

Chinese consumers' conspicuous perspectives: the context of smartphone purchase behavior

Abstract

This study investigated the key antecedent factors of Chinese consumers attitudes towards smartphones, focusing on the conspicuous value. An analytical framework with three key themes in the smartphone purchasing attributes in relation to the conspicuous attitudes was validated based on Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using 426 survey data collected in China. It has been found that 'conspicuous value' was the basic perception which has a relation with three key factors, 'fashionableness' and 'innovativeness', and 'instore shopping atmosphere' in smartphone purchasing attributes. This implies that the analytical framework developed from this study is applicable to the research topic as a useful analytical tool kit. From the empirical study based on this framework, it has been found that only 'fashionableness' has the significant impact on their purchase intention, whereas, 'innovativeness' and 'instore shopping atmosphere' did not have a significant impact on their purchase intention of smartphones. Chinese consumer behavior from the cultural context has attracted researchers so far, however, the practical and feasible analytical framework covering the cultural aspect and smartphone attributes has been lacked. This study proposed a practical analytical framework with the Chinese cultural value 'conspicuousness' and focus on the smartphone shopping attributes. Moreover, the empirical research outcome with the survey data based on the proposed framework can provide actionable implications for the relevant marketers and researchers.

Key words: China, conspicuous value, fashionableness, innovativeness, instore shopping atmosphere

1. Introduction

Background of this study

With the potential of smartphone market in China, it has acknowledged that it is useful to investigate how firms should cope with drastically changing Chinese smartphone market with changing consumer perceptions and behavior (xxx). While the world's economy remains in a state of depression, the potential customer base for smartphones is further revealed through research into the Chinese market, and the underlying data which contributes to its successful marketing strategies. It is common knowledge that Chinese consumer behavior should be analyzed in its cultural context (Hofstede, 2008). The unique nature of the Chinese market that has its origins in Confucian values, its demand for social respect and a particular notion of 'maintaining face' (*Mianzi* in Mandarin), is intrinsically different from Western social values. Therefore, it is important to understand that Chinese consumers' buying behavior is heavily influenced by these values and winning their preferences in today's competitive market is an essential aspect of a marketing strategy for any enterprise which aims to be successful in the Chinese market (Jin *et al.*, 2010).

Research gap

The concept of this perceived unique value should be investigated in detailed so that the practitioners and researchers can design effective marketing strategies in line with the Chinese consumers' value perceptions, especially in the context of their inclination to bolster their public appearance and status (Vigneron and Johnson, 1999; 2004). There have been a variety of antecedent factors for Chinese consumer purchasing behavior in academic discussions so far,

which have acknowledged the necessity of the cultural contextual analysis. For instance, this situation is also the case for the smartphone market. As practitioners need some more robust marketing tool kit because of the huge potential of the Chinese smartphone market and therefore, the contribution of the relevant research has been longed for, the practical and feasible analytical framework has not been agreed on so far. The research gap exists that an analytical framework with the cultural context, focusing on the smartphone attribute is missing which has resulted in the lack of actionable marketing activities in the Chinese smartphone market.

Aim and objectives

This study aims to explore the Chinese consumers' perceptions towards smartphone purchasing and build a conceptual framework on consumers' purchasing intention. To achieve this aim, four objectives emerged;

- To review relevant literature to develop key themes which represent Chinese consumer behavior towards smartphone purchasing.
- To build a conceptual framework with hypotheses reflecting the developed key themes
- To validate the framework with the collected data from the survey conducted in China based on the Structural Equation Modelling
- To evaluate the results of the research and the framework as a marketing toolkit is proposed
- To conclude and discuss the actionable implications for the marketers and researchers based on the empirical analysis using the proposed framework.

2. Literature review

Chinese consumer behavior in the smartphone market

In contemporary society, smartphones have become fully integrated into people's daily lives,

with technology an ever-increasing influence on lifestyle (Park, 2019). It is also observed that the smartphone market has developed rapidly responding to the demands of the consumers (Fillion *et al.*, 2016; Liang and Leung, 2018). For businesses, the primary aims of a company include massive profits and meeting the needs of consumers to increase buyer satisfaction customer patronage inevitably plays a vital role in the sales activities. Satisfied and loyal customers contribute to both decreasing costs and increasing profitability (Ehiobuche and Khan, 2012).

