

Confucius Face Culture on Chinese Consumer Consumption Values toward Global Brands

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological qualitative study explored Chinese consumer consumption values on global brand fashion luxuries from 61 participants who lived in Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin. Semi-structured consumption behavior questionnaires, in-depth one-on-one and focus group interviews using Moustakas (1994) approach served as the primary source of data collection. The research findings were centered on Chinese consumer consumption values and attitudes between Confucius face concept and global brands. Also, the findings revealed that: (a) Confucius face culture did influence Chinese consumer consumption values in the quest of social prestige, (b) Hofstede's collectivism [or conformity] and Chinese guanxi concept further influenced Chinese consumption values creating a bandwagon effect, and (c) Hofstede's power distance and Schutte's Maslow's hierarchy of needs: The Asian equivalent did confirm the quest for social status needs in the Chinese market.

Keywords: Confucius Face Concept (or *lien* and *mianzi*), Chinese Consumer, Global Brands, Guanxi

INTRODUCTION

Due to the rapid economic growth in China over the past 25 years, Chinese consumer consumption values and behavior tend to vary significantly based on regions, cohorts, and social class (Xiao, 2005), and also they have very different consumption values compared to their Western counterparts (Keegan & Green, 2008). This study explored and analyzed the assumption that there were significant differences in social cultural values between Chinese and Western consumer consumption values.

Considering that about 30 percent of the Chinese population are upper and middle-class (or 390 million people) out of 1.3 billion Chinese consumers (Xiao, 2005), those young professionals and those who are new middle-class consumers wish to exhibit quickly their achievements and social status to their circles through buying and using foreign luxury fashion goods. By doing so, those Chinese consumers will receive immediate social acceptance and *face* (or *mianzi*) up to the level of the social status they wish to achieve.

Additionally, there is a traditional connection between invisible wealth and social status or position in Chinese Confucian face culture (Zhang, 1996). Simons (2006) stated, "In a nation that has long tradition of valuing 'face,' consumers take luxury products as a symbol of their high social status." Not surprisingly, such consumers may end up heavily in-debt and remain very discontented in their life achievements (Peter & Olson, 2008).

Despite its apparent importance, a review of previous research on Confucius face concept in China market identified several deficiencies. Therefore, it seems clear that additional research in this area is needed and imperative. This study provided further insights to multinational corporations (MNCs), Chinese domestic firms, and Chinese consumers themselves. Furthermore, this study developed a better understanding of the spectrum of Confucius face concept that may affect Chinese consumers' consumption values, perception, behaviors, and attitude towards global brands when purchasing luxury fashion products.

Statement of the Problem

Chinese consumers prefer to purchase luxury imports than domestic made luxuries that possibly may have comparable product quality, design, features, and so forth. Therefore, the problem is that Chinese consumers are willing to pay much higher (or premium) prices for global-branded and or imported luxury fashion goods to enhance and maintain their social status and self-concept (or *mianzi*) due to possible preconception and or overstatement about

global brands compared to their domestic counterparts. Furthermore, such consumer consumption values and behavior are even more serious for those Chinese who have recently acquired middle-class status. Namely, those Chinese consumers engage in almost pathological levels of consumption of foreign luxury fashion goods (Peter & Olson, 2008) as they desperately purchase global-branded luxury-fashion goods seeking to acquire cultural meanings with which to construct a satisfactory self-concept (or *mianzi*). Therefore, many Chinese consumers purchase imported products because global brands and or imported goods symbolize higher social status, prestige, high fashion, and reliability (Wang & Chen, 2004).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study used a phenomenological qualitative approach by using semi-structured focus groups and in-depth personal interviews to explore further the impacts of Confucius face culture (or *mianzi*) on Chinese consumer consumption values, behavior, perception, beliefs, and attitudes towards their purchase intention and decision on global brands. The study targeted middle class Chinese consumers who live in Beijing and Tianjin (Northern China) and Shanghai (Southern China) with a total of 61 participants.

