensive because advertisers are encouraging people to gamble which is believed to be harmful for individuals, their families and the community.

In contrast, charity, alcohol and feminine products were rated the lowest in terms of the level of perceived offence by Chinese tertiary students in the present study. According to the focus group participants, alcohol is an important tool for socialisation and relationship building (a concept known as Guanxi) in China, whereas feminine hygiene is simply a necessity. These findings have some similarities with the findings that generated in the Hong Kong study, in which alcohol was rated as the least offensive and feminine hygiene products were rated as causing a moderate level of offence (Phau & Prendergast, 2001). Charity was not included in Phau and Predergast’s study; hence it cannot be compared to the present study. However, the questionnaire findings on the products/services have identified some differences with the research that was conducted in Western countries such as the US and Australia, in which both feminine hygiene products and alcohol were rated as being offensive (Christy, 2006; Christy & Haley, 2008). Such an inconsistency could have two implications: first, previous research on these two products is arguably outdated due to the change of people’s attitude over time; second, the assumption of these two products being offensive is not necessarily applicable to the specific demographic group of Chinese tertiary students in New Zealand, for instance, cultural values about alcohol consumption in China make it acceptable as an advertisement.

Mainland China and Hong Kong share similar cultural patterns as both are strongly influenced by Confucianism. Therefore, it is not surprising that there is a consistency in the findings of research being conducted in Hong Kong and the research that was conducted.
among Chinese tertiary students in New Zealand. The findings further suggest that although Chinese tertiary students re currently living in New Zealand and some of them have been in New Zealand for more than two years, their perception of what may potentially be offensive in advertising is still predominantly influenced by the Chinese culture. According to Bennett (1998), it may take a long time to live in the host culture to be able to achieve the stage of “integration” where individuals can justify their behaviour patterns and communication styles in line with the host culture. Further, Kim (2001) argues that most immigrants have gone through a similar process of assimilation. However, as the findings indicate, the widely spread usage of internet and largely cultural diversified society has made the “host culture” less influential, which may either delay the “assimilation process” or make it possible for immigrants to not be “assimilated”.

Advertising Themes

Findings indicated the type of advertising themes that are perceived as offensive by Chinese tertiary students (refer to table 4.6 in chapter 4). Out of the 12 advertising themes, prejudiced portrayals, and racial and ethnic stereotypes were rated highly in terms of the level of perceived offence. It is difficult to draw comparisons on these two themes as they have rarely been tested in previous research in Asian countries. The subjects of prejudiced portrayals, racial and ethnic stereotypes are not highly relevant in China because multicultural issues are not apparent, whereas in many Western countries such as New Zealand, multiculturalism is an obvious phenomenon. However, prejudiced portrayals and racial stereotype have been rated as highly offensive in previous research conducted in the Western countries (Christy & Haley, 2008). All participants in the focus groups revealed that advertisements with the content of prejudiced portrayals and racial and ethnic stereotype are likely to offend. They indicated that these kinds of advertising themes should be avoided in advertisements as they are, to some degree, associated with racism which is harmful to the wellbeing of both individuals and the society.
When comparing the differences among men and women in the focus groups, female participants are more likely to be offended by the advertising themes of sexual suggestiveness and violence, whereas males are more likely to be offended by the remaining advertising themes (as listed in Table 4.6). The focus group participants were shown a sexually suggestive image in an advertisement for a clothing maker (Appendix 2) in the focus groups. Female participants tended to be more conservative when discussing the content of this image, with one participant stating that she would be embarrassed seeing it in a public place. However, male participants in general found this image acceptable. This is probably because China is being influenced by Confucianism which, by in large, is a “masculine society” (Bargiela-Chiappini & Haugh, 2009), and expects females to be more conservative toward sex related conversations (Hofstede, 2001).

In terms of the level of perceived offence, the rating received by advertising themes in general is higher than the rating received by the products/services. This is evidenced by comparing the ratings on the products/services listed in Table 4.5 (see Chapter 4) and the ratings on the advertising themes listed in Table 4.6. The average of all the “means” in Table 4.5 is 1.9, whereas it is 2.54 in Table 4.6. The slightly increased figure signifies a raised level of perceived offence. An inference that may be taken from this is that there were fewer people choosing the option of “not offensive” and a greater number of participants selecting “extremely offensive” in the advertising themes section of the questionnaire compared to the products/services section. This pattern has been noticed in previous research. Prendergast, Ho and Phau (2002) argued in their study that “the manner of advertising is more crucial than the matter of advertising.” The focus group participants also gave an explanation as to why advertising themes are more likely to cause offence in comparison to the products/services, and stated that: “you cannot blame them (advertisers) for selling their products, but the way in which they approach you as a consumer”.

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Purchase Intention and Online Advertising

The following section discusses how perception of offensive advertising is related to purchase intention and the effectiveness of online advertising on the Chinese tertiary student participants in the present study. This section responds to sub question 2: *What are the effects of the perception of advertising as offensive on purchase intention?*

