

## Gender portrayal in Hong Kong and Korean children's TV commercials

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**Gender Portrayal in Hong Kong and Korean Children's Television Commercials:  
A Cross-Cultural Comparison**

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analysis

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**Gender Portrayal in Hong Kong and Korean Children's Television Commercials:  
A Cross-Cultural Comparison**

**Abstract**

This study examined gender portrayal in a sample of 345 television commercials broadcast in children's programs in Hong Kong and Korea using content analysis. Literature suggests that Hong Kong culture differs from Korean culture on the dimension of Masculinity/Femininity proposed by Hofstede. The differences between the two countries provide a valid test of theory and suggest hypotheses about the gender portrayal in children advertising. Results of the study showed, contrary to what is expected from the Hofstede's framework, gender portrayal of central characters and the level of gender stereotyping in Hong Kong commercials was similar to those of Korean commercials. Possible explanations include the emerging homogeneous youth market using a standardized advertising strategy and the rising concern of women rights in Korea.

## **Gender Portrayal in Hong Kong and Korean Children's Television Commercials: A Cross-Cultural Comparison**

### **Introduction**

Stereotypes in advertising on children's television programs have been a special problem because of their potential impact on gender socialization and, subsequently, children's views of themselves and other people ([Bussey and Bandura, 1984](#); [Bandura, 1986](#); [Kolbe, 1990](#); [McNeal, 1992](#)). The possibility that children might acquire negative stereotypes through television viewing, therefore, has aroused concern among parents, educators, and members of the advertising industry.

The issue of cross-cultural variation in gender stereotyping in advertising to children has been particularly neglected and few studies have examined such stereotyping in more than one country concurrently. Comparisons of stereotyping across nations could contribute to a better understanding of stereotyping and its relationship with cultural factors in children's advertising ([Browne, 1998](#)).

In the last few decades, social norms for behavior, actual roles occupied by men and women, and media regulatory policies have changed. However, much of the research on gender stereotyping in media is dated and particularly gender stereotyping is one of the neglected areas of advertising ethics research and need further research ([Zinkan, 1994](#)).

Gender role portrayal in advertising is well studied in some of western countries including the U.S. and England. However, understanding gender role portrayal in an international context is limited because there are so few studies. One study ([Milner and Collins, 2000](#)) attempted to show that gender role portrayal can be an artifact of the cultures that frame the phenomenon being studied, that is, when feminine values

have a dominant influence on a culture, this influence is reflected in the culture's advertisements.

The transfer of international advertising strategies to the Asian market is becoming popular due to rising living standards and the growing similarity of consumer tastes in the region. However, Asia is really a series of localized markets with their own characteristics, rather than a region (Tai 1997). Asian markets have different economical and cultural settings due to historical effects. The culture, language, advertising rules and regulations are significantly different in some Asian markets, such as Hong Kong and Korea. Although both countries seem to have similar cultural background influenced by Confucius culture, they have their own unique aspects of history, cultures and consumption patterns, including variations in personal values and interest in feminist issues that could differentially affect advertising content. Key demographic, economic and female labor participation indicators for the two countries are summarized as below:

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|                                 | <u>Hong Kong</u>                       | <u>Korea</u>      |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Population                      | 6,708,000                              | 47,676,000        |
| GDP (million USD)               | 161,870                                | 457,400           |
| Growth in GDP over last year    | -0.3%                                  | 12.7%             |
| Per capita GDP                  | 24,131                                 | 9,675             |
| Female labor participation rate | 51.1%                                  | 48.3%             |
| Cultural background             | Confucius culture<br>ex-British colony | Confucius culture |

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Hong Kong and Korea are active markets in the region with a booming youth market including children, thus, cultural differences between the two countries suggest hypotheses about the gender portrayal in advertising, especially targeted to children. Literature clearly suggests that Hong Kong culture differs from Korean culture. Among the Hofstede's (1997) framework of cultural dimensions, Hong Kong and Korea

differed in two dimensions, namely uncertainty avoidance (UA index score: Hong Kong 29, Korea 85) and masculinity/femininity (Masculinity index score: Hong Kong 57, Korea 39). Hong Kong is a society of low uncertainty avoidance and masculinity, while Korea is a country of high uncertainty avoidance and femininity. It seems that uncertainty avoidance is not directly related to gender portrayal in advertising, therefore, the objective is to investigate if the difference in the masculinity/femininity dimension will differentially affect the gender portrayal in children's television commercials.