Due to time and other resources constraints, this study used the qualitative method despite its disadvantages compared to quantitative methods. Focus group interviews were used in this study. To optimize the quality of the focus group interviews, each focus group interview consisted of 8-10 participants and was about one to two hours long (Creswell, 2005; Hair, Bush, & Ortinau, 2006; Neuman, 2006; Proctor, 2005; Zikmund & Bodur, 2008). Furthermore, this study used semi-structured in-depth interviews to gain further detailed data regarding their personal consumption values, perception, perspectives, behavior, and attitudes towards global brands. Whereas, in-depth interviews refer to a deep or one-on-one interview (Hair et al., 2006).

Population

This study was conducted in three major China cities, namely, Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin. Approximately 20 participants were interviewed in each city with a total sample population of 61 participants in this entire study. Due to the nature of the study, each participant must be older than 18 years, be a middle-class individual, and have a monthly income level of more than RMB 3,500 (or equivalent to US\$ 500) in Beijing and Shanghai, and RMB 2,500 (or equivalent to US\$ 360) in Tianjin because of slightly different living standards among all those cities.

To provide balanced representation and research findings for this study, the participants' gender proportion were recruited 46:54 between female and male, respectively (see Table 1). In addition, every participant must have buying experiences of global-brand luxury fashion goods with a minimum twice a year within the past year to provide accurate and more current Chinese consumers' consumption values, experiences, perceptions, attitudes, and behavior towards global brands in this qualitative study.

Sampling

China is the world's most populous country with 1.3 billion citizens (Datamonitor, 2007; Xiao, 2005). Therefore, it is impossible to have a large-scale sample size to draw generalizability of the findings from this research subject. This current study was a phenomenological qualitative study that was primarily directed to understanding the complex and the elusive from a systemic perspective more than to establish unambiguous cause and effect relationships between single variables (Gummesson, 2005; Munthree & Bick, 2006). To simplify and execute this study in a timely, effective, and appropriate manner, as well as for the sake of clarity, a purposeful or purposive sampling was used to recruit participants for this study.

Research Questions

There are significant cultural differences between the West and Chinese cultures (Hill, 2007). Therefore, this present study attempted to explore and understand more in-depth about Chinese consumption behavior and attitudes towards global brands based on Confucius face concept. Specifically, this study attempted to understand further how

Confucius face culture (or *mianzi*), Chinese *guanxi* concept, and Hofstede's power distance (i.e., inequality and hierarchy) and collectivism (e.g., interdependence, harmony, acceptance) interplay with Chinese consumer consumption values, perceptions, beliefs, behavior, and attitudes towards global brands through focus-group interviews and in-depth interviews.

The following are the research questions of this study, as follows:

RQa: How does Confucius face (or *mianzi*) culture play in Chinese consumer purchasing process and decision?

RQb: How does Chinese *guanxi* concept influence Chinese consumer consumption behavior towards global brands?

RQc: How does Hofstede's power distance concept affect Chinese consumer consumption behavior towards global brands?

RQd: How does Hofstede's collectivism concept influence Chinese consumer consumption behavior towards global brands?