Evidently, understanding consumer tendencies and preferences towards goods or services are highly significant in market competition (Fornell, 1992). Investigating and establishing the critical factors in forming an infrastructure of good customer relations and nurturing contentment in the Chinese smartphone market is the primary research theme of this study.

Telecommunication goods and services

The telecommunications sector plays a vital role in the economic development, due to increased progress in technology and massive competition among the service providers, where smartphones should be one of the key players in leading the telecommunication sector with its impact on the businesses in the current digital age (Roos and Edvardsson, 2008). Under this competitive circumstance, service providers are required to give the customers more attractive packages and implement effective marketing strategies to attract potential customers (Akematsu *et al.*, 2012; Bayraktar *et al.*, 2012; Rahul and Majhi, 2014). It is fatal for them to explore different values in a different markets and cultural contexts to retain existing customers and attain new customers based on the sustainable relationships with them (Heinonen *et al.*, 2010). The long-term relations with the customers can be achieved when the resonance can be nurtured in the relationships and it is inevitable for the providers to understand and be ready to

launch marketing messages based on a different cultural values to the customers in accordance to each market (Gerpott *et al.*, 2001; Leelakulthanit and Hongcharu, 2012; Rodriguez, 2013).

The tangible attributes (e.g., product appearance, product packaging, instore furnishings) and intangible attributes (e.g., in-store customer services, communication over the counter and brand image) form a basis for the marketing strategy (Ting *et al.*, 2011; Van De Ven *et al.*, 2011; Gobble, 2012; Leelakulthanit and Hongcharu, 2012), but building marketing strategies should be on the basis of understanding of the consumers' cultural values.

Smartphones and Lifestyle

Chen *et al.* (2013) discussed that a smartphone is an 'anywhere/anytime compact computer' and 'information/entertainment/infotainment' gadget which has been already a essential tool for the consumers. Ling (2007) suggested that teenagers especially have learned how to coordinate with others by using mobile technologies, exchange their views and opinions, emphasizing that a smartphone is now not only a communication tool but also a communication platform essential to their identity with regards to trends and fashion (Nakamura and Oe, 2009).

Smartphone as a high-end product

Researchers argue that the social symbol of expensive goods has a significant impact on consumers' purchasing choices (Vickers and Renand, 2003). Especially in China, high-end goods are symbolized as a different set of representations, such as fame, wealth and status; letting consumers have this commodity satisfies not only their material needs but also symbolic demand (Djelic and Ainamo, 1999). It has been discussed that smartphones in China should be analyzed as high-end goods, not only a communication tool (e.g., KPMG, 2012; Marketing China, 2013). Hence, smartphones as higher end gadgets than traditional feature phones might be playing an essential role in the context of social symbolism.

Individual prosperity and its appearance through consumption is core to the individualism culture (Heaney, Goldsmith and Jusoh, 2005). The immense popularity of Asian consumers for smartphones may be due to taking into account the importance of 'face,' rather than personal preferences (Schütte and Ciarlante, 1999). Conspicuous consumption is common in collectivist cultures and is more about the conformity and acceptance of the community rather than indulgence or self-expression (Phau and Prendergast, 2000). In the Chinese context, this conspicuousness should be one of the impactful underlying value for the Chinese consumer behavior.

Conspicuous value: Cultural orientations and the Chinese market

Two cultural orientations of individualism and collectivism prompt customers to buy high-end items in different modes (Schütte and Ciarlante, 1998). Researchers believe that today's consumption of high-end goods by Asian consumers emphasizes social meaning conveyed through products. Asian consumers buy high-end goods to ensure public social recognition and observe social norms.

Consumption is considered in traditional Chinese society as a tool to provide high-level demand as an activity in its right (Roy and Eshghi, 2013). Therefore, the Chinese consumer will pay more attention to the social value of the brand than the Western consumer, and actively advance the social value of the brand as Chinese consumers need the social identity (Tse, 1996).