## **Literature Review**

### **Intercultural Studies on Gender Portrayal in Advertising**

The relatively few studies that have compared levels of stereotyping in the advertisements of the countries investigated here have yielded inconsistent results. Edgar and McPhee (1974) found more traditional roles portrayed in the Australian advertisements than in the American advertisements. Peck (1979) examined children's commercials in Australia and he found the level of stereotyping was similar to that observed in the United States. [Mazzella et al. \(1992\)](#) found systematic differences between portrayals of men and women on Australian television commercials and the differences were similar to those found in studies in the U.S. and England.

[Gilly \(1988\)](#) placed the issue of gender role portrayal in the forefront of cross-cultural research in her study of television commercials in Australia, Mexico and the United States. She found no significant gender differences for several variables including product advertised, employment status, use as a spokesperson, credibility, and activity level in Australian advertisements, but did find gender differences in American and Mexican advertisements. The results of this study indicate that Australian advertisements show somewhat fewer gender role differences and Mexican advertisements show slightly more gender role differences than U.S. advertisements. In

this study she provided a list of roles such as spouse, parent and housewife that define the character in terms of relationship to others and independent roles – that is non-relationship ones – are worker, celebrity and interviewer.

Milner et al. (1993) provided a post-hoc explanation for Gilly's findings by suggesting that the results are ordered as Hofstede's Masculinity index would predict: Australian (61), the United States (62), and Mexico (69). These nations are on the masculine end of Hofstede's spectrum, which may explain why the results among the countries Gilly studied were not dramatically different. When Milner and Collins (1998) compared Gilly's data with data from Turkey, a feminine country, they found that, in contrast to the United States, Australia and Mexico, Turkish advertisements are less likely to feature productivity themes and are more likely to feature relationship themes and portray minimal differences between male and female gender roles.

Wiles et al. (1995) used Hofstede's taxonomy with mixed results in their examination of gender role portrayals in magazine advertisements published in a masculine country (United States) and two feminine countries (Sweden and The Netherlands). All three countries tend to show men rather than women in working roles; however, the authors found that these differences were less often encountered in Sweden and The Netherlands than in the United States.

In Browne's study (1998), the results are generally similar to those of previous studies and indicate substantial gender stereotyping. Boys appeared in greater numbers, assumed more dominant roles, and were more active and aggressive than girls. Gender role reinforcement was observed at the level of body language and facial expression; girls were portrayed as shyer, giggly, unlikely to assert control, and less instrumental. Despite similarities in gender stereotyping between countries, Australian television commercials tended to contain more nearly equal male-to-female proportions, more often depicted both boys and girls in the same commercial, and less frequently

portrayed girls as shy or giggly and boys as directive. Moreover, male characters had significantly more active interactions with objects in the American commercials than they did in Australian commercials in comparison with female characters. Those results might reflect country-related variations in ideals of male and female behavior or indicate actual differences in efforts at counter stereotyping.

Milner and Collins (2000) compared television commercials of four countries - Japan, United States, Sweden and Russia. The result showed that feminine values are revealed in commercials of Sweden and Russia, feminine countries in terms of Hofstede's taxonomy, however, the depiction of employment as a proxy for the masculine value of productivity was not as definitive. Also, the findings of fewer sex differences in Sweden and Russia than in Japan and United States (masculine country) were inconclusive. In this study, the lack of significant differences for the advice, help, credibility and spokesperson attributes suggests that these variables may have limited utility for cross-cultural research.

Ji and McNeal (2001) compared children's commercials in U.S. and in Mainland China and found that the Chinese sample used significantly more male models, male spokespersons, and male voice-overs. The result supported that China was a more masculine society than U.S.

### **Hofstede's Cultural Dimension and Gender Stereotyping**

Culture is the "collective mental programming" that distinguishes one society from another (Hofstede, 1983, p.76). Values -- judgments of good or bad, right or wrong -- are an important element of culture. In the past two decades, one of the major frameworks for understanding culture has been Hofstede's (1980; 1983) typology of cultural dimensions. This typology provides a rationale for cross-cultural differences in advertising (e.g., Albers-Miller and Gelb, 1996; Taylor et al., 1997; de Mooji, 1998).



Hofstede's original work described four cultural dimensions: individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity/femininity and later included long-term/short-term orientation (Hofstede, 1991).

Among the five cultural dimensions, the masculinity/femininity dimension distinguishes between cultures that emphasize stereotypical "masculine" traits, such as assertiveness, dominance and material success, and cultures that emphasize "feminine" traits, such as a concern for relationships and the quality of life. Within cultures, men have more masculine values on average and women have more feminine values, with the differences between the sexes being greater in masculine countries than in feminine countries (Hofstede, 1991). Femininity is distinct from both feminism and collectivism (Hofstede, 1998). Feminism involves gender roles at work and in the home, and maybe a social force in masculine as well as feminine cultures. Collectivism deals with group ties, whereas femininity applies to relationship enhancement regardless of group membership.