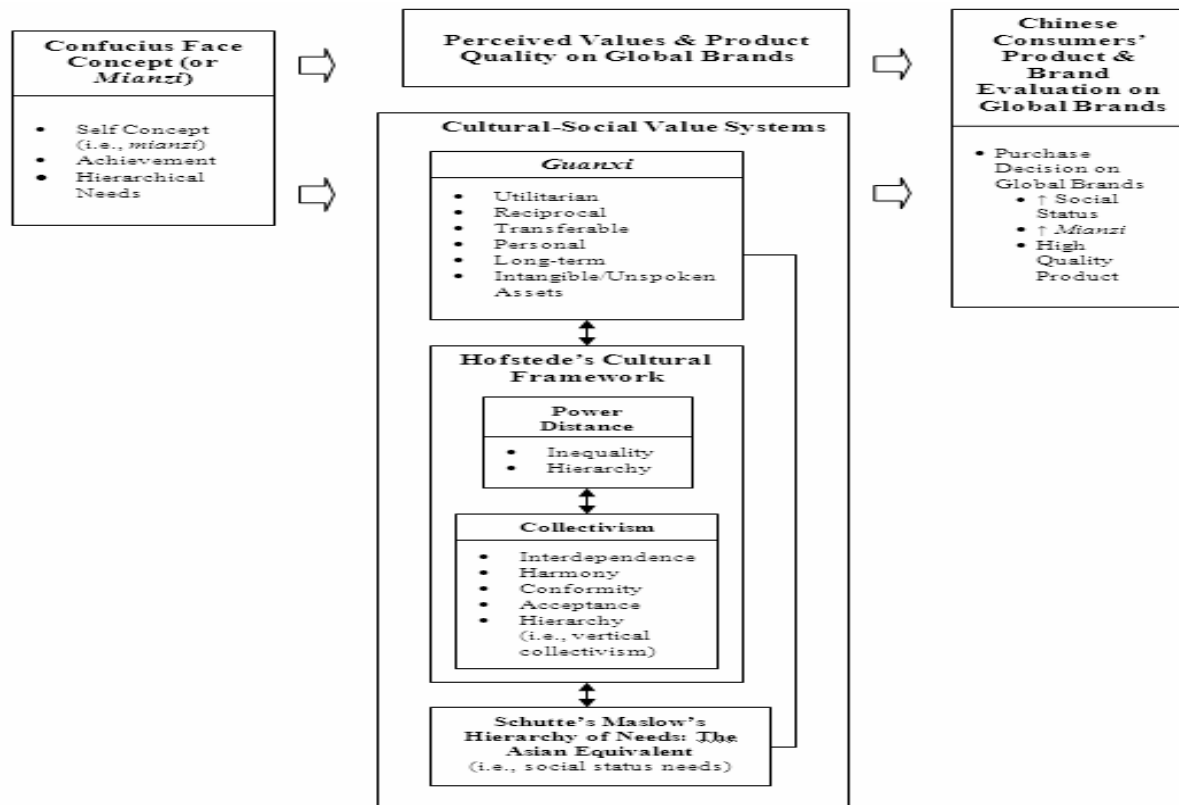


Figure 1: The conceptual framework of the study.

Assumptions

Due to the rapid economic growth in the Chinese market, the purchasing power and consumption values of Chinese consumer have been increased dramatically since the past years (Datamonitor, 2007; Hill, 2007; Xiao, 2005). Chinese consumers are demanding better product quality and well-known brand reputation on fashion luxuries than the past years. In addition, Chinese traditional culture has placed a great emphasis on Confucius face (or *mianzi*) concept to position one's social prestige for enhancing and maintaining one's desired status in their eyes (Browaey & Price 2008; Leung & Chan, 2003). In order to enhance and or maintain one's face and social prestige and to purchase high quality products, this study assumed that not only the Confucius face concept (or *mianzi*) would affect Chinese consumer consumption values and evaluation towards global brands, but also it would become one of the most critical marketing variables in Chinese consumer purchase decisions (Lin & Kao, 2004). Moreover, strong perceived values and cultural social value systems (e.g., Chinese *guanxi* concept and Hofstede's framework of power distance and collectivism,

Schutte's Maslow's hierarchy of needs: The Asian equivalent) were viewed as decisive determinants of selecting and purchasing global brands in Chinese consumer consumption behaviors and attitudes as illustrated below.

RESULTS

Data Analysis Process

This study used Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological approach to further analyze the data. The researcher wrote down any ideas, feelings, and responses that emerged during data collection (i.e., text analysis). Interviews were transcribed as accurately as possible from the tape recordings (i.e., transcript data). Then, a set of categories was developed to allow the data to be coded together into areas of similar meaning (i.e., text analysis).

First, this study gathered, reviewed, and analyzed the text data content by gathering a text database from the anonymous demographic and behavioral consumption questionnaires and discussion from focus groups as well as one-on-one in-depth interviews. While analyzing the text data, this study divided them into groups of sentences, and determined the meaning of each group of sentences based on the research questions and or the social and cultural dimensions as illustrated in Figure 1. Second, this study gathered and reviewed the text analysis and the transcript data from the interviews based on each city. In other words, there were three different sets of text data and transcript data derived from Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin (i.e., B represents Beijing participants; S for Shanghai participants; T for Tianjin participants). Then, the data were compared and analyzed directly among those three cities to investigate whether or not there is consensus of opinion from a diverse group of Chinese consumers who regularly purchase global-branded luxury fashion goods in Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin. Those opinions, viewpoints and or descriptions of occurrences were discussed in alignment to the assumption illustrated in Figure 1.

