

SEASONAL LIMITED PRODUCT VALUE PERCEPTION IN A CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT

Master's Thesis
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Aalto University School of Business
Master's Programme in Marketing
Fall 2022

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Title of thesis Seasonal Limited Product Value Perception Research in A Cross-cultural Context

Degree Master's Degree

Degree programme Marketing

Thesis advisor(s) Sanna-Katriina Asikainen

Year of approval 2022**Number of pages** 59**Language** English

Abstract

As a result of the Internet's homogeneity of information, customers in diverse regions have begun to consume products associated with foreign cultural features. Consumption of regional, local, and seasonal cultural elements has always been a powerful means of self-identity and self-expression for consumers. Utilizing seasonal features in product design can assist multinational brands in enhancing profitability, demonstrating brand innovation, and developing brand regional communities.

Understanding how consumers perceive the value of this type of product is essential for formulating a subsequent strategy. In this study, we adopted and modified the luxury value perception model to evaluate which aspects would be the most influential factors, even the determining factors, when people make decisions in a cross-cultural context. We discovered that people's individual values have a significant impact on their decision-making, as well as their brand preference. Even if there are fewer restrictions because the users are in a cross-cultural environment, customers still consider the innovation and creativity of the design to be one of the most important factors in determining their satisfaction. Last but not least, we discuss the seasonal limited edition (SLE) strategy's potential as a sustainable path for brands.

Keywords Seasonal limited edition, Value perception, Willingness to pay, Cross-cultural Marketing

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Both customers and the market face the challenge of expansion and development in the consumerist society: Consumption is utilized by consumers not just to meet demand, but rather to display their social and cultural identity (Katz-Gerro, 2004). One of the great examples could be luxury consumption; Consumption of luxury products might reveal not only a consumer's financial strength but also their aesthetic and cultural preferences (Lee et al., 2003; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004a). Furthermore, the purpose of limited editions is to boost the value of luxury (Shin et al., 2017). For instance, limited Hermès Birkin bags and Ferrari's limited-edition customized models are meant to exhibit that both the economic position and taste of some people who are at the top of the social pyramid (Dubois & Laurent, 1996). In today's consumer culture, part of people's purchasing is to fit into their current living environment, and some other part is so-called conspicuous consumption to emphasize and maintain their uniqueness within the group (Belk, 2019). Cultural symbol consumption is popular among marketers and consumers since it is a highly immediate method of consumption (Chunai & Qin, 2018). Consumption of tourist souvenirs, for example, is particularly an immediate consumption of cultural elements.

For international brands, the market expansion also means a greater variety of product and marketing strategies. Multinational corporations typically employ localized methods to attract and retain local users; "Standardized creativity, localized execution" has been the consensus of transnational marketing (Jiang & Wei, 2012). For example, Huawei publishes strategy manuals every year and distributes them to its both marketing departments and agencies around the world so that they can ensure the consistency of strategies when implementing localization strategies. To develop a brand image in the minds of consumers, multinational corporations must demonstrate brand inclusivity. Internationalized products

are unquestionably a primary approach. However, with the tide of the Internet economy lashing against cultural boundaries in global marketplaces, and the increasing expansion of cross-cultural consumption, consumers have not only become more accepting of cross-cultural elements, but their expectations for the consumption of original cultural features are also rising (Jiménez-Crespo, 2020). Cosmopolitan consumers (Holt, 1997) who travel regularly tend to participate in the national rather than the local organizations and desire exotic experiences brought by objects or activities because they have already treated exotic consumption as mundane.

Customers purchase goods, which contain certain cultural elements, as a ritual. Meanwhile, consuming those goods is as well as the simplest way for cultural outsiders to reach and experience the cultures. Christmas calendars, for example, are frequently given as a seasonal present in Western countries to show people's enthusiasm and expectations for the holiday, but it does not preclude some people who don't celebrate the holiday from purchasing such items even though their consumption motivations may differ. Some consumers are drawn by the unique product design, while others are amazed by the various, one-time product experience. In any event, the increased consumption of cultural elements in a cross-cultural context presents both companies and consumers with new opportunities and difficulties. According to Douglas and Craig (1997) and Levitt's (1983) theory of internationally mobile customers, with the advancement of communication and information, consumer behaviors are becoming more homogenized even across national borders. As a result, studying the consumption motives in a cross-cultural context is critical for global firms and brands looking to expand into new markets.