**Impact on Purchase Intention**

Importantly, the findings of the questionnaire survey indicate that advertising perceived as offensive is more likely to attract attention. More than half of the participants (n=26) indicated that an advertisement perceived as offensive could stir their interest in the products and most of them said that an offensive advertisement would have a longer lasting impact on them. The impact of an offensive advertisement would last slightly longer on males than on females. More female participants (n=6) indicated that they would see offensive advertising as being “interesting” whereas more male students (n=8) chose the option of “disgusting”. This may explain why, after watching an advertisement (for the anti-mould product called “30 seconds”) in the focus groups, some female participants found it funny and laughed, whereas most male participants felt upset. However, the findings on this issue may not necessarily reflect the feelings they hold toward advertising that may potentially offend them, but also the word they choose to use to describe an advertisement which is perceived as offensive.
Most participants are of the view that offensive advertisements are created on purpose to attract attention. About half of the 50 survey participants (n=24) indicated that an offensive advertisement could lead them to stop purchasing the product/service. Further clarity on this point was obtained in the focus groups where it was found that although the offence experienced in viewing the advertisements was likely to focus participants’ attention and have longer lasting impact, these effects may actually work against the objectives of the advertisers as they are more likely to be reminded not to purchase the products. One participant said: “you will remember the ad if it has offended you, and whenever you see their products, it reminds you of its ads”. These comments were received from participants in both groups and align with the position reached in studies by Prendergast, Cheung and West (2008), Waller (2007) and Prendergast, Ho and Phau (2002) who argue that advertising perceived as offensive may result in severe damage for the advertisers, such as consumers boycotting the products.

More than half of the 50 survey participants (n=30) had the experience of not buying a product/service due to negative impact associated with its advertisements. This is more likely to be the case if the products are not necessities and can easily be replaced. A participant stated that:

If the product is a necessity, I will not change it unless I can replace it with another product of the same function and quality. For example, if an ad of Coca Cola has offended me, I may go for Pepsi in the next time. It primarily depends on whether it is convenient to find a replacement. If the range of alternative products is limited, I will not have much choice.
However, it is important to keep in mind that most products are replaceable in today’s market.

The impact of advertising that has the potential to offend may not only stop at the point when it reaches the audience in the first place; rather, it may spread to the wider public depending on the seriousness of the perceived offence. More than a third (n=18) of the questionnaire participants indicated that they would encourage their family and friends not to purchase a product/service if they were offended by its advertisement. This is more likely to be a gender issue, as more female participants (n=11) revealed that they would “publicise” the advertisers in a negative way if they have been offended by their advertisements. Similarly, members of both groups stated that they would tell their friends and families to stop buying a product if they were offended by its advertisement, and they all happened to be female participants. Below is an excerpt of the focus group transcript:

I will not buy the products if their advertisements have offended me. Not only that, I will tell others to not buy their products. I will tell them that their ads are disgusting and to not buy their products.

In relation to the findings of perceived offence towards advertising themes presented in the previous part of this Chapter, the advertising themes of prejudiced portrayals, and racial and ethnic stereotypes were perceived as highly offensive by Chinese tertiary students. They confirmed in the focus group interviews that advertising related to these themes is more likely to offend them and discourage them from purchasing their products, even if their products may provide some attractive benefits to them. However, for all other advertising themes, participants are less likely to change their buying behaviour, even if they are perceived as offensive. “If I really dislike the ads, say an ad that is related to racism, I will
stop using its products. However, if it is not very offensive, I will keep on using their products.”

In general, Chinese tertiary students are rational when it comes to purchase decisions. Their primary consideration relates to the quality of a product rather than their attitudes about an advertisement. Participants in both focus groups responded that whether to stop buying a product would also depend on the degree of offence they experienced. In this case, the previously identified products and advertising themes that were perceived as offensive could be taken into consideration when planning an advertising campaign. Particularly, the themes of stereotypes or prejudiced portrayals should be handled with extra caution when they are adopted as an advertising approach.

A Favoured Medium

It is important to note that the internet is the most favoured choice of media among Chinese tertiary students in Auckland. Findings of both questionnaire and focus groups indicate that the medium of internet is the channel where participants have the highest chance to be exposed to advertising. The questionnaire survey revealed that internet usage among the participants is extensive. Compared with the internet, the participants’ use of all other forms of media is limited. All participants would spend a certain amount of time on the internet on a daily basis and most of the focus group participants confirmed that they would spend about 4 hours or more on the internet every day. Therefore, it could be said that if Chinese tertiary students are to be offended by an advertisement in New Zealand, internet is the medium which it has the highest chance to cause such an offence. According to data from the questionnaire research in the present study, online advertising is more likely to offend compared to advertising on the traditional media of TV, radio, magazine and newspapers.
The findings indicated that the advantage of internet is that it is multi-functional and this specific feature of the internet has reduced the attractions of traditional media for this group. They are involved in various online activities such as social media, Weibo in particular, reading the news, watching videos, and online games. However, the increased usage of the internet is rather a global phenomenon, and in New Zealand this is demonstrated through data showing spending on online advertising has grown dramatically over the last decade (NBR, 2012; IABNZ, 2012). The wide spread of internet usage has made it a vital part of advertising campaigns for many businesses (Spilker-Attig & Brettel, 2010).

Although the internet is the most popular type of media channel among the Chinese student participants in this study, the effectiveness of online advertising still remains unclear. Given that internet users usually have a clear objective, either to engage in social media interactions or to play a specific online game, the level of tolerance for advertisements would be reduced when they are distracted from their predetermined objectives. This may explain to some extent why online advertising is seen as ineffective by some scholars (e.g., Chi, Yeh & Chiou, 2012), and the overall click-through rate of banner advertising is less than 1% (ibid). Further, if a banner advertisement is designed or presented inappropriately, it may work against the objectives of the advertisers as some participants in the present study disclosed that they would stay away from a website if it has too many banner advertisements. Therefore, according to Möller & Eisend (2010), advertisers should pay more attention to the actual effectiveness of online advertising, to focus the appropriate market and catch their attentions, instead of solely stressing click-through rates.