Lastly, instead of using statistical analysis, words or illustrations were used to describe the central phenomenon in this study. The result may be a description of an individual person and city that described individuals and identified themes that may result in a rich and complex picture emerging. Based on this complex picture, this study made an interpretation of the meaning of the data by reflecting on how the findings relate to existing research. Application to theories from the literature review also formed an important component of the analysis in this study. With such data analysis techniques, it would appropriately help this study explore effectively how Confucius face concept influence Chinese consumer consumption values, perception, preference, experience, behavior, and attitude towards global brands in China market.

Table 1: Summary of Sample Size in Each City (N=61)

City	Participant Code	Type of Interview	Gender		Sample Size (N)
			Female	Male	
Beijing	B1 to B9	Focus Group # 1	0	9	21
	B10 to B18	Focus Group # 2	9	0	
	B19 to B21	One-on-One In-Depth (# 1-3)	0	3	
Shanghai	S1 to S9	Focus Group # 1	5	4	21
	S10 to S19	Focus Group # 2	6	4	
	S20 to S21	One-on-One In-Depth (# 1-2)	0	2	
Tianjin	T1 to T8	Focus Group # 1	3	5	19
	T9 to T16	Focus Group # 2	2	6	
	T17 to T19	One-on-One In-Depth (# 1-3)	3	0	
Total Participants			28 = 46%	33 = 54%	61

Table 2: The Comparative Rank of Chinese Consumer Perceived Values and Product Quality on Global Brands in Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin (2008)

Rank	City					
	Beijing		Shanghai		Tianjin	
		%		%		%
1	Quality	21.1	Quality	17.6	Quality	15.7
2	Prestige	15.7	Prestige	16.4	Design	13.5
3	Design	14.4	Design; Trustworthiness	12.7	Durability	12.4
4	Durability	13.4	Service	8.9	Prestige	10.1
5	Trustworthiness	10	Respectfulness; Convenience	3.8	Trustworthiness	9
6	Service	6.7	Colorfulness	2.5	Service	7.9
7	Convenience	4.4	Uniqueness; Variety; Well-Known Brands; Others	1.3	Uniqueness; Well-Known Brands	6.7
8	Uniqueness; Variety; Well-Known Brands	3.3	Expensiveness; Trendiness; "Westernized" Look (or <i>yang qi</i>)	0	Trendiness	5.6
9	Trendiness	2.2			Colorfulness; Variety	3.4
10	Colorfulness	1.1			Respectfulness	2.3
11	"Westernized" Look (or <i>yang qi</i>); Others	0			Expensiveness	2.2
12					Colorfulness	1.1
13					"Westernized" Look (or <i>yang qi</i>); Others	0

Chinese Customer Perceived Values and Product Quality on Global Brands

Table 3 displayed how the average middle-class Chinese consumers who lived in Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin perceived values and product quality of global brands with the following rank: (1) 18.1 percent on high quality [this particular attribute was also selected as the top consideration by those three cities], (2) 14.1 percent on prestige, (3) 13.5 percent on better design, (4) 10.6 percent on trustworthiness, and (5) 7.8 percent on better customer service.

Table 3: Reasons for Buying Global Brands

Chinese Consumer Perceived Values & Product Quality on Global Brands	City							
	Total Average		Beijing		Shanghai		Tianjin	
	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank	%	rank
High Quality	18.1	1	21.1	1	17.6	1	15.7	1
Durable	14.1	2	13.4	4	16.4	2	12.4	3
Prestigious	14.1	2	15.7	2	16.4	2	10.1	4
Better Design	13.5	3	14.4	3	12.7	3	13.5	2
Trustworthy	10.6	4	10	5	12.7	3	9	5
Better Service	7.8	5	6.7	6	8.9	4	7.9	6
Unique	3.8	6	3.3	8	1.3	7	6.7	7
Well-Known Brands	3.8	6	3.3	8	1.3	7	6.7	7
Convenient	3.1	7	4.4	7	3.8	5	1.1	12
More Variety	2.7	8	3.3	8	1.3	7	3.4	9
Trendy	2.6	9	2.2	9	0	8	5.6	8
Respectful	2.4	10	1.1	10	3.8	5	2.3	10
More Colorful	2.3	11	1.1	10	2.5	6	3.4	9
Expensive	0.7	12	0	11	0	8	2.2	11
Others	0.4	13	0	11	1.3	7	0	13
"Westernized" Look (or <i>yang qi</i>)	0	0	0	11	0	8	0	13