As many cultural manifestations are presented by rituals, many cultural elements acting as the carriers of local cultures are seasonal. Civic rituals, such as the Labor Day, the war memorials, and the new year, are the most representative rituals (Mark, 1994). Using people's sense of ritual can help marketers increase sales in a short period of time while also increasing brand favorability and loyalty by displaying the brand's market activity (Mi

et al., 2021). The consumption of these seasonal cultural elements is time-sensitive and periodic, which implies that the product life cycle is limited compared to other products in the same category, due to the two-way nature of isolation and tolerance of culture (Bitran & Mondschein, 1997). As a result, limited edition (abbreviated as LE; or on some occasions called Special edition, abbreviated as SE) has emerged as a method for brand scarcity while controlling expenses (Jang et al., 2015).

As mentioned above, the regional/cultural boundary of products has been blurred along with the increase of cross-cultural consumption (Hermeking, 2005). One of the most obvious examples is the global availability of products with regional and cultural peculiarities. This phenomenon is advantageous for marketers: on the one hand, the global market can help not only with the sales promotion but also reduce inventory pressure when necessary; On the other hand, when the ethnic/regional element appears in the foreign markets, the novelty of which would help brands create unique and bold brand images for new visitors, further help sustain loyalty by renewing the company's perception in the eyes of regular visitors; As we all can see, in both the consumer behavior and the consumer culture fields, the consumption of specific elements under cross-cultural context has great rooms that need to be filled.

1.2 Research object and research question

In the previous studies, scholars use the term cosmopolitanism to interpret the phenomenon that regular travelers are open to divergent cultural experiences since their horizons are built upon their knowledge and experiences of diversity, and it is an educational result of the intellectual and aesthetic taste (Hannerz, 1990). The popularity of cosmopolitan products depends on the generalized consumption and the glocalization of the social and cultural environment (Lam, 2010). The marketing and development trends of cultural heterogeneity's final products in the global market require us to pay more attention.

As what was discussed in the background description that how both the consumption of cultural symbols and the enthusiasm towards limited editions reflect consumers' desires for individual or social identification, in the article we strive to focus on the commodity category which contains both the above characteristics.

Considering the fact that commodities containing specific cultural elements are rebranded and consumed in other regional markets, for example, special products supplied seasonally, such as Easter eggs, are also launched and purchased in the regions where people don't celebrate it; we determine the research object of this article as the seasonal products with a limited product design tactic, referred to as SLE (Seasonal Limited Edition) in the following paragraphs.

In light of the scarcity of existing literature regarding the relation between value evaluation and purchase behavior in the consumer culture field, in this study we would like to take the niche marketing category, Seasonal Limited Edition (SLE), as the object aiming to address the following issues: Firstly, in the cultural field, *how and to what extent, does the symbolic value in consumption actually affect consumers' purchasing behavior*; Secondly, *if the elements of psychology and cultural elements are superimposed, will they have different effects on the perceived value of consumption under their synergy?*

1.3 Preliminary literature review and research gap

This research has been involved in the research of consumer psychology and consumer culture theory. In consumer psychology, scholars have demonstrated that the scarcity message and its manifestations in marketing practice - limited edition - can enhance consumers' perceived value by emphasizing scarcity (BROCK, 1968; Lynn, 1989). At the same time, the sense of value will be transformed into the willingness to pay in behavior (Chae et al., 2020; Jang et al., 2015). In the field of CCT, symbol consumption is regarded as relational self-expression and identity cognition (Sherry, 1998). So, cultural

symbols are expressions of value(Witt, 2010). However, in the field of CCT, there is a lack of literature on the transformation from symbols to values to consumption behaviors.

Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap in the relationship between value perception and behavior in CCT.

Therefore, through the selection of key concepts and their particularity in the context of cross-cultural consumption, a conceptual framework with the transformation path as the timeline and the intention stages as the signs of progressive transformation is built, laying the foundation for the subsequent methodology.

1.4 Methodology

This paper uses a semi-structured interview method to interview eight consumers who have experience in purchasing SLE products. In order to better measure the value perception of consumers, we use the laddering technique to leave a more flexible information space for the interviews. We encode the data according to the luxury value perception model mentioned in the theoretical framework and find out what core values that consumers care about and drive them to buy through the A-C-V chain connection. Finally, draw the hierarchical value map.