Kim (2001) argues that to actively participate in the mass communication of the host culture could facilitate individuals to understand host communication system. The extensive use of internet would reduce the reliance of Chinese tertiary students on other media such as TV, radio or newspaper. Further, while they are online, they tend to access to information
about their home country. For these reasons, the extensive use of internet among Chinese tertiary students can be seen as a disturbing factor for them to be competent in the host communication system. However, on the other hand, the use of internet could assist them to maintain in the cultural environment of their home country which could explain why the Chinese culture is still prevalent to most of the participants.

Cultural Values and Potential for Offence

The following part of this chapter discusses aspects of the cultural characteristics of Confucianism explored in the Literature Review (Chapter 2), linking them with the key findings presented in the previous chapter. This section could address sub research question 3: What particular cultural values in the Chinese tertiary students stimulate the perception of offence? The “particular cultural values” are discussed in the context of the perception toward each individual product/service and advertising theme, which are presented through the lens of Confucianism.

Funeral Services

The product/service of funeral services was rated the highest in terms of the level of perceived offence in the survey. Most focus group participants responded that, in their view, it is inappropriate to advertise funeral services through the public media. One participant stated:
I think, although I do not feel upset about these kinds of ads, I’d prefer to see it on the internet, newspapers or magazines, not to see it when I am watching TV. I do not want it to come up halfway through a film on TV. Maybe, one day, when I need the relevant information, I hope that I can find it online.

Focus group participants further indicated that the perception of offensiveness caused by the advertising of funeral services is related to their cultural background. Many of them believe that advertisements about funeral services are a sign of bad luck. They commented that discussing funeral services with someone, especially the elderly, in China is thought to be disgraceful.

In relation to the traditional Chinese culture of Confucianism, the value of filial piety may have played a part in the perception of advertisements on funeral services as offensive. In the traditional Chinese families, parents have the absolute authority and any attempts to challenge their authority are seen as not being filial piety (Liu, 2012). It is the children’s obligation to satisfy their parents. In this way, children should be cautious and show full respect when talking to their parents. Cheng (2011) provided that filial piety is a reciprocal process of affection which covers the attitude of respect for one’s seniors and affection on the senior’s part to the junior. Therefore, conversations which may upset the parents should be avoided. Many focus group participants indicated that the advertising of funeral services concerns them mainly because their parents or grandparents may get upset when watching it. Some of the comments were: “you cannot talk about death and funerals with the elders in your family, or otherwise they will get really upset”; and “they will get really upset if you bring up the conversation of retirement services. They cannot stand the idea of going to retirement centers. It is the children’s responsibility to take care of their parents”. These comments suggest that the cultural characteristic of filial piety may influence the perception of advertising about funeral services as offensive because their foremost consideration is the...
feelings of the older and elderly members in the family when watching advertisements about funeral services.

Focus groups’ participants were shown an advertisement for funeral services. A number of old people were talking about their funeral plans in the early part of the advertisement, and the payment options were provided at the end. Surprisingly none of the participants were offended personally by this advertisement, even though the topic of funerals was discussed explicitly in the advertisement. However, participants expressed their concerns for the elderly and commented that the elderly in their families would find it offensive. Participants stated that: “maybe the elderly in New Zealand have an open mind, and they do not feel offended by this ad. However, if this ad is shown in China the elderly would not be happy watching it”. It appears that this advertisement does not offend them on a personal level. However, they are primarily concerned about the elderly family members and in that way, they may get offended. In this case, their concern about the advertisement of funeral services has gone beyond the consideration of their personal feelings but the feelings of their elderly family members which could be seen as a typical characteristic of collectivism and filial piety (Ip, 2009).

**Gambling and chat line**

Gambling and chat-line services were rated the second and third most offensive products following funeral services. Some comments were received from the focus group participants regarding these products. According to several participants, chat-line services were perceived as offensive because the content is often misleading:
It is a charged service. They will trick you to spend more time on the phone, so that they can charge you more. In fact, it is useless. It is not a psychological service. All what they are doing is to trick you. Therefore, people eventually will start to dislike it.

Advertising of gambling is perceived as offensive due to the fact that it is promoting an inappropriate social behaviour:

By watching the ads, people may find gambling attractive, and will start to gamble. They will then get addicted to gambling. It brings a negative impact to the audience.

The participants did not specify the relationship between perceptions of offence relating to advertising of gambling and chat-line services, and the traditional Chinese culture. However, the acts of both gambling and using chat-line services contradict the practice of ritual which requests individuals to act in a “civil” (Tae & Strudler, 2012) manner. From a Confucian perspective, respect is obtained by engaging in appropriate ritual behaviour (ibid), and advertising promotes behaviours that are not “ritual” are not likely to be accepted.

**Charity**

The product/service relating to charity received the lowest rating in terms of the level of perceived offence, and the rating for charity advertisements is significantly lower than the remainder of the products. During the focus group interviews discussing this result, participants listed a number of reasons why charity advertising is unlikely to offend. The main reason that advertisements of charities are not potentially offensive to them is because that they are often associated with goodwill. The participants understand that the intention of
charity advertising is not for personal benefit of the advertisers, and because of this, viewers would resist criticising them even if the advertisements themselves may be of a poor quality. Further, participants in both groups pointed out that the rating is probably due to peer pressure. “Although it may not be their instinctive response, they are reluctant to say that charity ads are offensive knowing that other people may see the questionnaires.” The questionnaire itself was anonymous. However, it was distributed in person and participants were encouraged to leave their names and contacts for a follow up focus group interview.

The issue of how the perception of charity advertisements is related to the participant’s cultural background was not discussed specifically. However, Confucian philosophy could shed some light on why charity advertisements were rated as the least offensive. First of all, Confucianism encourages people to act virtuously towards others, and the idea of virtue and reciprocity has been expanded to the concept of charity (Wang & Juslin, 2009). To return some wealth back to society is seen as a virtuous act and a reciprocal behaviour which was promoted by Confucianism (ibid). Further, the fundamental ideology of collectivism urges people to give a higher status to the communal interest over individuals’ personal gains (Ip, 2009). In this way, it is not difficult to explain why participants are concerned about how their attitudes toward charity might be judged by others.