Interview question 1: How does Confucius face (or mianzi) culture influence the Chinese consumer purchasing process and decision?

This question was designed to evaluate and understand how Confucius face (or *mianzi*) concept influences Chinese consumer consumption values on global brands. The majority of the participants acknowledged that Confucius face culture not only did exist in their mind when purchasing global brand products, but also strongly influenced their consumption values and behavior on global brands. They perceived that with the consumption of global brands, it would attract more direct and immediate attention (B20; B21; S8; T5; T8; T13; T16; T18), recognition and acceptance (B20; S14; S20; T9; T13; T14; T16; T17; T18), and respect (T2; T8; T16; T18) from others during their social interaction. In turn, these compliments would enhance their social status or prestige (B19; B20; B21; S17; S17; S20; S19; T2; T8; T14; T16; T17; T18), and would fulfill their self-confidence (B3; B15; B20; B21; S8; T4; T18) and vanity (B20; B21; S11; T6; T7).

Some participants purchased and used global brands, not only to save their face (or *mianzi*), but also to maintain their sound relationship or *guanxi* with their in-groups (B4; B20; B21; T4; T7). Consequently, it was important to conform their products to their in-groups' to save their own face (or *mianzi*) within their in-groups by purchasing and using global brand products (B4; B21; T4; T9). Participants B21, B20, B3, B15, S8, T4, and T18 shared their perspectives and experience that by using global brand products, it would make them feel good and strengthen their self-confidence about their social status. Participant T9 expressed that he purchased global brand products not only because they had high brand positioning in the Chinese market, but also he did not want to make wrong purchase decision by not selecting global brands, that would make him embarrassed (or lose face) in front of his in-groups. Participants B14, B20, and T13 perceived that as global brands had favorable brand reputation and produced quality products in the Chinese market, they preferred to give gifts of global brands that could obtain immediate positive attention, recognition, respect, and prestige from the receivers resulting in saving face to both the gift givers and receivers.

Last but not the least, participant B21 shared and described his observation on Chinese face (or *mianzi*) culture, as follows:

Participant B21: To answer the questions of why does *mianzi* [or face] play an important role in Chinese culture and why it matters so much to Chinese culture, one needs to take different cultural perspectives to understand why they behave in such a way, as follows:

1. Historically, it has significant involvement in Chinese cultural structures that have been embedded for millennia.
2. Traditionally and culturally, Chinese emphasize on *ming jiao* (i.e., *mianzi*, appearance, and formality) which is an external and superficial attribute that may immediately reflect one's social status.
3. Psychologically, Chinese face concept (or *mianzi*) is a way of receiving immediate recognition from others to maintain and or enhance one's social status.

Interview question 2: How does Chinese guanxi concept influence Chinese consumer consumption behavior towards global brands?

In this research question, there were only two participants (i.e., T17 and T18) who were not bothered by the Chinese *guanxi* concept towards global brands, while the rest agreed that the Chinese *guanxi* concept did influence their consumption behavior when purchasing global brands, particularly participants B20, S21, T1, T7, T15, and T17. Participants believed that by using global brand fashion luxury products, it would help maintain their *guanxi* (or relationship) better with their in-groups (B17; S4; T1; T11; T14; T16; T18).