1.5 Structure

The remainder of this study is organized as follows: a brief literature review of cultural symbol consumption and its value perception from both a consumer psychology perspective and a consumer culture theory perspective, and the conceptual framework of this study based on the relevant key concepts; then we bring up the propositions under the discourse of the theoretical framework, which comprehends the luxury value perception model; we use the laddering technique to analyze the linguistic data collected from the

semi-structured interviews; following by the key findings from the data; last but not least, given the study's freshness, we discuss the limitation and future study direction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 From Consumer Psychology Perspective

Scarcity message and Limited edition

Since the commodity is possessed by people as a part of self-extension (Belk, 1988), it is expected to function as a vital identity material when compared with others. Hence, consumers' need for uniqueness naturally extends to commodities. According to commodity theory (Brock, 1968), the value of any commodity is positively related to its unavailability. In marketing practices, in order to raise the value perception, the methods commonly used by marketers include limitation on supply, restricting maximum order size, prestige pricing, and such words as "last chance", etc. The above methods are all through the delivery of scarcity messages to customers to achieve the marketing goal from psychological effects (Lynn, 1989).

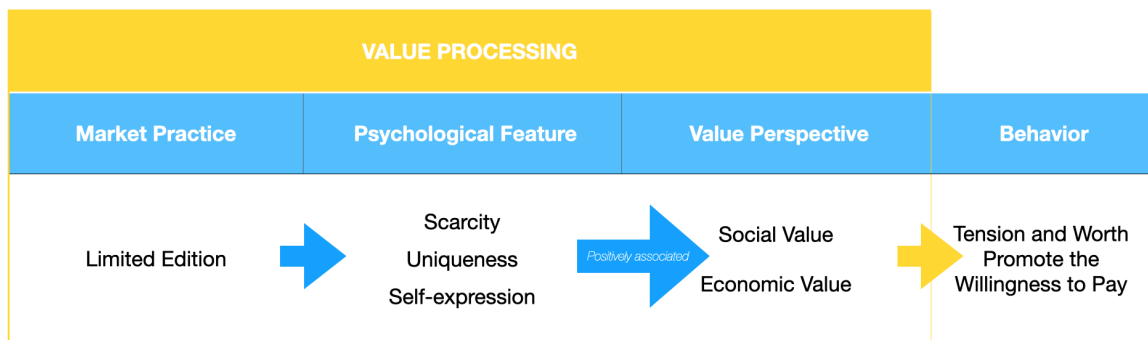
As a commonly employed marketing tool for scarcity messages, academic study on the Limited Edition Products (abbreviated as LEPs) has been relatively sparse thus far. Psychologists concluded the function that LEPs could satisfy the demand to show individuality and identity by possessing something that others cannot have as the so-called "snob effect" (Snyder & Fromkin, 1977). According to some scholars, in comparison to low-quality brands, Limited Edition is an effective strategy for high-quality brands; nonetheless, the application of Limited Edition to mass consumer brands remains debatable (Balachander & Stock, 2009). However, other scholars believe that the Limited Edition strategy is also adaptive for categories such as mass consumer goods that naturally lack scarce quality. Its effectiveness for mass consumer brands is demonstrated by the following: For products with limited life cycles, scarcity can provide a long-term price advantage. For consumers, limited editions contribute to their perception of value when making purchasing decisions (Jang et al., 2015; Lynn, 1989; Verhallen, 1982). As a result,

limited editions are not appropriate for pure commodities, but rather for meaningful, not just practical, products (Reis, 2018).

Value perception and Willingness to Pay (WTP)

Customers’ value perception is intermediate between their cognition and buying behavior. (Sheth et al., 1991). The value perception is shaped by multiple dimensions, including availability, uniqueness, price, etc. A widely accepted research proposed a model which sorts the value consumers perceived into 5 dimensions: functional value, conditional value, social value, emotional value, and epistemic value (Sheth et al., 1991). Nevertheless, other scholars found that customers perceive the value based on the evaluation of the product overall rather than based on any single manner(Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Extending this statement, some researchers pointed out that one of the most obvious embodies of such whole-image value evaluation is customers’ trust in the brand. As a result, it is vital to study and measure how customers perceive the value which could give rise to buying decisions(Chae et al., 2020). The essential characteristics of LEPs, which refer to scarcity, uniqueness, and self-expression, act on people’s perception of the social and economic value of the goods(Ha, 2021).

To conclude, as a marketing tactic, Limited Edition's influence path from market action to psychological effects on consumer behavior is as follows: the LEP's scarcity messages increase consumers' sense of tension and worth, hence raising their willingness to pay (WTP)(Chae et al., 2020; Jang et al., 2015).