Masculinity stands for a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material success. Its opposite, Femininity, stands for a preference for relationships, modesty, caring for the weak, and the quality of life. The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension is the way in which a society allocates social (as opposed to biological) roles to the sexes.

Some societies strive for maximum social differentiation between the sexes. The norm is that men are given the more outgoing, assertive roles and women the caring, nurturing roles. Other societies strive for minimal social differentiation between the sexes. This means that some women can take assertive roles if they want but especially that some men can take relationship-oriented, modest, caring roles if they want to. The minimum-social-differentiation societies in comparison with their opposite, the maximum-social- differentiation societies, will permeate their institutions with a

care, quality-of-life oriented mentality. Such societies become “welfare societies” in which caring for all members, even the weakest, is an important goal for men as well as women ([Hofstede, 1983](#)).

This dimension , as de Mooij (1998) notes, discriminates between cultures particularly with respect to values related to winning, success, and status, which are much used in advertising appeals. For advertising and branding, this dimension can be used to distinguish important cultural differences with respect to values and motivations like achievement, accomplishment, and success (de Mooij 1998, p.82).

Milner and Collins (1998) suggest that gender of a nation may be superior to gender of the depicted character in predicting gender role portrayals in television advertisements, therefore, proposed this dimension as likely to discriminate among countries in regard to gender role portrayal in television advertising. They (2000) presented the first major systematic examination of television commercials from a range of countries that Hofstede designed as masculine and feminine - two masculine countries (Japan and United States) and two feminine countries (Sweden and Russia). They found that a country’s gender as ranked on Hofstede’s Masculinity continuum can be linked to depictions of relationships for both male and female characters. The findings support Hofstede’s claim that feminine societies exemplify a cultural preference for relationships for both genders, thus, cross-cultural gender role portrayals of relationships can be predicted. However, the depiction of employment as a proxy for the masculine value of productivity was not as definitive. Also, the findings for the hypothesis of fewer sex differences in feminine countries than in masculine countries were inconclusive.

## **Hypotheses**

The current study attempts to answer a broad research question ‘How does the gender portrayal differ in children’s commercials in Hong Kong and Korea?’

In previous research, Hofstede’s Masculinity Index provides a framework for gender role depictions. The first essential element in Hofstede’s masculinity dimension is the preference for masculine or feminine values in a culture: for whereas masculine societies strive for material success, achievement and productivity, feminine societies value relationships. Research shows that themes related to these values appear in advertisements ([Albers-Miller, 1996](#); [Albers-Miller and Gelb, 1996](#); [Milner and Collins 1998](#)), thus, advertisements in feminine countries are predicted to feature more relationship themes for male and female characters whereas advertisements in masculine countries are predicted to feature productivity themes prominently for both sexes. The second element is gender differentiation. Masculine countries are more likely to embrace sharp distinction between the roles of men and women, whereas feminine ones are not, thus, it can be predicted there will be more significant sex-role differences between male and female characters in masculine countries than in feminine countries ([Milner and Collins, 2000](#)). Therefore, the following three hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Characters in commercials are more likely to be portrayed in relationships with others in Korea (feminine society) than in Hong Kong (masculine society).

H2: Characters are more likely to be portrayed in work situations in Hong Kong than in Korea.

H3: There will be more sex-role differences between male and female characters in Hong Kong than in Korea.

## **Methods**

### **Sample**

The Hong Kong sample was obtained from taping of commercials of forty hours of children's programming broadcast on the two free-to-air Chinese-language terrestrial channels (i.e. TVB-Jade, and ATV-home) in Hong Kong during three weeks in June, July and August 2001. Cable TV was excluded as its advertising volume was still low. Children's programs were mainly shown on Saturday and Sunday mornings, and weekday afternoons. These programs included imported cartoon series and local children variety shows. According to the AC Nielsen's weekly TV rating report (AC Nielsen, 2001), children aged 4 to 14 comprised a substantial portion of viewers during the selected program hours. The Korean sample was obtained from the commercials of children's programming broadcast on the three major television channels (KBS2, MBC, SBS) in June 2001. Children programs were mainly shown during weekday afternoons (from 4:00 to 7:00p.m.) and on Saturday and Sunday mornings. The programs included local and imported cartoon series and local dramas and variety shows. Korean children spend substantial time in television viewing and elementary school children watch television for 2 hours and 37 minutes everyday (Kim, 2000).