Conforming groups taste and preference was not only to obtain acceptance and recognition (B17; S4; T9; T11) as well as respect (B17; B20; S4; T4; T14) from their in-groups, but also it was a good way to enhance their social status (S4; T7; T14). Therefore, it is important to group members to mutually conform to the group taste and preferences (B3; B12; B17; S13; T7; T14; T11) in order to maintain their sound *guanxi* (or relationship) with their in-groups (B3; S4; S7; S21; T1; T11), and to save their face (or *mianzi*) (B17; B20; S4; T3; T14) within their in-groups. Participants T3, T4, and T18 acknowledged that both these Chinese *guanxi* concept and Confucius face culture gave them a significant psychological burden. Participant T3 further revealed that some people even borrowed money to buy and use the same products as their in-groups' to maintain their *guanxi* and face (or *mianzi*).

Interview question 3: How does Hofstede's power distance concept affect Chinese consumer consumption behavior towards global brands?

Except participants S20, T1, and T6, most of participants perceived by using global brands, it would directly enhance their social status, and also would further strengthen their self-confidence as well (B20; S1; S21; T17; T18). With the use of global brand fashion products, it made the participants feel that they were being different from ordinary people that made them feel special (S18; T5; T17; T18) as the following statements:

Participant T5: It is a way of showing one's social status by wearing global brands [e.g., *Ying Xiong* (or Hero brand) vs. Mont Blanc]. It is a way to differentiate oneself from ordinary people.

Participant S18: It is because global brands will give consumer different purchasing/consumption experience. For example, why [Chinese] people like to go to Starbucks? It is because they enjoy being watched (i.e., watching being watched) that can enhance their face (or *mianzi*) and social status/class.

As participants perceived that global brands not only could enhance one's social status, but also it could imply one's achievement (S20; T18) as they would receive better attention (S13; S21), recognition/respect (S20; S21; T20), and impression (B20; B21; S17; T17). Besides, some believed by using global brands, it could show one's power [hierarchy] even to fear people (T11; T18). On the other hand, participants S21 and T7 expressed that sometimes subordinates deliberately chose to buy and use lower rank global brands than their superiors in order to save their superiors' face (or *mianzi*) at work and or public settings. Indeed, it is to strengthen further the notion of power distance between the superiors and subordinates.

Interview question 4: How does Hofstede's collectivism concept influence Chinese consumer consumption behavior towards global brands?

Other than participants B19, S19, T2, T4, T15, T18, and T19, the rest of the participants preferred to follow the trend (or *gen feng*) to conform to their in-groups or the public. Major reasons that drove the participants to follow the herd [or so called bandwagon effect] mainly were due to (a) lack of brand and product knowledge, (b) conformity, and (c) in search of social acceptance and recognition.

Participants (B3; B20; S20; T17; T20) felt when they were conforming their taste and appearance to others, they would feel comfortable and a sense of belonging to the group for not being different from the rest of the people. Whereas, some participants (B7; S9; S16; S20; S21; T17; T18) followed the bandwagon to have public or in-group's acceptance and recognition. Participant S21 followed the bandwagon to maintain his good *guanxi* (or relationship) with his in-groups.

A similar consistency with the literature review research pertained to the findings that Chinese consumers tended to be more likely to yield to the majority for higher value placed on harmony in person-to-group relations [i.e., collectivism] and or *guanxi* (Bond & Smith, 1996; Ng, 2003; Triandis, 1999) when selecting using their products. For example, those Chinese participants preferred to select and purchase the same brands and products with their in-groups' for the sake of social conformity (B3; B12; B17; S13; T7; T15; T11) and social acceptance (B17; B21; S4; T9; T11) within their in-groups and for maintaining sound and harmonious relationships with their group members by being conformists (B17; B21; S4; S7; S21; T1; T11; T14; T16; T18). Furthermore, based on the interview findings, the appropriate use of attractive advertisement (B8; B13; B21; S3; S7; T9; T11) and celebrity endorsement (B21; T9) and was highly effective in product promotions for global brands in the Chinese markets to reduce their perceived risks, be conformists, and quest for social status. As a result, such phenomena generated a bandwagon effect (or *yang qun xin li*) in Chinese consumer consumption values (B21; S16; S17; S20; S21; T17; T18). In other words, collectivism (specifically, conformity), *guanxi*, and the bandwagon effect apparently were closely interrelated to one another and strongly influenced Chinese consumer consumption values on global brands.