The Chinese emphasis on performing correctly in the same social class, with the appropriate way of consumption is expected to correspond to their behavior and social status. They also need to be distinguished from others in society, which is particularly high in China, for example, the Chinese would like to strengthen social identity with material wealth and brands (Podoshen *et al.*, 2011). Luxury and high-end goods are often used as tools to increase the distance between different social groups and identify with others with the same social status.

In the smartphone context, Chinese consumers are attracted by a more advanced and the most recent model smartphone to satisfy their conspicuous perception. Smartphone purchasing behavior cannot be discussed, therefore, without the conspicuous consumption aspects, as Chadha and Husband (2006) and Chaudhuri and Majumdar (2006) indicated.

Key themes underlying conspicuous value in the smartphone context

Following the discussion above, three key themes are discussed in the context of smartphone purchasing behavior, which will be embedded in the analytical model. The model attained will be validated with the primary data to reveal Chinese consumers' attitudes based on the conspicuous value perceptions.

Fashionableness of gadgets

Lorente (2002) studied the younger generation's preference of fashionableness of mobile phones, focusing on their perspectives on design, and similarly, Noel *et al.* (2019) indicated that especially the younger generations are attracted by fashionable aspects such as color and the design of gadgets rather than their primary functions. Similar research across various European and Asian countries was conducted by Kasesniemi *et al.* (2001) and Lorente (2002) which suggest that fashionableness of smartphones should be one of the key elements which attracts the customers.

It has been discussed that the success of mobile phones reflects the lifestyle of the young generation (Toufani *et al.*, 2017) and it is suggested that analysis of the impact of the fashionableness of the gadgets should be explored in more depth (Kopoma, 2000; Mäenpää, 2000; Foley *et al.*, 2007; Filieri and Lin, 2017). Nakamura and Oe (2009) analyzed the smartphone's desirability in the context of ostentatiousness; there are clear links between customer satisfaction and the products' fashionable aspects.

Innovativeness

Research by Holak and Lehmann (1990) showed that usage and a favorable view of a product's predecessor result in consumers' greater willingness to own a new innovative product. It has been indicated that compatibility with the user's lifestyle is affected by the present operating system environment, changes to software interface and the degree of previous experience in using smartphones and other similar gadgets (Sultan, 1999; Kitchen *et al.*, 2015). A conspicuous value could be stimulated by the gadgets' innovative aspects such as a high quality of the snapshots, storage, and application level could be reflecting consumers' conspicuous attitudes (Noel *et al.*, 2019), who also suggested this inclination to the innovative aspects can be accelerated in line with the higher social status.

Convergent products have received increasing amounts of attention recently (Gill, 2008; Gill and Lei, 2009; Han *et al.*, 2009; Lee *et al.*, 2013). Consumers' perceptions, the innovative technological aspects of gadgets should be one of the components of the conspicuous value. Smartphone purchasing behavior should, therefore, be analyzed with regards to those innovative aspects of the products as one of the constituents of the conspicuousness (Podoshen *et al.*, 2011; Komatsu, 2004). Innovative functionality is one of the factors that affect customers' purchase intention of smartphones.

Instore shopping atmosphere

Research has debated that shopping atmosphere influences business performance and customer loyalty (Demirci Orel and Kara, 2014; Garga and Bambale, 2016; van Lierop and El-Geneidy, 2016). For instance, as Kemp *et al.*, (2019) discussed, happy customers will get back to the store which supports the sustainable businesses for the businesses (e.g., Hu and Jasper, 2006; Maruyama and Wu, 2014). It has been discussed with the evidence from the empirical studies that customers become more loyal to the goods and services with the good shopping

atmosphere, which can enhance customer relations with the suppliers (Ogle *et al.*, 2004; Pan and Zinkhan, 2006; Garga and Bambale, 2016; Terblanche, 2018).