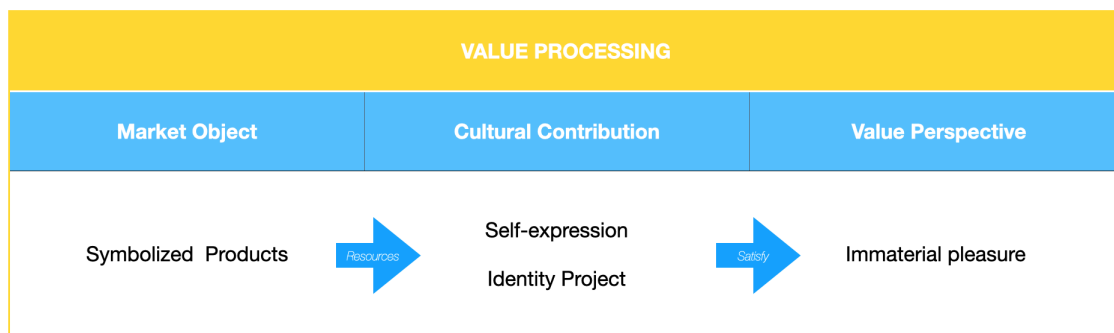


2.2 From Consumer Culture Theory Perspective

Symbol consumption and Value

Either the production or the consumption in modern society is pure economic acts, we should never ignore the cultural context where they take place. Furthermore, consumption can be seen as a set of social-cultural practices which would rather establish differences from other groups, than merely express them (Bocock & Bocock, 2020). The concept of structuralism in sociology is also adopted to analyze the symbols and signs in consumption, offering new insight into explaining consumption in certain social contexts. In Bourdieu's (1989) study, he divides the capital of modern capitalism into two categories: the economic capital and the cultural capital through different consumption purposes; between them, cultural capital emphasizes that through the educational systems, some groups have the capability to interpret the culture of modern and industrial societies; Consumers in this segment pay more attention to the intellectual and artistic pleasure rather than merely material pleasure. This immaterial satisfaction, which could also be called symbolic desire, is often achieved through consumers' self-expression and identification to highlight the relationship between themselves and society in unity as well as opposition (Ha, 2021). As the commodity has an expression in itself, people build and improve their self-image through buying behaviors (Ericksen & Sirgy, 1992). Symbols, including cultural symbols and brands, are important constructive resources for consumers in the process of self-expression and identity project (Sherry, 1998). So, in consumer culture, consumers anchor symbols to certain values. Or, in other words, symbolic consumption is a concrete manifestation of value at the social-cognitive level (Witt, 2010). According to these statements, in the CCT field, culture is understood as a result of both inward and outward symbolic communication, within a group where skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives are shared as symbolic materials (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

To sum up and simplify the relation among culture, value and symbolic consumption, scholars describe them in the scope of capitalism: Culture can be viewed as unifying values shared by members of society. Because people are symbol-producing, symbol-consuming creatures in capitalism ((Bocock & Bocock, 2008).



2.3 Research Gap

Through the literature study regarding consumer psychology, consumer culture, and value perception, it is found that in the field of psychology, scholars have carried out multi-dimensional demonstrations of the relationship between the vital characteristics of products and values, and demonstrated the correlation between value perception and purchase behavior; However, in the field of consumer culture, although the factors affecting the perception of value have been explored, and the value processing from symbol to immaterial pleasure is also elaborated. Besides the demonstration of international mobility accelerating the homogenization in customer behavior, there is a bare discussion about how values relate to decision-making and buying action. Due to the lack of research in this area, there is a necessity to address this issue seriously.

2.4 Key Concepts

Firstly, we identify the relative concepts in Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) field relative to customers' purchase intention, especially those involved in cultural mobility.

Furthermore, to investigate those of them are the affecting factors and evaluate the ways they affect the consumer behavior.

Glocalization

A pattern of consumption that has its roots among one ethnic group has the potential to be partially adopted by other groups, and further grow in their own cultural formations (Burns & Elias, 1979). This process could result in the initial formation of globalized consumption. Globalization was viewed as a result of the flow of cultural activities; in fact, the sociocultural reality was formed by these practices through dialectical processes between the consumer and consumer culture (Holt, 2002); in other words, globalization refers to the rapidly increasing integration and interdependence of societies and cultures on a global scale (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). However, there are some problems brought by it. The effect of the globalization trend on consumers is primarily manifested in the increasing homogenization of customers' desire for goods (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). As a consequence, we see a proliferation of cultural hybridization products on the consumer market. Of course, the advantage of homogeneity in the consumer sector is that it makes product efficiency, predictability, calculability, and control evident to businesses, particularly huge chains or international corporations (Ritzer, 2012). What we shouldn't ignore, is that from the sociocultural perspective, the renowned anthropologist Appadurai (1990) pointed out that the extension of such a trend would result in the homogenization of cultural experience, too.