Duplicated commercials were not included in order to eliminate the bias from broadcast frequency of commercials. Public services announcements, station identification and promotional messages were excluded. Commercials for products that the prime purchasers and users were adults were also eliminated from the analysis. These included real estate, financial services, electrical appliances, cosmetics, and automobile commercials.

### **Coding**

There were two levels of analysis of gender portrayal: the first level was based on individual commercial, and the second level was based on the central figure within each commercial. A central character refers to a child, adult, or

cartoon human character appearing the longest time or talking the most in the ad. There could be none or more than one. In the current study, at most two central characters were coded. For each commercial, seven variables including product category, product user, sex of the voice-over, music, presence of central characters, setting and reward were coded. For each central character, seven variables including character type, sex, age, role, employment status, activity, and whether he or she was a spokesperson were coded. The description of variables is shown in Table 1.

Roles can also be recoded into two categories, relationship (i.e. friends, son/daughter, brother/sister, parent, teacher, student) or independent (i.e., celebrity, narrator and others) according to Gilly (1988) and Milner and Collins (2000).

Two pairs of trained coders coded a sample of 345 television commercials, 147 from Hong Kong and 198 from Korea. A Chinese female and a Chinese male university graduate coded the Hong Kong sample independently. Two Korean female graduate assistants coded the Korean sample. They coded all commercials and characters together. Cases in which the coders did not come to agreements were dropped. The inter-coder reliability for each variable was determined as the percentage of agreement between the pair of judges. Discrepancies among coders were settled by the decision of the authors. The intercoder reliability using Perreault and Leigh's (1989) measure was employed as it took care of the number of categories and the observed frequency. They are shown in Table 1. All variables in the Hong Kong sample and the Korean sample exceeded the critical level of 0.80, as suggested by Perreault and Leigh's (1989).

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

## **Results**

Table 2 shows the characteristics of the commercials by society. The Hong Kong sample contained mostly commercials of snack food, toys, medicine and personal goods. The Korean sample contained mostly commercials of snack food, drinks and toys. Result of the Chi-square test ( $df=8$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) indicated that there was significant difference in product profiles of the two samples. Product user had no significant difference between the two samples. Most of the advertised products in both societies were used by both males and females. There was significant difference in the presence of central characters between the two samples (Chi-square statistics=12.2,  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.0001$ ). The Hong Kong sample contained a higher proportion of commercials without central character than the Korean sample. The two samples had no significant difference in the type of music used. Most of the commercials in both societies used upbeat music background. There was significant difference in the sex of the voice-over between the two samples (Chi-square statistics=13.0,  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.005$ ). While male voice-over was most frequently used in both samples, the Korean sample had a higher proportion of female voice-overs than the Hong Kong sample. There was significant difference in the setting between the two samples (Chi-square statistics=11.7,  $df=5$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Fantasy or animation settings were the most frequently used settings in both samples. The Korean sample had a higher proportion of other indoor commercials. There was also significant difference in the reward between the two samples (Chi-square statistics=60.7,  $df=5$ ,  $p<0.0001$ ). Pleasure was the most frequently used reward in both samples. The Hong Kong sample had a higher proportion of commercials using the practical reward, while the Korean sample had a higher proportion of commercials using the social-enhancement reward.

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Altogether 372 central characters, 147 from Hong Kong and 225 from Korea, were coded. Table 3 shows the characteristics of the central characters by society.

There was no significant difference in the distribution of sex of the central characters between two samples (Chi-square statistics=1.3, df=1, N.S.).

There was significant difference in the role portrayal between the two samples (Chi-square statistics=48.2, df=8,  $p<0.0001$ ). Friend was the role most frequently used in both samples. The Korean sample of central characters had a higher proportion of celebrity roles. The Hong Kong sample had a higher proportion of brother/sister roles and narrator roles. The brother/sister roles were not used in the Korean sample. Sixty-one percent of the central characters were portrayed in relationship roles in both samples. The distribution of recoded role showed no significant difference between the Hong Kong sample and the Korean sample. Characters in commercials were as equally likely to be portrayed in relationship with others in Hong Kong (masculine society) and in Korea (feminine society). As a result, H1 was rejected.

Central characters in both samples were mostly shown in non-working roles. There was no significant difference in the employment status of the central characters in Hong Kong and Korea. As a result, H2 was rejected.

[INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Altogether there were 189 male central characters (80 from Hong Kong and 109 from Korea) and 183 female central characters (67 from Hong Kong and 116 from Korea). Table 4 shows the characteristics of the male and female characters for the Hong Kong and the Korean samples. Chi-square statistics and significant levels are reported for each table when it is significant at 0.05 level.