Alcohol and Feminine Products

The level of perceived offence for alcohol and feminine products were rated as being relatively low compare to the rest. While focus group participants have discussed feminine hygiene products as simply a necessity, they all agreed on the other hand that alcohol is a very important part of Chinese culture. Similar comments were received from both groups where they stated that: “in China, you cannot live without alcohol, in either business or political activities. Especially for businesses, negotiations are usually carried out on the
tables”; and “alcohol is barely a beverage. It is relevant to the politics, economics, for gifting purposes. It is highly relevant to daily life. You will need alcohol for family gatherings as well”. The consumption of alcohol is seen as a vital part of Chinese dining culture. Further, an advertisement for a Beer (Tui) was shown to the focus group participants. Although a few female participants complained about the content of the advertisement being disrespectful to females, most of them found this advertisement acceptable. They further indicated that even in China, people would not be offended by this advertisement.

**Racial and Ethnic Stereotypes**

The advertising themes of prejudiced portrayals and racial and ethnic stereotypes were rated the highest in terms of the level of perceived offence (refer to Table 4.6). Comments received from the focus group participants support the questionnaire findings. “This is surely offensive. Their customers (viewers) are not limited to a specific group. They should try to avoid these themes as stereotype and prejudiced portrayals could lead to racism which is a sensitive subject in all countries.” The relationship of stereotypes and traditional Chinese culture was not specifically covered in the focus group conversations, as multicultural issues are not apparent in China. Focus group participants are all the in-group members in China, thus they were less “mindful” (Gudykunst, 2005) toward ethnic related issues. A focus group participant corresponded to Gudykunst’s position, stating that: “when you were watching the ad in China, you were a member of the majority group. However, when you come to New Zealand you will not feel comfortable watching it because you become more sensitive about the ethnic issues.”

In the focus group interviews, participants were shown four New Zealand TV advertisements and the only advertisement participants claimed to be personally offended by is 30 seconds mould and algae killer. This is primarily because of the stereotype and
prejudiced portrayal of an Asian character in the advertisement. Participants stated that their major concern about this advertisement is that the message it carries is misleading and incorrect. They did not relate the perceived offence to the specific aspect of their cultural background. The conversation was centred on the portrayal of the Asian character in the advertisement and how this character was featured in an improper manner. Participants commented that: “this is offensive, in my view. They used an Asian in the ad and exaggerated his accent. I do not feel comfortable watching it”; and “it gives people a wrong impression about Asians, especially the kids. I think I have seen this ad before. I was irritated the first time I saw it.” stated the participants. Although the advertiser’s intention is unclear, it is rather apparent that this advertisement has been interpreted as being offensive by Chinese tertiary students. However, the offensiveness stirred by this advertisement was primarily due to the fact that the advertisers have adopted an advertising approach of using “negative stereotyping” and prejudiced portrayal.

At the intercultural encounters, individuals of the host culture may criticise behaviour or thoughts by someone from a different culture, which could offend the out group members (Bennett, 1998). This is not related to a specific culture group, but a view that may be held among all cultures. Fiske and Neuberg (1990) argued that stereotype and prejudiced portrayals are likely to offend the “out group” regardless of their cultural background. They have further suggested that prejudiced portrayals and stereotypes could potentially cause offence, and even “positive stereotypes” can be translated into hostile attitudes, but the hostile attitudes are not necessarily related to a specific cultural or ethnic group. The perception of offence is particularly driven by the aspect of the participants’ racial or ethnic background instead of their cultural background, for being a member of the “out group”. Therefore, it would be reasonable to infer that the perception of stereotypes and prejudiced portrayals in advertisements as being offensive are not directly related to the specific culture of Chinese, as in the advertisement of 30 seconds, participants indicated that other Asian ethnic groups such as Korean or Malaysian may also find it offensive.
Inappropriate and Antisocial Behaviour

In addition to stereotypes and prejudiced portrayals, inappropriate and antisocial behaviour were also rated as highly offensive in the survey. In the focus group discussions, participants brought up the term “harmony” a few times. Inappropriate behaviour and antisocial behaviour are all contradictory to the belief of harmony which was highly valued by Confucianism (Ip, 2009). According to Confucianism, harmony is the ultimate goal of familial, organizational, communal, and political lives. Peace and freedom from conflict play a vital part in the achievement of harmony. From this perspective, any disruptions to the achievement of harmony would be seen as unacceptable.

Participants further commented that an important reason for disliking the advertisements containing inappropriate behaviour and antisocial behaviour is the concern that children may imitate these behaviours. This position reflects the Confucian’s value of learning on which a great emphasis is regularly placed (Patt-Shamir, 2009). One participant commented that:

We were told to follow a specific ‘code of practice’ since we were little. Many children in China are told in this way. Therefore, we will get irritated when we see anything that is contradicting to the ‘code of practice’ of which we were told.

This practice is a typical characteristic in Confucian societies, as regularity and repetition was taken as the key objective of learning, which is believed as a pathway leading to morality (Patt-Shamir, 2009).
The advertising theme of health and safety issues was rated the lowest in terms of the level of perceived offence in the survey, and the rating is significantly lower than all other themes. The focus group participants believed the result was expected and reasonable. Advertising about health and safety is unlikely to cause offence because it is promoting a proper and socially accepted behaviour. This can be seen as on the opposite side of the position they hold toward inappropriate behaviour and antisocial behaviour where the cultural characteristic of harmony is relevant. Another reason that advertising of health and safety issues has been rated as the least offensive advertising theme is due to the fact that they are produced for the wellbeing of the public and community. Therefore, the attitudes they held in this case are similar to those they held toward charity, where consideration of the collectivist interest is prioritised over individuals’ interests.