To balance consumers' need of feeling unique and the brand strategy of being globalized, a new path was brought up. With globalization in mind, multinational brands employ a variety of strategies to acquire new consumers, one of the most important among them is localization. Cultural practices in the marketplace have complex local interpretations.

Güliz and Belk (1996) classified those practices as follows: return to local roots, consumer resistance, local appropriation, and creolization (Creolization is a term referring to the process by which elements of different cultures are blended together to create a new culture). This unique presentation demonstrates the heterogeneity of globalization. The subtle tension between international brands and local social culture always exists: brands exert influence over consumers and the consumption environment in the local market via hegemonic brandscapes, so as to shape long-term consumption (Thompson & Arsel, 2004), while local culture provides constant resources for building familiarity and bond, further transfers into brand equity. Zhao and Belk (2008) discovered that global marketers adopt local symbols to generate culturally desired meanings around initially foreign elements in their thesis analyzing Chinese advertising posters. Additionally, media has played a significant role in providing symbolic images for expressing the relationship between self, ontology, and the world (Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006). Due to the relevance of this bidirectional interaction in academic and practical marketing, Robertson (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2006) created the term “Glocalization” to refer to the existence of both universalizing and localizing tendencies simultaneously. Glocalization is a marketing term that refers to a specific scale that multinational corporations use to grasp cultural differences in marketing (Wilk, 1995). Meanwhile, for cultural original nations, glocalization manifests itself in the re-appropriation of original cultural traditions in their homelands (Askegaard & Eckhardt, 2012).

Conspicuous Consumption

Status and conspicuous consumption are often identified as the same phenomena by academics (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004). Consumer behavior is positively engaged in one’s desire seeking for social status (Eastman et al., 1999). As a consequence of so, the status and social prestige they gain from the acquisition of certain goods is one of the important motivating forces that influence their behavior (Goldsmith et al., 1996).

Kilsheimer’s opinion (Goldsmith et al., 1996; Kilsheimer, 1993) is in line with the others

and demonstrates that status consumption is the motivational process to improve one's social status and enhance one's prestige through conspicuous consumption, and it could be achieved by both demonstrating symbolized signals or communicating affluence. For instance, luxury product, which is a widespread symbol of consumerism, is often consumed to indicate status and as such displayed conspicuously to provide a visual representation of status. Therefore, it is vital in conspicuous consumption to create the relation between the value they want to convey to others and the characteristics of specific products and brands.

Consumers reinforce their identities through the consuming experience. If they can gain satisfaction from the identity, the value they perceive from it would raise their purchase and revisit intention(Luna-Cortés, 2017). Although the production of modern society is based on the materialism proposed by Marx, modern consumerism still to a certain extent relies on unconscious idealism to create demand(Goodwin et al., 2020). Consistent with this view, the unconscious desires couldn't be fulfilled simply by "real" goods, either. Conspicuousness is similarly defined as a person being happy to be noticed and revealing something greater than is real (Eastman et al., 1999). Here symbolic level intervenes. Since modern consumerism depends upon a specific set of values that are accepted and comprehended among sufficient groups, symbols have naturally become the carrier of consumers' desire for value in consumption. We can say that the consumer goods in modernity are sold as symbols, which piggyback some abstract values onto the reality. Baudrillard (2012) vividly portrays it as "floating values" in hyper-reality. The most common consumer symbols in the marketplace include brands, national cultural elements, etc. Today, more and more Internet memes are also accepted as well-known consumer symbols.

In the globalized environment, conspicuous consumption is both necessary and special. First, the formation of the global market and the prevalence of media networks not only allow people to move among different social environments but also promote the need for

flexibility and adaptability of people in their own culture to achieve their current life goals, which has formed global mobilities (Booth et al., 2000). One of the global mobility forms that is different from political and economic behavior and most closely related to consumer behavior is global nomadism. It is “a kind of hyper-cosmopolitan consumer lifestyle that prioritizes flexibility and adaptability in consumption practice” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005:226). Despite its many advantages for the accumulation of social capital, it is undeniable that individuals living in nomadism face many cultural challenges resulting in isolation and loneliness. Therefore, scholars emphasized that in global nomadism, the consumption and possession of cultural symbols are very important, because people can obtain a sense of identity and a connection with their homeland from the consumption of these symbols, thereby maintaining social mobility (Bardhi et al., 2012).