Chi-square tests indicated that there was no significant difference in the roles, recoded roles, employment and presenting as spokesperson of male and female central characters in both samples. There was significant difference in the activities of male and female characters in the Korean sample, but not in the Hong Kong sample. Korean male characters were more likely to be active while Korean female characters

were more likely to be inactive. The Hong Kong sample did not show a greater sex-role difference between male and female central characters. As a result, H3 was rejected.

[INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The objective of this study is to examine the influence of a culture's masculinity/femininity dimension on the gender portrayal in children's television commercials. All the three hypotheses were rejected by the results reported. Contrary to what is expected, Hong Kong (masculine society) did not exhibit less relationship roles and more sex-roles differences between male and female characters.

Milner and Collins (2000) found a strong evidence that supports the notion that a country's "gender" as ranked on Hofstede's Masculinity continuum, can be linked to depictions of relationships for both male and female characters in adults' commercials. Our study of children's commercials however shows that a country's "gender" failed to predict the gender role portrayals of relationships. Although literature suggests that Hong Kong culture differs clearly from Korean culture, it was not reflected in the gender portrayal in children's television commercials.

One explanation for the deviation is the standardization of advertising strategy in the Asian Market. It is observed that more and more homogeneous cross-cultural groups with similar needs, which can be approached in the same way in Asian countries. Especially younger generations become much closer to each other in terms of aspirations and needs. Their usage of international or global brands encourages multinational corporations to view Asian countries as a single regional market. The multinational corporations tend to create a unified message that can appeal to a broad diversity of Asian consumers in order to maintain a uniform image (Tai, 1997). Hong Kong and Korea are in the same region and many international advertisers are



increasingly adopting similar executions with regionalization of advertising strategy. This may explain the lack of difference in gender portrayals in advertising in both countries.

Another explanation is the heavy use of celebrity endorsement in children's commercials in Korea. One of the characteristics of Korean advertising is (over)use of celebrity. Celebrities not only behave as endorsers, but also appear as product model or spokesperson. Celebrity appearances in television commercials include famous actors, singers, sports stars, comedians, or so-called entertainers. This phenomenon is not limited to adult advertising. Large numbers of celebrity also appear as model or spokesperson in children advertising and the result of this study confirmed this fact.

Many of the celebrity in entertainment world are young aspiring models and many of these young people start their careers by appearing in advertising, where they gain a lot of exposure and become well known and popular among the public (one informal recent survey said the most favorite occupation of Korean youngsters is entertainer). In many cases, they are regarded as celebrities, but not much authoritative. Rather they are called 'Big model' that get paid much more than professional models.

One might argue that current portrayals mirror social norms and reflect the interests of target market, but changes in actual roles occupied by men and women in both countries make that argument increasingly less compelling ([Browne, 1998](#)). Korean society is changing apparently in terms of women's issues and rights. It has more interest groups for women and more women's participation in workplace and social groups. In addition, sex discrimination and sexual harassment issues covered in mass media and court system may help explain those changes. Therefore, relatively recent attention to women's issues in Korea may create greater sensitivity to the issue of stereotyping in advertising, thus, commercials on Korean television contain lower levels of stereotyping.

Despite similarities in gender stereotyping between countries, Korean commercials tended to contain more nearly equal proportions in male-to-female proportions, Hong Kong commercials tended to show more equal male-to-female proportions in activity. Those results might reflect country-related variations in ideals of male and female behavior or indicate actual differences in efforts at counter-stereotyping. Differences in levels of interest in the content of children's television, advertising codes of ethics pertaining to children's programming, and women's movement activity are possible explanations that warrant further research attention.

Previous research showed that the depiction of employment as a proxy for the masculine value of productivity was not definitive and the hypothesis of fewer sex differences in feminine countries than in masculine countries were inconclusive ([Milner and Collins, 2000](#)). In the current study, a majority of central characters were not in employed condition in both samples. As children are not familiar with work, advertisers seldom feature employers and employees in the commercials. This was consistent with previous studies that both sexes are not featured in employment settings at all (see Dominick and Rauch, 1972; Schneider and Schneider, 1979; [Gilly, 1988](#); Wiles et al., 1995). The rationale is offered by Andren et al. (1978) that advertising would seldom refer to working life because consumer identify life with leisure and not work. The lack of significant difference for the spokesperson attribute suggests that this variable may have limited utility for cross-cultural research.