Overall, the understanding and explanation of participants’ perceptions of offensive advertising can be traced back to the characteristics of Confucianism which is a fundamental constituent of the Chinese culture. Although the data obtained in the present study do not necessarily confirm the hypothesis that culture is related to the perception of advertising as offensive, the above analysis in relation to the characteristics of Confucianism could infer that cultural values can have an impact on the perception of advertising.

Based on the analysis of sub question 3, it may be reasonable to suggest that the traditional (conservative) characteristics of Confucianism in Chinese culture influence the perception of advertising as offensive by Chinese tertiary students in New Zealand. The Confucianism characteristic of filial piety could be seen as an influencing factor on the perceptions of advertising about funeral services as offensive. Ritual could be seen as an
influencing factor on the perception of advertising about gambling and chat-line services as offensive. Perception of advertising themes of racial and ethnic stereotypes are not directly related to the influence of Confucianism. However, the perception of offence toward the advertising theme of inappropriate and antisocial behaviour could be explained by the Confucianism characteristic of harmony. This could lead to a hypothesis that the characteristics of Confucianism are related to the perception of advertising as offensive which was assessed in the context of New Zealand TV advertising.

Views on New Zealand Advertisements

The following section discusses the impact of traditional cultural values on the perception of advertising as offensive by Chinese tertiary students within the context of actual New Zealand TV advertisements. This chapter addresses the main research question: *In what way do cultural values have an impact on the perception of advertising as offensive by Chinese tertiary students?*

Questionnaire has identified the aspects (product/service or advertising theme) in advertising which may potential cause offence to Chinese tertiary students. Based on findings of the survey, four New Zealand TV advertisements were selected to be presented to focus group participants, with each consist one of the offensive aspects. These advertisements are funeral services (offensive product/service), TAB (offensive product), Tui Beer (gender stereotype/offensive advertising theme), 30 Seconds (ethnic stereotype/offensive advertising theme). Participants’ responses were collected to assess whether the cultural value of Confucianism is a strong influencing factor and how the characteristics of Confucianism impact the perception of advertising as offensive by Chinese tertiary students. However,
focus group participants indicated that they have not been offended by the advertisements of funeral services and TAB, despite that the product/service of funeral service and gambling have been identified as having the greatest potential to cause offence. Participants were not offended by the advertisement of Tui beer neither, despite that the survey indicates that the advertising theme of gender stereotype is likely to cause offence. Although they were offended by the advertisement of 30 seconds, no information could establish that the offensiveness incurred is necessarily due to the participants’ cultural background (refer to the previous section discussing the advertising themes of Racial and Ethnic Stereotype). Through assessing the comments received on the actual advertisements, it could be concluded that the role of traditional Chinese cultural characteristics is not an apparent influencing factor in the perception of New Zealand advertisements as offensive by Chinese tertiary students.

The cultural values of Confucianism may have an impact on the perception of advertising as offensive under certain circumstances, including the nature of the product or service being advertised, and the context in which it is viewed. However, Chinese tertiary students appeared to have a high degree of acceptance of New Zealand advertisements, and were unlikely to be offended by the advertisements targeted to the general public in New Zealand. This is probably due to the fact that all participants in this research are aged between 18 and 25. Therefore, the oldest participant would be born in the late 1980s, a period when China adopted an open-door policy in order to welcome and accept the commercial influences from the West. Further, most participants are from urban areas where the influence of Western society, cultural values and ideology is strong. The Westernised environment has shifted the attitudes and behaviour of those young people onto the Western track (Ng & Heaberle, 1997). Therefore, it can be concluded that, with specific reference to the traditional Chinese culture of Confucianism, its influence on their perception of New Zealand advertisements as offensive is not apparent and, if anything, indirect.
Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of the questionnaire and focus groups, and linked the significant findings with current relevant literature. The chapter was presented with a consideration of the research questions, and as such, it was structured in a manner to address each of these. The first part of the Chapter discussed the questionnaire findings on the products/services and advertising themes that were perceived as offensive. Discussion in the second part was formed around the issue of participants’ purchase intention and how it is related to the perceived offensive advertising. The third part analysed the relationship between the perceived offensive advertising and the traditional Chinese cultural of Confucianism. The last part of this Chapter tested whether, in the context of actual New Zealand advertising, the aspects of traditional Chinese culture has played an influential role on the perception of offensive advertising. It is identified that the role of Chinese traditional cultural, in particular characteristics of Confucianism, is not apparent when they were assessed under the context of specific New Zealand TV advertisements.
CHAPTER 6

This chapter discusses both the strengths and limitations of the present project. It also presents some suggestions for future research in the field of perception of offensive advertising in New Zealand. The chapter ends with a summary of the whole thesis highlighting the key findings which were generated by this project.

Strengths

The principal strength of this research project is that it contributes to knowledge about potential perceptions of advertising as offensive. Little research in this field has assessed the role of the audiences’ cultural background, especially in a multicultural context. It is important to acknowledge that most societies are becoming increasingly multicultural. Therefore the audiences for advertising messages across a wide variety of media in a multicultural society are people from a hugely diverse range of cultural backgrounds. As cultural beliefs and perceptions vary vastly across the range of people from different cultures, it is important for advertisers to understand who are likely to be offended by what type of advertising before planning and implementing a campaign. Secondly, as was identified in the Literature Review, most research in the field of perceptions of advertising have been conducted with quantitative research methods, mainly surveys, whereas qualitative research methods have been rarely used to study this phenomenon. Therefore the use of focus groups enhances the research design being employed to study the perceptions of advertising by Chinese tertiary students. Lastly, the findings of this project are useful to practitioners in the
advertising industry who are planning to include Chinese tertiary students in their target audience for their campaigns.