More specifically, instore shopping atmosphere can be analyzed in the context of the conspicuous value of consumers. It is because consumers appreciate the store staff attitudes towards them while they are shopping. Being Treated nicely instore should be one of the essential factors to retain loyal customers (Kim *et al.*, 2016). Customers' positive attitudes towards goods and services are changeable; the most important thing is to learn how to maintain a good relationship between customers and the organization (Hill, 2000; Haryono and Sihombing, 2018). Customers appreciate the warmth attitudes with a comfortable touch treating them as if they are VIPs, and also they appreciate the shop decoration and physical atmosphere which overall makes the customer to feel they are special to the shop and the relevant brands (Li *et al.*, 2015; Baek *et al.*, 2018).

In the Chinese context, the concept of 'Saving face=*mianzi*' could also be important element for the marketers to consider: *Mianzi* is one of the underpinning motives for Chinese consumers to buy products, especially something high-end, luxury or expensive (Filieri *et al.*, 2018; Huang and Wang, 2018). Chinese consumers view the external social needs (e.g., *mianzi*, status) as more important than internal individual needs (Wong and Ahuvia, 1998). Ho (1976) discussed the concept of '*mianzi*' plays an important role and expresses both personal and non-personal characteristics (e.g., wealth, authority) when consumers were served by shop staff. In the smartphone purchasing scenario, the '*mianzi*' should also be considered in the context of instore shopping atmosphere, as Chinese consumers perceive the in-store shopping atmosphere as one of the key factors to be attracted by the shops whose staff treat them as important customers and keep the customers' '*mianzi*' in front of others in the public space.

Hypotheses

From the literature review, Chinese consumer behavior towards smartphone can be analyzed based on conspicuous value as the critical antecedent factor underpinning their perception which could be explained by three factors, fashionableness, innovativeness, and instore shopping atmosphere. Moreover, our literature review suggests that these three sub factors could have an impact on Chinese consumers' purchase intention of smartphones.

This study aims to reveal potential relationships based on a quantitative method for testing the following hypotheses. Table 1 shows the hypotheses built based on the literature review with the relevant supportive academic discussions.

Hypothesis number	Hypothesis	Supportive academic discussions
H1	Conspicuous consumer value has a positive relation with 'fashionableness' of smartphones	Hirsjärvi et al., 1982; Drotner, 2000; Kasesniemi et al., 2001; Lorente, 2002; Komatsu, 2004; Ito, 2005; Foley et al., 2007; Noel et al., 2018
H2	Conspicuous consumer value has a positive relation with 'innovativeness' of smartphones	Holak and Lehmann, 1990; Sultan, 1999; Olsen, 2002; Kotler and Keller, 2009; Podoshen, 2011; Noel et al., 2018; Vonortas, 2018
H3	Conspicuous consumer value has a positive relation with 'instore shopping atmosphere'	Bitner and Hubbert, 1994; Jones et al., 2000; Bodet, 2008; Li et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2016; Baek et al., 2018; Haryono and Sihombing, 2018; Terblanche, 2018; Kemp et al., 2019
H4a	The factor 'fashionableness' has a positive impact on purchase intention of smartphones	Holak and Lehmann, 1990; Chadha and Husband, 2006; Filieri, 2017; Hsiao, 2017; Toufani, 2017
H4b	The factor 'innovativeness' has a positive impact on purchase intention of smartphones	Holak and Lehmann, 1990; Sultan, 1999; Olsen, 2002; Kotler and Keller, 2009; Podoshen, 2011; Noel et al., 2018; Vonortas, 2018; Hong, 2017; Kim et al., 2018; Reddy et al., 2018
H4c	The factor 'instore shopping atmosphere' has a positive impact on purchase intention of smartphones	Bitner and Hubbert, 1994; Jones et al., 2000; Olsen, 2002; Bodet, 2008; Çifci, et al., 2016; Paul et al., 2016; Liu, 2017; Manner, 2018

Table 1. Hypotheses of this study

As a summary of this section, Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study with the hypotheses.