A similar consistency was found in this study with the numerous prior studies of Hofstede's power distance concept as well as Schutte's Maslow's hierarchy of needs (i.e., the Asian equivalent) justified the findings that participants deliberately purchased and used global brand fashion goods to show their social prestige and to differentiate themselves from ordinary people (B20; B21; S1; S13; S17; S18; S20; S21; T5; T11; T17; T18).

CONCLUSION

China is a vast and multifaceted country whose cultural heritage has more than five millennia (Lowe & Worsley, 2004). Its population has more than 1.3 billion people that accounts for about one quarter of the world population (Hill, 2007; Lowe & Worsley, 2004; Xiao, 2005) and still remains one of the last great untapped regions of the world for new marketing opportunities (Xu, 1990 as cited in Lowe & Worsley, 2004; Xiao, 2005). Over the past two decades, China has become the biggest market for luxury and prestige brands from the West (Keegan & Green, 2008). Luxury sales of global brands have rapidly increased in China (Keegan & Green, 2008). China has become the world third largest consumer of luxury goods with 12 percent of world total market share in 2006 (Xinghua, 2007). It is expected that China will become the world's largest consumer of luxury goods in 10 years (Datamonitor, 2007; Xinghua, 2007).

As the marketing world is moving forward towards globalization, and as new untapped markets open up and develop due to globalization, it is imperative for leaders and marketers to understand the cultures and consumer behavior in new global marketplaces. China is an attractive marketplace for numerous MNCs due to its rapid economic growth in recent years, and its huge potential consumer market for the world. According to the interview findings, it was notable that middle-class Chinese consumers economically were much more able to afford and consume fashion luxuries than years ago, and also they stressed high quality products and brand reputation both from global brands and local brands to assure their consumption selection and decision on fashion luxuries.

Furthermore, China is facing a major social and cultural transformation from a more collectivistic country to a more individualistic country (Xiao, 2005) resulting in dramatic changes in Chinese consumption values, perception, preference, behavior, and attitudes towards fashion luxuries. It is believed that this study will provide further insights of changing Chinese consumer behavior in recent years. Eventually, this study will benefit multinational and local leaders and marketers to develop marketing and business strategies to cater for China's vast market effectively, efficiently, ethically, and profitably. Meanwhile, this study will also benefit Chinese consumer living standards through the increased availability of a wider choice of product and or service assortments to meet Chinese consumer consumption values, preferences, and expectations accordingly.

Finally, culture is not static rather evolutionary (Cateora et al., 2006; Hill, 2007; Wild et al., 2008). Similarly, Chinese culture is also rapidly changing due to its rapid economic growth and globalization in recent years. Yun Kee Lee (Personal Communication, 2008) shared his insights of the potential China market, as follows:

China is a very dynamic and ever-changing country. Confucius face (or mianzi) culture is also changing accordingly as time passes. So, we should not see it [Confucius face culture] as a static phenomenon. Generally speaking, those Chinese who are less educated and live in less affluent environments or regions tend to have greater influences on Confucius face culture mainly due to their lack of self-confidence towards themselves. Also, different regions of China may have different levels of living standard resulting in them reacting differently towards Confucius face culture. Therefore, China is a very colorful and dynamic nation consisting of people with different concepts, perception, values, beliefs, attitudes, and affordability at the same time.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDY

This exploratory study had provided a qualitative component to the body of knowledge to explore how Confucius face culture influence Chinese consumer consumption values on global brand fashion luxury products. Given the narrow scope of this study, future qualitative studies may expand on this study and include being repeated in different regions (e.g., Taiwan, Hong Kong, China hinterland), cities, also use different demographics, products, etc. To allow for the generalization of the results to be improved, the number of participants in this study could be increased and be more diversified than the three Chinese major cities (i.e., Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin) used in this study. Additionally, comparing the same and or specific product category among cities may help select the same target consumers who enable to provide a more meaningful direct comparison study to the future study, and also it may help the future study further understand how Chinese consumers react and perceive global brands on certain product

category in different cities. Based on the findings of this phenomenological qualitative study, replica of this study can identify if changes in Chinese consumer consumption values are oriented at cultural and economic development.

Lastly, to generate generalizability to this study, a quantitative study can be conducted with far larger sample sizes and more diverse regions than the qualitative study can do.

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