Limitations

The first limitation of the study relates to narrowing the scope of focus in relation to the cultural characteristics of Confucianism. The reason Confucianism was selected as the main lens through which to view Chinese culture in this thesis was that it is considered as the most influential ideology in China. Therefore, these characteristics could represent Chinese cultural values to a large extent. However, it is important to note that using this frame of reference in this study leaves out the potential influence of other influences on Chinese culture such as Communism and Westernisation which have all influenced, cultural beliefs and values in China and continue to do so. Overall, culture is a complex phenomenon and any attempt to understand a culture from a single perspective is insufficient. However, given the scope of this study, a specific cultural base was selected as a reference point for analysing and interpreting the data. Further, one could also argue that some of the characteristics of Confucianism are moral standards that are accepted and encouraged universally, such as proper behaviours in line with the expected social norms and respect to parents. These characteristics are not only limited to Confucianism.

The second limitation of this study relates to its size and scope. First of all, the size of the survey sample was small as it was conducted on 50 students. Given the number of Chinese tertiary students in New Zealand, 50 represents only a small proportion of the overall population. On the other hand, however, to mitigate the limitations of sample size as much as possible, the validity of the questionnaire was somewhat strengthened by limiting the
participants’ age range to 18 to 25 years old. Also, the questionnaires were distributed through a face to face approach in order to increase the response rate. Further, a specific sample selection method was taken so that half of the participants were male and the other half were female. Finally, half of the respondents have been in New Zealand for less than two years whereas the other half have been here for two years or more. This data collection approach was designed in order to generate deeper insights into the findings, by potentially being able to compare groups of participants to assess whether there were any differences or similarities between them. It should also be noted that the limitations of the survey were counterbalanced to a certain extent by the qualitative part of the study which collected more in-depth data from focus groups.

Future Research

This study was engaged with the specific demographic group of Chinese tertiary students in Auckland. They represent a minutely small number and proportion of all the cultural/ethnic groups in New Zealand. In order to understand the potential for perceptions of offence caused by the advertising industry to different types of New Zealand audiences, similar studies would need to be conducted on other cultural/ethnic groups. Further, the participants in the present study are all students aged between 18 and 25. They do not represent the whole Chinese population in New Zealand, and as such studies should be conducted on other age ranges in order to understand the ways in which the Chinese population in New Zealand in general receive and respond to advertising messages across the variety of media channels used.
Summary

The research for the present study of Chinese tertiary students’ perceptions of offence in advertising was conducted with the expectation to analyse the perception of offensive advertising by Chinese tertiary students in Auckland. A main research question and three sub questions were devised at the initial stage of this project:

In what way do cultural values have an impact on the perception of advertising as offensive by Chinese tertiary students?

1. What types of products and services/advertising themes are considered as offensive?
2. What are the effects of the perception of advertising as offensive on purchase intention?
3. What particular cultural values in the Chinese tertiary students stimulate the perception of offense?

The sub-questions were developed in order to facilitate more depth in the study and to seek answers for the main research question. The research questions were addressed in the previous chapter (Discussion) by linking the data of a questionnaire survey and focus group interviews to the current literature.

The questionnaire survey was conducted first and then emerging themes were explored through the use of focus group interviews. Findings of the questionnaire survey
have identified the level of perceived offence among a variety of products/services and advertising themes. Participants’ purchase intention was also addressed by findings of the questionnaire survey. In addition, the relationship between participants’ purchase intention and the perception of offensive advertising has been further confirmed by findings of the focus groups.

Given the limitations on time and resources for this project, it wasn’t feasible to include all characteristics of Chinese culture in the research design. Therefore, I focused on the characteristics of Confucianism which have often been cited as the most influencing ideology in China (Ren, 2010; Berling, 1996). In this way, the cultural characteristics in this thesis are specifically referring to the characteristics of Confucianism. The Confucianism characteristics of Virtue, Ritual, Harmony, Filial Piety and Learning have been taken into account in analysis of the research findings. The findings of this study, especially from the focus groups, suggest there may be a relationship between the characteristics of Confucianism and perceptions of advertising as offensive among Chinese tertiary students in New Zealand.

In conclusion, this project has explored a number of themes that are relevant to the subject of perception of offensive advertising by the Chinese tertiary students in Auckland. The questionnaire suggests that funeral services is the product/service that is most likely to create feelings of offence among Chinese tertiary students, compare to all other products/services being listed in the questionnaire. It is followed by gambling and chat-line services which were rated as the second and third highest respectively in terms of the level of perceived offence. Prejudiced portrayals, and racial and ethnic stereotypes are the advertising themes that are most likely to generate feelings of offence. They are followed by inappropriate behaviour, gender stereotype, and anti-social behaviour, ranking from the third to the fifth place.
A perceived offensive advertisement can have a strong impact on purchase intention. According to survey findings, 30 out of 50 participants indicated that they have had the experience of not buying a product/service because they think its advertisements are offensive and 29 of them would stop buying the product/service in the future if they think its advertisements are offensive, which are all consist a major proportion of the sample. Eighteen participants informed that they will encourage their family and friends to stop purchasing a product/service if they think its advertisements are offensive and this could easily lead to further damage on both a corporation’s sales and its reputation.