While there are arguments that a regional approach is inappropriate due to different consumer tastes and requirements among the Asian countries, there is a growing sign of the regionalization of advertising strategy ([Tai, 1997](#)). In this point of view, the findings of the study provide managerial implications for international advertisers to approach youth markets including children in Asian countries as a homogeneous group in terms of gender image in advertising communication.

In conclusion, the concept of “gender of nations” needs further examination. The idea that countries have a sex-role identity at an aggregate level is put to question. The application of Hofstede to marketing and advertising research is a recent innovation and is subject to trial and error. The current study can be repeated for adults’ commercials to see if the set of hypotheses are supported. If so, it will suggest that advertising creative strategies for adults’ commercials and children’s commercials will be very different in the same country.

Table 1. Description of variables and intercoder reliability

For characteristics of commercials

| Variable  | Values  | Reliability*<br>HK | Reliability*<br>Korea |
|---|---|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Product category  | toys, character toys, snack/food, drinks, fast food, entertainment, medicine and personal goods, educational tools and services, others | 0.98               | 1.00                  |
| Product user, who is the product advertised used by primarily             | male, female, both  | 0.98               | 1.00                  |
| voice-over, a voice (or voices) from an unseen source. Excluding jingles. | male, female, both, none  | 0.91               | 0.97                  |
| Music   | None, upbeat, soft, unidentified  | 0.91               | 0.97                  |
| Presence of central characters  | Yes, no   | 0.95               | 0.94                  |
| Setting   | Home, store, other indoor, outdoor, fantasy or animation, unidentified  | 0.94               | 0.98                  |
| Reward  | Self-enhancement, social-enhancement, practical, pleasure, others, none   | 0.91               | 0.95                  |

\* Perreault and Leigh's (1998) measure of inter-coder reliability

For characteristics of central characters (up to two for each commercial)

| Variable  | Values   | Reliability*<br>HK | Reliability*<br>Korea |
|---|--|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Character type  | Child, cartoon child, adult, cartoon adult   | 0.99               | 1.00                  |
| Sex   | male, female   | 1.00               | 1.00                  |
| Age   | Under 13, 13-19, 20-35, 36-49, 50 and above  | 0.99               | 0.99                  |
| Role  | Friend, son/daughter, brother/sister, parent, teacher, student, celebrity, narrator, other who are not related to anyone | 0.94               | 0.96                  |
| Employment, character in a work situation or appears to be employed | Yes, no  | 1.00               | 1.00                  |
| Activity  | Inactive, active, aggressive, dependent, caring and sharing, others  | 0.93               | 0.97                  |
| Spokesperson  | Yes, no  | 0.91               | 0.88                  |

\* Perreault and Leigh's (1998) measure of inter-coder reliability

Table 2. Characteristics of the commercials by society (N=345)

| Characteristics                       | Hong Kong (N=147) |      | Korea (N=198) |      | Chi-square statistics | p      |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------|---------------|------|-----------------------|--------|
|                                       | F                 | %    | F             | %    |                       |        |
| <i>Product category</i>               |                   |      |               |      | 32.7                  | 0.001  |
| Snack food                            | 50                | 34.0 | 75            | 37.9 |                       |        |
| Drink                                 | 14                | 9.5  | 38            | 19.2 |                       |        |
| Toys and character toys               | 21                | 14.3 | 31            | 15.7 |                       |        |
| Fast food                             | 7                 | 4.8  | 18            | 9.1  |                       |        |
| Entertainment                         | 11                | 7.5  | 15            | 7.6  |                       |        |
| Education tools and services          | 13                | 8.8  | 14            | 7.1  |                       |        |
| Medicine and personal goods           | 18                | 12.2 | 3             | 1.5  |                       |        |
| Others                                | 13                | 8.8  | 4             | 2.0  |                       |        |
| <i>Product user</i>                   |                   |      |               |      | 3.1                   | N.S.   |
| Male                                  | 15                | 10.2 | 12            | 6.1  |                       |        |
| Female                                | 6                 | 4.1  | 14            | 7.1  |                       |        |
| Both                                  | 126               | 85.7 | 172           | 86.9 |                       |        |
| <i>Voice-over</i>                     |                   |      |               |      | 13.0                  | 0.005  |
| Male                                  | 81                | 55.1 | 82            | 41.4 |                       |        |
| Female                                | 29                | 19.7 | 72            | 36.4 |                       |        |
| Both                                  | 9                 | 6.1  | 16            | 8.1  |                       |        |
| None                                  | 28                | 19.0 | 28            | 14.1 |                       |        |
| <i>Music</i>                          |                   |      |               |      | 5.8                   | n.s.   |
| None                                  | 23                | 15.6 | 20            | 10.1 |                       |        |
| Upbeat                                | 83                | 56.5 | 132           | 66.7 |                       |        |
| Soft                                  | 35                | 23.8 | 43            | 21.7 |                       |        |
| Unidentified                          | 6                 | 4.1  | 3             | 1.5  |                       |        |
| <i>Presence of central characters</i> |                   |      |               |      | 12.2                  | 0.0001 |
| Yes                                   | 96                | 65.3 | 162           | 81.8 |                       |        |
| No                                    | 51                | 34.7 | 36            | 18.2 |                       |        |
| <i>Setting</i>                        |                   |      |               |      | 11.7                  | 0.05   |
| Fantasy or animation                  | 40                | 27.2 | 57            | 28.8 |                       |        |
| Outdoor                               | 27                | 18.4 | 44            | 22.2 |                       |        |
| Other indoor                          | 17                | 11.6 | 37            | 18.7 |                       |        |
| Home                                  | 28                | 19.0 | 30            | 15.2 |                       |        |
| Store/restaurant                      | 7                 | 4.8  | 13            | 6.6  |                       |        |
| Unidentified                          | 28                | 19.0 | 17            | 8.6  |                       |        |
| <i>Reward</i>                         |                   |      |               |      | 60.7                  | 0.0001 |
| None                                  | 25                | 17.0 | 54            | 27.3 |                       |        |
| Pleasure                              | 56                | 38.1 | 77            | 38.9 |                       |        |
| Social-enhancement                    | 5                 | 3.4  | 38            | 19.2 |                       |        |
| Self-enhancement                      | 20                | 13.6 | 22            | 11.1 |                       |        |
| Practical                             | 40                | 27.2 | 5             | 2.5  |                       |        |