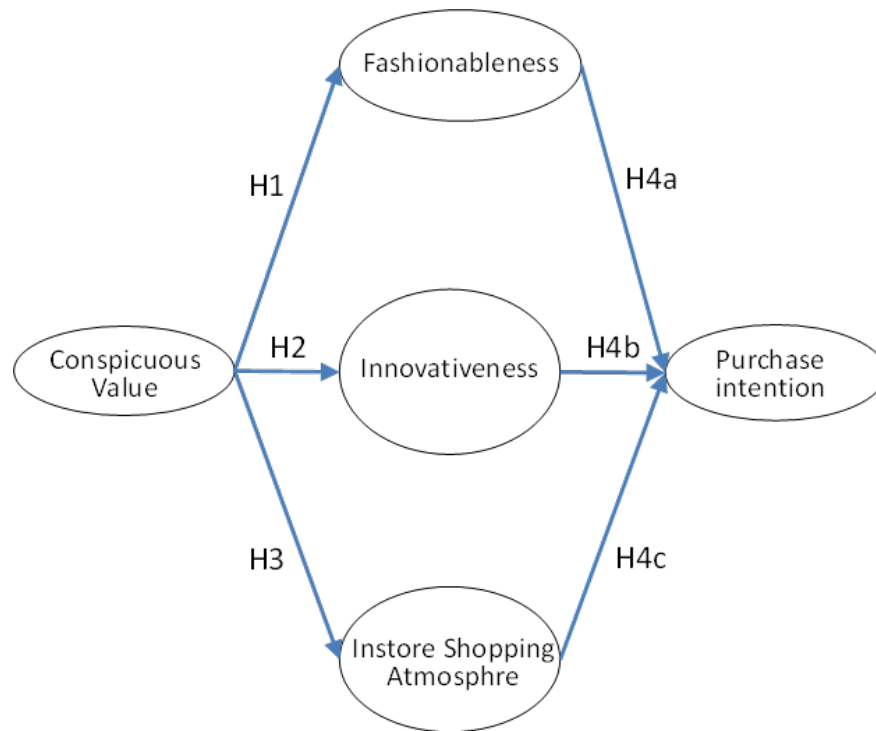


Figure 1. Conceptual framework and hypotheses

3 Methodology

Research Approach and Methodology

This study uses the deductive approach as the aim of this study is to test and validate a conceptual model with measurements with data collected from consumers in the Chinese market. Data is gathered through the online survey, and the data set is going to be analyzed with SPSS ver. 23. A quantitative method is applied to test predetermined hypotheses that are deduced based on existing theory (Weathington *et al.*, 2012).

It is believed that the most suitable purpose of this research is descriptive because the authors will describe the Chinese consumer's behavior (Ghauri and Grohauug, 2005).

Data Collection

As Weathington *et al.* (2012) debated, surveys attempt to gather information from an entire group which is usually a sample (Swetnam, 2004). Thirty items were prepared for the questionnaire, with some modification of wording and format following a pilot test with 50 informants in advance. The survey was conducted by an internet-based survey website, Survey Monkey, to collect primary data for the analysis.

The questions and corresponding options used in this research have been carefully measured and chosen, focusing on which related factors affect customer loyalty and how smartphone firms attract customers in the Chinese smartphone market. Based on the research aim and associated hypotheses, the questionnaire consists of questions designed to assess the factors developed in the hypotheses: conspicuousness, fashionableness, innovativeness, instore shopping atmosphere and purchase intention of smartphones.

426 responses were collected, which represent a spectrum of ages and gender in China. The questions can be divided into two parts, including general information and more detailed responses. For data analysis, SPSS version 23 was used.

4 Findings and analysis

Data

Table 2 shows the outline of the respondents' demographic profile.