Although the research has not confirmed that culture is directly related to the perception of offensive advertising, the explanation of participants’ perceptions of offensive advertising can be traced back to the characteristics of Confucianism which is a fundamental constituent of the Chinese culture. Therefore, the research has reached a position to support the hypothesis that the traditional (conservative) characteristics of Confucianism in Chinese culture influence the perception of advertising as offensive by Chinese tertiary students in New Zealand.

The research has also identified that this specific demographic group of Chinese tertiary students has a high degree of acceptance and are unlikely to be offended by advertisements that are produced to the general public of New Zealand. However, it is important to note that the advertising themes of cultural/ethic stereotypes or prejudiced portrayal which have a strong potential leading toward severe offence among Chinese tertiary students, which need to be handled with extra caution by advertisers should they propose to include this demographic group in their marketing plan.
References


Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam:

Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire survey research.

This questionnaire is an important part of a thesis research conducted by Dapeng Wang, a Master student at Unitec Auckland. The research intends to study the relationship between audiences’ cultural background and their perception of advertising as offensive.

Participants in this research are tertiary students, between ages of 18 and 25. Your personal information will be kept as strictly confidential. Data from this research will only be reported in aggregate with all other participants. Because a diverse participant group is needed for this project, it is possible that the data you provide will not be used in the study.

Your opinion will be of great help to the research and your assistance is much appreciated. This questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If you have any questions about this questionnaire, you may contact me by email dapeng.is@gmail.com

Please note that the return of this questionnaire will be taken as an indication of voluntary consent to participate. If the questionnaire is sent in, this data cannot be withdrawn.

Thank you and best regards,

Dapeng Wang
Please answer the following questions in relation to your experience in New Zealand.

**General Information**

1. Which one of the following media gets most of your attention? (Please Choose One)
   - newspaper
   - magazine
   - radio
   - television
   - internet (browsing)
   - internet (social network)

   Please rate:
   - 1 (0 hour); 2 (less than 1 hour); 3 (1-2 hours); 4 (2-4 hours); 5 (over 4 hours)

2. How much time do you spend reading newspapers every day? __

3. How much time do you spend reading magazines every day? __

4. How much time do you spend listening to radio every day? __

5. How much time do you spend watching TV every day? __

6. How much time do you spend on the internet (browsing) every day? __

7. How much time do you spend on the internet (social network) every day? __

In general, how would you rate the advertisements being presented in the following media?
- 1 (not offensive); 2 (a little offensive); 3 (offensive); 4 (very offensive); 5 (extremely offensive)

8. Newspaper __

9. Magazines __

10. TV __

11. Radio __

12. Internet (browsing) __

13. Internet (social network) __

**Products/Services**

How would you rate the following products/services being advertised?
- 1 (not offensive); 2 (a little offensive); 3 (offensive); 4 (very offended); 5 (extremely offended)

13. Feminine hygiene __

14. Underwear __

15. Alcohol __

16. Condemns/birth control __

17. Funeral services __

18. Political parties __

19. Religious dominations __
20. Charities
21. Dating services
22. Chat line Services
23. Gambling/Casinos
24. Weight loss

Offensive Themes/Contents

How would you rate the following advertising themes/content?
1 (not offensive); 2 (a little offensive) 3 (offensive); 4 (very offensive); 5 (extremely offensive)

25. Violence
26. Death
27. Sexual suggestiveness
28. Nudity
29. Inappropriate behaviour
30. Prejudiced portrayals
31. Racial and ethnic stereotype
32. Gender stereotype
33. Religious references
34. Anti-social Behaviour
35. Health & Safety Issues
36. Indecent Language

Impact & Purchase Intention

37. How does an offensive advertisement affect you?
   a. Interest
   b. Disturb
   c. Disgust

38. How long does the impact of an advertisement last on you?
   a. A short time
   b. Some time
   c. A longtime

39. Do you think offensive advertising influences you?
   a. Less than other people
   b. More than other people
   c. About the same as other people
40. Does an offensive advertisement stir your interest in the products?
☐ Yes ☐ No

41. Do you think that most offensive advertising were created in purpose to attract attentions?
☐ Yes ☐ No

42. Does an offensive advertisement urge you to stop purchasing the product?
☐ Yes ☐ No

43. Have you ever decided not to buy a product/service because you think its advertisements are offensive?
☐ Yes ☐ No

44. If advertising of a product will offend you, would you still buy it if it will offer you attractive benefits?
☐ Yes ☐ No

45. Would you encourage your family and friends to stop buying a product/service because you think its advertisements are offensive?
☐ Yes ☐ No

46. In the future, would you refrain from buying a product/service because you think its advertisements are offensive?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Further Information & Comments

47. Sex:
☐ Female ☐ Male

48. How long have you been here in New Zealand:
☐ 2 years and less ☐ between 2 and 5 years ☐ 5 years and more

49. Do you mind of being contacted for further research in this subject?
☐ Yes, please leave your name for future contact _____________ ☐ No

50. How would you like to be contacted?
☐ Email ☐ Telephone, please leave your email/phone number _____________
Questions for Focus Group:

Part 1 General Discussion (15 minutes)

1. How do you define the term “offensiveness”?
2. How would you describe the feeling of being offended (disturbing, disgusting etc.)?
3. In your experience, have you ever been offended by any advertisements?
4. Have you ever been offended by any advertisements in New Zealand? What is it?
5. Do you have any similar experiences in China?
6. What do you think about the advertising in NZ, and in China
7. Are there any differences between the ads in New Zealand and in China?
8. What are some of the main differences between NZ and Chinese ads?
9. How much time do you spend on the Internet on a daily basis?
10. What do you usually do online (e.g. shopping, browsing, chatting, videos, games)?
11. Apart from the Internet, is there any other media that you have a regular access to?