Others 1 0.7 2 1.0

Table 3. Characteristics of the central characters by society (N=372)

| Characteristics         | Hong Kong<br>(N=147) |      | Korea<br>(N=225) |      | Chi-square<br>statistics | p      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------|------------------|------|--------------------------|--------|
|                         | F                    | %    | F                | %    |                          |        |
| <i>Character type</i>   |                      |      |                  |      | 12.1                     | 0.0001 |
| Child (real or cartoon) | 75                   | 51.0 | 74               | 32.9 |                          |        |
| Adult (real or cartoon) | 72                   | 49.0 | 151              | 67.1 |                          |        |
| <i>Sex</i>              |                      |      |                  |      | 1.3                      | n.s.   |
| Male                    | 80                   | 54.4 | 109              | 48.4 |                          |        |
| Female                  | 67                   | 45.6 | 116              | 51.6 |                          |        |
| <i>Age</i>              |                      |      |                  |      | 25.1                     |        |
| Under 13                | 61                   | 41.5 | 46               | 20.4 |                          |        |
| 13-19                   | 27                   | 18.4 | 32               | 14.2 |                          |        |
| 20-35                   | 50                   | 34.0 | 125              | 55.6 |                          |        |
| 36-49                   | 7                    | 4.8  | 15               | 6.7  |                          |        |
| 50 and above            | 2                    | 1.4  | 7                | 3.1  |                          |        |
| <i>Role</i>             |                      |      |                  |      | 48.2                     | 0.0001 |
| Friend                  | 42                   | 28.6 | 61               | 27.1 |                          |        |
| Son/daughter            | 14                   | 9.5  | 31               | 9.3  |                          |        |
| Brother/sister          | 14                   | 9.5  | 0                | 0.0  |                          |        |
| Parent                  | 14                   | 9.5  | 33               | 14.7 |                          |        |
| Teacher                 | 2                    | 1.4  | 5                | 2.2  |                          |        |
| Student                 | 4                    | 2.7  | 17               | 7.6  |                          |        |
| Celebrity               | 10                   | 6.8  | 46               | 20.4 |                          |        |
| Narrator                | 14                   | 9.5  | 6                | 2.7  |                          |        |
| Other                   | 33                   | 22.4 | 36               | 16.0 |                          |        |
| <i>Role (recoded)</i>   |                      |      |                  |      | 0.004                    | n.s.   |
| <i>Relationship</i>     | 90                   | 61.2 | 137              | 60.9 |                          |        |
| <i>Independent</i>      | 57                   | 38.8 | 88               | 39.1 |                          |        |
| <i>Employment</i>       |                      |      |                  |      | 0.03                     | n.s.   |
| Yes                     | 11                   | 7.5  | 18               | 8.0  |                          |        |
| No                      | 136                  | 92.5 | 207              | 92.0 |                          |        |
| <i>Activity</i>         |                      |      |                  |      | 29.6                     | 0.0001 |
| Active                  | 22                   | 15.0 | 73               | 32.4 |                          |        |
| Inactive                | 114                  | 77.6 | 119              | 52.9 |                          |        |
| Aggressive              | 2                    | 1.4  | 11               | 4.9  |                          |        |
| Dependent               | 1                    | 0.7  | 11               | 4.9  |                          |        |
| Caring and sharing      | 4                    | 2.7  | 9                | 4.0  |                          |        |
| Others                  | 4                    | 2.7  | 2                | 0.9  |                          |        |
| <i>Spokesperson</i>     |                      |      |                  |      | 7.0                      | 0.01   |
| Yes                     | 35                   | 23.8 | 83               | 36.9 |                          |        |