Age	Count	%	Cumulative %
U18	34	8.00%	8
18-24	196	46.00%	54
25-30	84	19.70%	73.7
30's	43	10.10%	83.8
40's	43	10.10%	93.9
50's	21	4.90%	98.8
60's	5	1.20%	100
Total	426	100.00%	

Gender	Count	%	Cumulative %
Male	205	48.10%	48.1
Female	220	51.60%	99.8
No answer	1	0.20%	100
Total	426	100.00%	

Social class	Count	%	Cumulative %
Unemployed	41	9.60%	9.6
Student	175	41.10%	50.7
Bule color	62	14.60%	65.3
White color	147	34.50%	99.8
Other	1	0.20%	100
Total	426	100.00%	

Economic background	Count	%	Cumulative %
U500	60	14.10%	14.1
501-1000	92	21.60%	35.7
1001-2000	56	13.10%	48.8
2001-3000	52	12.20%	61
3001-4000	66	15.50%	76.5
4001-5000	53	12.40%	89
5001-6000	24	5.60%	94.6
6001-8000	16	3.80%	98.4
O8001	7	1.60%	100
Total	426	100.00%	

Table 2. Profile of the respondents

Reliability of the prepared variables for the Semi Structural Modelling (SEM) analysis

We conducted a descriptive analysis as a preliminary preparation for the hypotheses testing. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of observed variables for the 'conspicuousness,' ant three key themes, 'fashionableness,' 'innovativeness,' and 'instore shopping atmosphere.' As three

key themes which should represent 'conspicuousness,' it is also essential to validate the reliability of these three factors.

According to Hair *et al.* (2010), the set of variables with Cronbach's alpha higher than 0.600 can be acknowledged to be reliable and compatible with the analysis. Therefore, the Cronbach's alpha test was applied to the relevant variables which consist of the three key themes, the results are summarized in Table 3. From this process, it has been found that prepared nine variables are statistically reliable for the hypotheses testing which will be conducted based on the SEM analysis.

Latent factors	Components	Count	Mean	Std. Dev.	Alpha
Conspicuous value	Showing-off of possession	426	3.75	0.80	0.601
	Expensiveness	426	3.60	0.81	
Fashionableness	Suitable for lifestyle	426	3.59	0.84	0.778
	Fashionable gadgets preference	426	3.48	0.87	
Innovativeness	Product feature	426	3.78	0.77	0.701
	Innovative Design	426	3.54	0.80	
Instore shopping atmosphere	Fancy and posh atmosphere	426	3.55	0.80	0.858
	Customer service quality	426	3.59	0.81	
	After-sales support	426	3.52	0.79	
Purchase intention	Purchase intention	426	3.47	0.82	0.684
	Recommend to others	426	3.32	0.83	

Table 3. Observed variables representing consumers' perceptions

SEM Analysis

SEM is conducted to test the hypotheses, focusing on the paths that influence customers' purchase intention. Figure 2 demonstrates the outcome of SEM with statistical coefficients with the significant relations among the relevant factors generated from the factor analysis.