Part 2 Discussion of the Questionnaire Findings (25 minutes)

12. In the questionnaire research conducted earlier, advertising on the internet (browsing) has been rated as the most offensive compare to ads on other media, what is your thought on this?
13. Which of these images is the most offensive? (show images)
14. Why?
15. What is your opinion on ads about funerals?
16. Are there any ads for funeral services in China? Would it be done differently if it was advertised in China?
17. What is the Chinese view on funeral and ads about funeral services?
18. Do you think it would have been done differently, it was advertised in China?
19. The products of funeral services and gambling/casino were rated as the most offensive in the questionnaire research (shown charts). Any ideas why they are the most offensive products being advertised?
20. Are they related to the participants’ cultural background?
21. Do you think the Chinese culture may be a factor causing the offence towards these ads?
22. Charity is the least offensive product. The level of offensiveness for alcohol and feminine products are quite low as well, why are they unlikely to offend?
23. Do you think this is due to the fact that all the participants are Chinese?
24. How do you think about the advertising themes of prejudiced portrayals and racial and ethnic stereotype?
25. They have been ranked as being the most offensive advertising themes, why don’t you like these kinds of themes? (relate to the chart)
26. Is this related to the participant’s specific culture?
27. Would you still be offended if the stereotype or prejudiced portrayals are for other ethnic groups?
28. What about inappropriate behaviour and antisocial behaviour? (high level of offensiveness)
29. Health and Safety issues were rated the least offensive advertising theme, any comments?
30. Do you think you are more likely to remember the ad and its products, if it is more offensive?
31. Would you be more likely to buy a product or resist to buy a product if you found its ads offensive?
32. Would you still buy the product if its ads have offended you?
33. What about those products that you have been using for some time, such as toothpaste or a soft drink? would you go after a different a product?
34. Would you switch to a different product (brand) of a similar kind, if the ads have offended you?

Part 3 Case study (video ads) 30 minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funeral services</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nc_pFnLmz1c">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nc_pFnLmz1c</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAB</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YakKcFKrJeU">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YakKcFKrJeU</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Seconds</td>
<td>Theme</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMKP0K1Tu8s">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMKP0K1Tu8s</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tui beer</td>
<td>Theme</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dn7u5XvupSU">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dn7u5XvupSU</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35. Do you find this ad offensive?
36. What particular aspects (which part) of this ad have offended you?
37. Do you think it is offensive to everybody? If not, why is it offensive to you?
38. Do you think the Kiwis or people from other culture may find it offensive as well?
39. Is this related to your cultural background?
40. What particular aspect of your cultural has made you feel being offended?
41. In this case, what do you think is the role of culture in your perception offensiveness?
Appendix 3: PowerPoint

The Perception of Offensive Advertising & Cultural Aspects

Focus Group Interview

Which one of these is offensive?

- Poor Joseph. God was a hard act to follow.
- Hookup Tonight Local Singles
What about these ones?

Level of Offensiveness for different products:
Level of Offensiveness for different advertising themes:

Video:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funeral Services</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nc_pFnLmz1c">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nc_pFnLmz1c</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAB</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YakKcFKrJeU">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YakKcFKrJeU</a></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Consent Form (Focus Group)

Participant Consent Form

Research Project Title:
The role of cultural values on the perception of advertising as offensive: A case study of Chinese tertiary students in Auckland

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understand the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don't have to be part of this if I don't want to and I may withdraw within 2 weeks of the interview.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and none of the information I give will identify me and that the only persons who will know what I have said will be the researcher and his supervisors. I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely on a computer at Unitec for a period of 5 years.

I understand that my discussion with the researcher will be taped and transcribed.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Participant’s Name: ............................

Participant Signature: ............................ Date: ............................

Project Researcher: ............................

Researcher Signature: ............................ Date: ............................

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2012-1035)
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 30/05/2012 to 30/05/2013. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 5: Information Sheet (Focus Group)

Information for participants

Research Project Title
The role of cultural values on the perception of advertising as offensive: A case study of Chinese tertiary students in Auckland

What we are doing
My name is Dapeng Wang. I am currently enrolled in the Master of International Communication at Unitec and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

Synopsis of project
The purpose of this research is to analyse the relationship between cultural values and perceptions of offensive advertising in the context of a multicultural society. The project will conduct a case study on Chinese tertiary students in Auckland and exam how they can be potentially offended by advertisements that are targeting the general public of New Zealand. The research includes a questionnaire survey and two focus group interviews. The information you provide will constitute a vital part of the research.

What it will mean for you
We greatly appreciate your time and participation. The focus group will take approximately 1 hour to complete. In the first half of the interview, we will be asking you some questions regarding your understanding about the perception of advertising as offensive. We will then be presenting to you a set of images to facilitate the discussion. At the third and final part of the interview, we will hold a general conversation to discuss your experience of offensive advertising and how the perceived offensive advertising may be related to your cultural background.
The focus group will be audio recorded and transcribed, and notes will be taken during the process as well. I will be the only person transcribing the focus group data.

If you agree to participate, we will ask you to sign a consent form. This does not stop you from changing your mind if you wish to withdraw from this project. However, because of our schedule, any withdrawals must be done within 2 weeks after we have interviewed you.

We can assure you that your name and information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information collected from you will be stored on a password protected file and only you, the researcher and his supervisors will have access to this information.

Please contact us if you need more information about the project, my phone number is 0212439602 and my email is dapeng.is@gmail.com. You can also contact my supervisor should you have any concerns regarding to this research. My supervisor is Dr Jocelyn Williams, phone 815 4321 ext. 8829 or email jwilliams@unitec.ac.nz.

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2012-1035)

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 30/05/2012 to 30/05/2013. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.