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|    |     |      |     |      |
|----|-----|------|-----|------|
| No | 112 | 76.2 | 142 | 63.1 |
|----|-----|------|-----|------|



Table 4 Characteristics of male and female characters by society

| Characteristics       | Hong Kong      |                  | Korea           |                   |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
|                       | Male<br>(N=80) | Female<br>(N=67) | Male<br>(N=109) | Female<br>(N=116) |
| <i>Role</i>           | F              | %                | %               | %                 |
| Friend                | 32.5           | 23.9             | 27.5            | 26.7              |
| Son/daughter          | 10.0           | 9.0              | 11.9            | 6.9               |
| Brother/sister        | 8.8            | 10.4             | 0.0             | 0.0               |
| Parent                | 3.8            | 16.4             | 10.1            | 19.0              |
| Teacher               | 0.0            | 3.0              | 2.8             | 1.7               |
| Student               | 2.5            | 3.0              | 6.4             | 8.6               |
| Celebrity             | 7.5            | 6.0              | 26.6            | 14.7              |
| Narrator              | 13.8           | 4.5              | 2.8             | 2.6               |
| Other                 | 21.3           | 23.9             | 11.9            | 19.8              |
|                       |                | n.s.             |                 | n.s.              |
| <i>Role (recoded)</i> |                |                  |                 |                   |
| Relationship          | 57.5           | 65.7             | 58.7            | 62.9              |
| Independent           | 42.5           | 34.3             | 41.3            | 37.1              |
|                       |                | n.s.             |                 | n.s.              |
| <i>Employment</i>     |                |                  |                 |                   |
| Yes                   | 7.5            | 7.5              | 11.0            | 5.2               |
| No                    | 92.5           | 92.5             | 89.0            | 94.8              |
|                       |                | n.s.             |                 | n.s.              |
| <i>Activity</i>       |                |                  |                 |                   |
| Active                | 18.8           | 10.4             | 42.2            | 23.3              |
| Inactive              | 73.8           | 82.1             | 46.8            | 58.6              |
| Aggressive            | 1.3            | 1.5              | 1.8             | 7.8               |
| Dependent             | 1.3            | 0.0              | 6.4             | 3.4               |
| Caring and sharing    | 0              | 6.0              | 2.8             | 5.2               |
| Others                | 5.0            | 0.0              | 0.0             | 1.7               |
|                       |                | n.s.             |                 | Chi-square=15.4*  |
| <i>Spokesperson</i>   |                |                  |                 |                   |
| Yes                   | 21.3           | 26.9             | 40.4            | 33.6              |
| No                    | 78.8           | 73.1             | 59.6            | 66.4              |
|                       |                | n.s.             |                 | n.s.              |

\*p&lt;0.01

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**July 9, 2002**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Manuscript

Please find attached three copies of the revised manuscript titled “**Gender Portrayal in Hong Kong and Korean Children’s Television Commercials: A Cross-Cultural Comparison**” to be considered for publication in the *Asian Journal of Communication*. The manuscript has been revised according to the reviewer’s comments. The following table summarizes the major changes:

| Reviewer’s suggestion  | Amendment(s) made and pages  |
|--|--|
| providing brief connections and transitions for the literature review  | Brief connections and transitions are provided. The section “gender stereotyping and gender socialization” is dropped as it is not directly related with this paper, p.5-9 |
| 2. Hofstede’s work is individually reviewed  | Hofstede’s work is separately reviewed, p.7-9  |
| 3. justification for a comparison of Korean and Hong Kong, and background information about the two cultures | Justification and background information added, p.4  |
| 4. add discussion to the significance of the the study and implication for international advertisers         | Significance of the study and implication for advertisers added on last paragraph, p. 16   |
| 5. change of title   | Change to “Gender portrayal in Hong Kong and Korean Children’s Television Commercials” A Cross-Cultural Comparison   |

Thank you for your attention. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information. We are looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

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Dr. Kara Chan