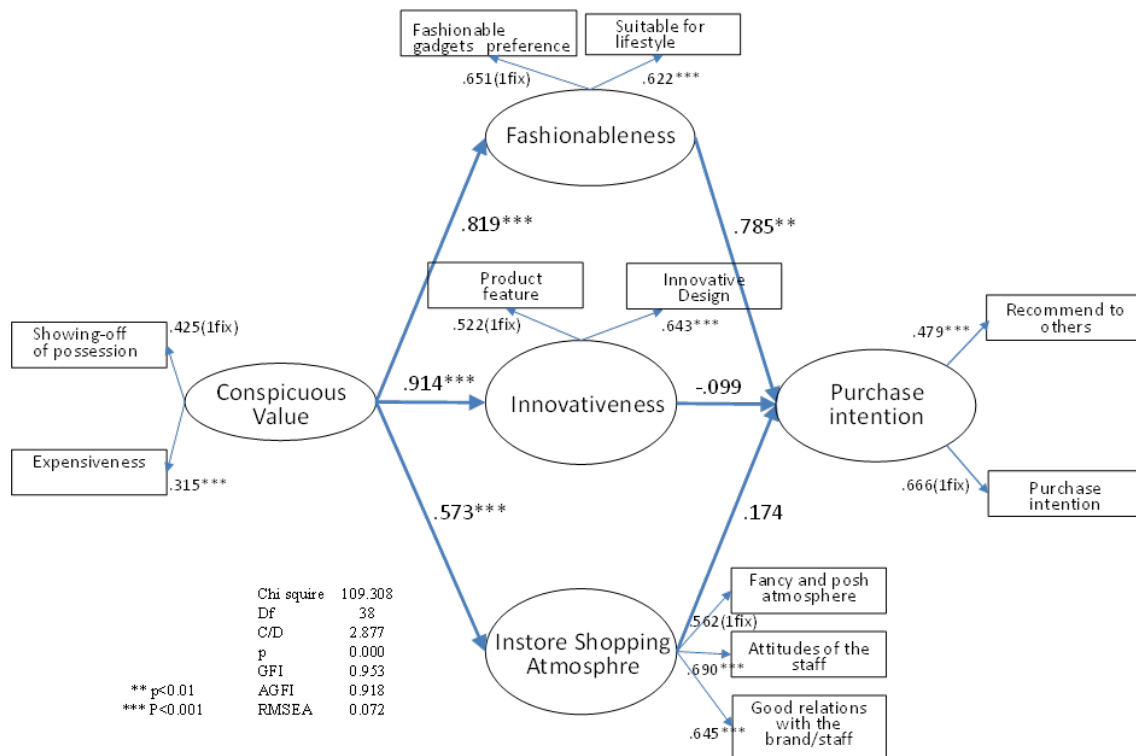


Figure 2. Result of SEM analysis

SEM was used to analyze the data, and the measurement model had acceptability to fit the measures. Specifically, the fit measures for the research model included a χ^2 /degrees of freedom ratio of 2.877 ($\chi^2=109.308$, $df=38$); it met the recommended level of 5.0 (Hair et al., 1998). As other results of fitting tests, GFI (0.953), AGFI (0.918) are high above the recommended level of >0.90, whereas RMSEA (0.072) also met the recommended level <0.10 (Hair et al., 1998). Thus, the results of the substantive model are going to be examined in the next step.

To		From	Staderdized path coefficient	p
Inovativeness	<---	Conspicuous value	0.914	***
Instore shopping atmosphere	<---	Conspicuous value	0.573	***
Fashionableness	<---	Conspicuous value	0.819	***
Showing-off if oissessuion	<---	Conspicuous value	0.425	1 fix
Expensiveness	<---	Conspicuous value	0.315	***
Purchase intention	<---	Fashionableness	0.785	**
Fashionable gadgets preference	<---	Fashionableness	0.651	1 fix
Suitable for lifestyle	<---	Fashionableness	0.622	***
Purchase intention	<---	Inovativeness	-0.099	0.067
Pruduct feature	<---	Inovativeness	0.522	1 fix
Innovative designe	<---	Inovativeness	0.643	***
Purchase intention	<---	Instore shopping atmosphere	0.174	0.110
Fancy and posh atmosphere	<---	Instore shopping atmosphere	0.562	1 fix
Attitudes of the staff	<---	Instore shopping atmosphere	0.690	***
Good relations with the brand/sstaff	<---	Instore shopping atmosphere	0.645	***
Recommend to others	<---	Purchase intention	0.479	***
Loyal to the brand	<---	Purchase intention	0.666	1 fix
			*	<0.05
			**	<0.01
			***	<0.001

Table 4. Path coefficients

Hypotheses Testing

Figure 2 indicating that this model is reliable, with the coefficients from conspicuous consumption to three latent factors as follows: fashionableness=0.819 ($p<0.001$), innovative product features=0.914 ($p<0.001$), service quality= 0.573 ($p<0.001$). Out of three latent variables, the innovative product features and fashionableness factors show bigger coefficients from conspicuous consumption compared with the instore shopping atmosphere. With differences

between these three, the conspicuous consumption factor is significantly leading to all three variables. Hence Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 are all supported.

Out of the Hypotheses 4a, 4b and 4c, only H4a (fashionableness) is supported (0.785, $p < 0.01$) which indicates that fashionableness only has a significant impact on the Chinese consumers' purchase intention of smartphones. On the other hand, contradictory to the previous researchers' findings about service quality (Bitner and Hubbert, 1994; Jones *et al.*, 2000; Bodet, 2008; Olsen, 2002), H4c (instore shopping atmosphere) was rejected (0.174, $p = 0.110$), whereas H4b (innovativeness) was also rejected with no significance of the path coefficients (-0.099 , $p = 0.067$). Table 4 shows the detailed results of the relationships among the factors and observed variables. Table 5 summarises the results of the hypotheses testing.

Hypothesis number	Hypothesis	Result
H1	Conspicuous consumer value has a positive relation with 'fashionableness' of smartphones	Supported
H2	Conspicuous consumer value has a positive relation with 'innovativeness' of smartphones	Supported
H3	Conspicuous consumer value has a positive relation with 'instore shopping atmosphere'	Supported
H4a	The factor 'fashionableness' has a positive impact on purchase intention of smartphones	Supported
H4b	The factor 'innovativeness' has a positive impact on purchase intention of smartphones	Not Supported
H4c	The factor 'instore shopping atmosphere' has a positive impact on purchase intention of smartphones	Not Supported

Table 5. Summary of the hypotheses testing

5 Conclusion

Overall findings

The results of the analysis show that conspicuous consuming attitudes exist as a basis for Chinese consumers' perceptions which leads to three aspects of smartphone shopping attributes: fashionableness, innovativeness, and instore shopping atmosphere. Their conspicuous value was found to have a significant impact on their evaluation towards three attributes of smartphone purchasing. However, among the three paths from these factors, only fashionableness has a significant impact, neither innovativeness nor instore shopping atmosphere has the impact on consumers' purchase intention of smartphones.

From the outcome of this study, the factor of conspicuous consumption was found to be a base for the consumers' attitudes towards smartphone purchasing. The fact that the proposed analytical framework in the context of smartphone purchasing is approved indicates that Chinese consumers' behavior is based on the unique cultural element of conspicuous value.

In this study, the authors break down this conspicuous value into three pathways; fashionableness, innovativeness, and instore shopping atmosphere. By this approach, only the factor of fashionableness has a significant impact on consumers' purchase intention, whereas innovativeness and instore shopping atmosphere are not perceived to be influential for consumers' purchase intention. Chinese conspicuousness has been studied by empirically so far, but one of the contributions from this study should be the practical analytical framework is proposed for the marketers and researchers for further investigation to develop actionable implications for the relevant businesses.

The approach conducted in this study which factorized the intangible value into tangible elements in the smartphone shopping attributes enables the practitioners and researchers to implement an actionable strategy to attract consumers.

Limitations

Firstly, the data profile indicates that 66% of the data set is concentrated for the age band of 18-24 (46.0%) and 25-30 (19.7%), who are categorized as the 'digital natives', as the main theme of this study focuses on Chinese consumers' attitudes towards smartphones, the targeted samples were the cohort who are the most familiar the technological gadgets (McMahon and Pospisil, 2005; Hutton and Fosdick, 2011). To attain more robust outcome with implications for the smartphone market, the well-balanced dataset representing the whole population should be needed. Secondly, it is required to elaborate the proposed models, investigating into the broken down the conspicuous value in the smartphone purchasing. The study pointed out only three key themes as the factors encompassing the conspicuous value in the model; this model with three bottom line factors should be investigated with some bigger dataset to generate actionable implications for the researchers and marketers. The dimensions and measurements of the analytical model should be explored and validated in further research.

Further research opportunities

To be able to develop some more robust and actionable implications for the marketers and researchers, it is needed to get a larger dataset to deepen the analysis and propose appropriate measurements for the field of study. In doing so, it is required to investigate the impact of service quality and innovative attributes of smartphones further. It is also required to explore the relations with Chinese consumers' conspicuous value as the basis for their purchasing intention of smartphones.

The exploration into the Chinese market and Chinese consumers' behavior in the technology-based goods market should cast both academic and practical implications to the existing and potential businesses who aim to penetrate the vast market with different values and cultural backgrounds. In this regard, it is essential for the researchers to investigate the

cultural impact on consumer behavior in the divers of markets. Research into the social and cultural context should be more closely investigated and could contribute to building an effective marketing strategy in the real economy, which this study aimed and objected.

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