Purchase Intention

Consumer decision-making is a complex process. It reflects how value is measured at the level of consumer psychology. This process reflects the transformation from information to perceived value and eventually to behavior. Researchers conclude the decision-making before buying behavior really happens in 6 stages: awareness, knowledge, interest, preference, persuasion, and purchase (Kotler, 2017). Consumption decisions mainly depend on consumers' perception of quality, perceived value, and satisfaction they feel (Ranjbarian et al., 2012).

From the existing literature, scholars conclude several key factors that affect consumers' purchasing intention. As not only a name but also a symbol, the brand plays an important role in generating consumer preference and further loyalty by creating a positive image. Syed Saad Hussain Shah et al. (2012) investigated the significant relationship between the brand equity, including brand image and brand awareness, and customer's willingness to pay (Kawa et al., 2013); associated with the brand, perceived quality, which is determined by multiple dimensions including reliability, performance, and brand, is the specific measurement in the evaluation process (Ali, 2019); product quality is another key factor in

assessing consumers' intentions. High quality has a positive impact on purchase intention (Chi & Qu, 2008; Tsiotsou, 2006). Other than the factors above, visual plays a dramatic role in decision-making, too. Koshazadeh et al. (2012) state that consumers are deeply impacted by packaging; similarly, another visual factor is the advertising, which is efficient in both impressing targets by visual and vocal symbols and creating an emotional link by high-frequency appearance (Zain-UI-Abideen & Latif, 2011). Appropriate advertising could increase the positive evaluation of the product, even a positive attitude towards the brand (Khan et al., 2012); the last vital factor is the price. Since price directly communicates the exchange value of the product to consumers, it was often viewed as the representative of actual value which doesn't have huge perceptual differences among different groups of people (Kotler, 2017). Although the price doesn't directly affect consumer satisfaction, it would have an impact on consumers' expectations, indirectly correlating with their purchase intention (Ranaei Kordshouli & Allahyari Bouzanjani, 2012).

Perceived Value

“Perceived value” is a marketing term used to differentiate from the economic concept “value”. In the economic context, “value” is been measured by the utility (Tellis & Gaeth, 1990). Value is been regarded as a concept evaluated by the objective dimensions such as standards, rules, criteria, norms, goals, or ideals (Gallarza et al., 2011). In most cases, it is still a figurative idea that can be measured and described by some common criteria.

However, in the field of consumption, “perceived value”, or “value”, is a more complex concept that involves more emotional factors than rational standards of utility (Gardial et al., 1996). To some extent, it refers how customers interact with the products or services to gain their individual or social demand. Therefore, “perceived value” can be understood as important personal beliefs that individuals hold wishing to be respected and accepted in their society (Rokeach, 1968). These beliefs are the criteria that guide their behavior when they make preference judgments (Flint et al., 1997:169).

More and more companies and organizations realize the importance of consumer perceived value and start to apply it to strategic management (Mizik & Jacobson, 2003; Spiteri & Dion, 2004). How to create value that can increase people's purchase intention and build sustainable competitive advantage has become their prior concern (Slater, 2013). Since we have agreed that "perceived value" is a subjective evaluation that caters to people's desires underneath the "real" products, these "unreal" desires need to be presented physically by symbols. That is also why in commercial consumerism, symbol plays an irreplaceable role as the carrier of value that merchandise wants to convey to consumers and have an impact on their behaviors.

In cross-cultural situations, researchers regard the consumption of cultural elements/symbols as the embodiment of value perception (Lee et al., 2009). In line with the idea that consumers decide the value of a product on their own account, another study proposes that consumers' value perceptions in cross-cultural contexts are determined by their own assessment of the importance of element attributes (Tse, 1988). Dwell on the perceived value under the cross-cultural context, a great example is the value perception of luxury. Kaynak and Hassan (2014) and Tse et al. (1988) attribute the cross-cultural value perception of luxury goods to the fact that consumer demand in the luxury goods sector is transnational, even if the relative importance of the decision determinants may vary. Lee et al. (2003) proposed a value perception evaluation model, in which not only the interpersonal aspects such as conspicuousness, are considered, but also comprehend personal aspects such as hedonist and perfectionist motives, also situational conditions, for example, political, societal, and economic factors.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Glocalization discusses how culture can help address the homogenization of customers' desire for goods and cultural experience brought about by globalization; Since people have the need to achieve status improvement through consumption, scholars have demonstrated

that there is a correlation between status desire and their consumption behavior. The CCT logic behind this is that conspicuousness acts on people's identity projects and affects people's satisfaction, and satisfaction has a guiding effect on consumer behavior; in the cross-national context, international nomads use conspicuousness to adapt to changing living conditions, also rising their satisfaction. In addition to the impact of conspicuousness on purchase intention mentioned, other factors that have a guiding effect on behavior include other subjective factors, such as brand recognition, perceived quality, and objective factors, such as price, packaging, advertising, etc. Hence, the conceptual framework of this study is presented as follows:

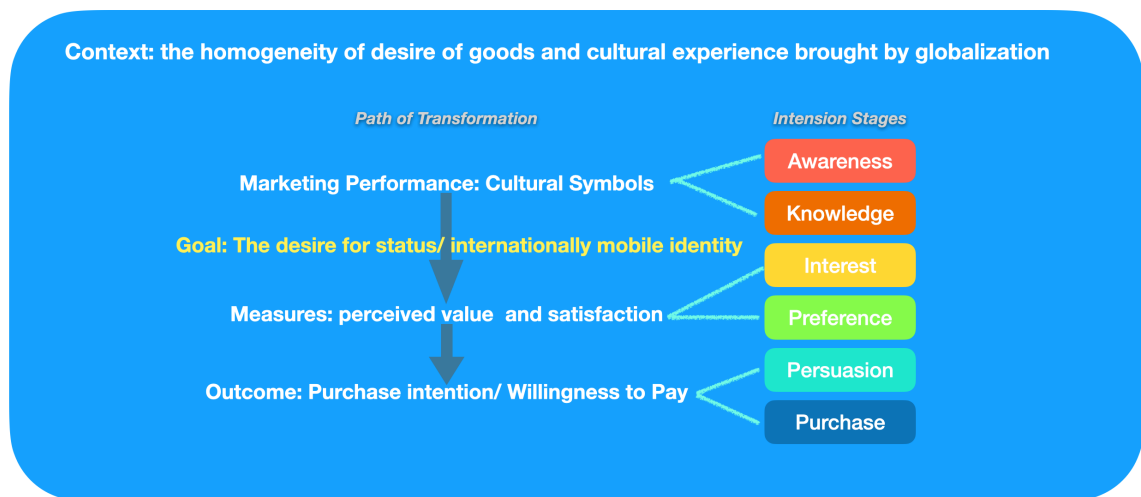


Figure 1
Conceptual framework

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As stated in the Research question, this study seeks to investigate how consumers' value perception affects decision-making regarding SLE goods. More precisely, this paper mainly discusses the transformation from value perception to consumption behavior under cross-national discourse, which emphasizes the role of cultural symbols as the medium and carrier of transformation. Also as presented in the conceptual framework, each step of value conversion has a corresponding relationship with the intension stages(Kotler, 2017). Since the luxury value perception model (See Figure 2) also focuses on the correlation between the antecedent constructs and the value aspect, we chose it as our research theoretical basis. It is adaptive for our research because it is a typical cultural symbol consumption (luxury) study that not only takes both psychological and functional needs into consideration but also, importantly, emphasizes the complexity of cross-cultural consumption. It pointed out that the variables may engage in the 4 dimensions of value perception differently as individual value judgments do not represent objective evaluation, comprising their personal weighing of current life goals.

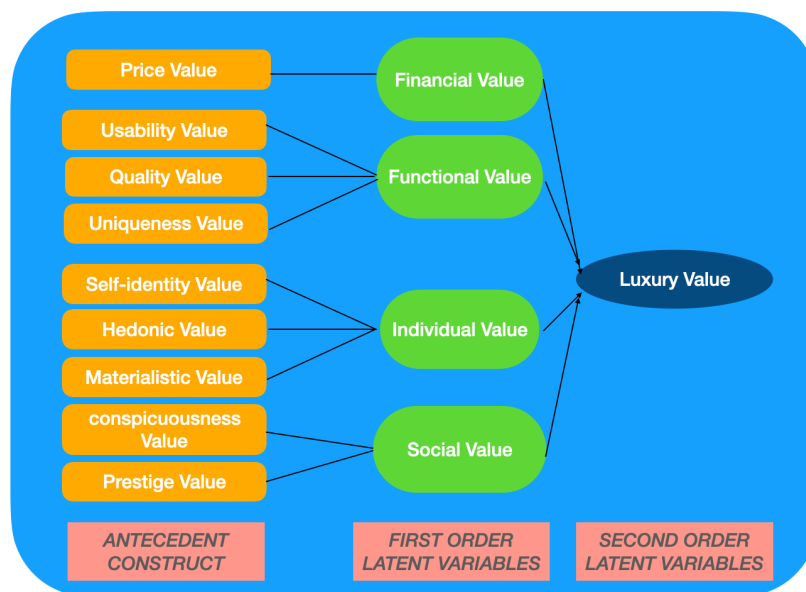


Figure 2
luxury value perception model

Vigneron and Johnson's brand luxury index (2004) summarizes the key factors of luxury consumption behavior into five, including personal perceptions (perceived extended self, perceived hedonism), as well as the more usual non-personal perceptions (perceived conspicuousness, perceived uniqueness, perceived quality). To extend this framework and enhance the relation between customer motives and value perception, Lee et al. (2003) propose luxury value perception model which encompasses 4 key dimensions:

Financial Dimensions: It refers to the value of the product expressed in price, and to what is given up or sacrificed to obtain a product (Chapman, 1987; Grewal et al., 1998; Ahtola, 1984).

Functional dimension: it refers to the utilized value as goods, such as the quality, uniqueness, usability, reliability, and durability of the product (Sheth et al., 1991).

Individual Dimension: it focuses on personal orientation value that helps customers to address personal matters such as identity and hedonistic (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004).

Social Dimension: It refers to the values consumers perceived when they expect to acquire the approved cognition such as conspicuousness and prestige value and the propensity to purchase or consume luxury brands (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Brinberg & Plimpton, 1986; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999, 2004a).

Associated with the 4 main dimensions of value perception, antecedent constructs as the key factors that aggregated the value perceptions, it might be variable depending on different cultural situations and individuals.

Price Value: Price generally has a positive effect on perceived quality (Erickson & Johansson, 1985), especially high prices often indicate prestige as well (Groth & McDaniel, 1993). However, items containing special meanings cannot be labeled and measured by actual price. It is important to know that consumers might distinguish

between objective price and perceived price according to their own sentimental demands (Jacoby et al., 1977).

Since SLEs are commonly found in premium price brands and luxury brands rather than mass-consumer brands, we can make the following propositions for value based on financial aspects:

Proposition 1: The financial value perception of SLEs comes from the premium price. Therefore, consumers of SLEs might be sensitive to the price over their expectation of the brand average; excessive premium will affect consumers' willingness to pay.

Usability Value: Usability points to the function that the product is designed for in terms of ease of use and can be defined by the physical-chemical-technical. The usability measurement has 2 dimensions: consumers' needs and product properties. As a result, it couldn't always be perceived objectively due to different usage purposes. For premium-price products, people will expect superior functions rather than only basic functions. (Fennell, 1978)

In a cross-cultural context, the usage of SLEs is different from its original design, especially since most of the SLE products contain festival and religious elements; Therefore, we brought up another proposition:

Proposition 2: in a cross-cultural context, consumers are not sensitive to the functional value of products, such as usage time and scenarios.

Quality Value: Gentry et al. (2001) found that the prestige brand name can reflect superior quality. In some cases, special conditions can be related to the quality, for example, hand-made implied fine producing and limited capacity, which could improve the perceived quality (Dubois & Laurent, 1994, 1996; Garfein, 1989; Nia & Zaichkowsky,

2000; O’Cass & McEwen, 2004; Quelch, 1987; Roux & Floch, 1996; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004a). In other words, high quality is generally a guarantee of value.

Uniqueness Value: The uniqueness could be brought by 2 aspects: on the one hand, abstract factors such as labels (e.g. brands, collaborated design) and special conditions (limited editions, seasonal supply) raising the perception of exclusivity and rareness can enhance the consumer’s desire or preference for a brand (Lynn, 1991; Verhallen, 1982); on the other hand, the concrete conditions such as the price that not everyone can afford also enhance the value of uniqueness(Snyder & Fromkin, 1977).

Through the preliminary research of this study, we found that SLE is a common strategy for brands that already have a certain international reputation, so the important role of brands in the perception of quality value cannot be ignored; because in a cross-cultural context, the exclusivity and rareness of SLE products will be magnified, so based on the above 2 constructs we make the following proposition:

Proposition 3: The quality value of SLEs is mainly brought by the brand, so SLE cannot bring additional quality value to the product to enhance consumers' purchase intention; on the contrary, the scarcity and uniqueness of SLE products that are enhanced in a cross-cultural context would affect consumer behavior.

Self-Identity Value: Self-identity refers to the internal (private) facet of one’s self in terms of the way the individual perceives him or herself (Jamal & Naser, 2003; Mehta, 1999; Sirgy & Johar, 1999). In the theory of consumer behavior, self-image congruity moderates the relationship between one's self-image and one's image of a product or service (Belk, 1988; Mick, 1986). Hence, consumers may use the consumption of specific items to integrate the symbolic meaning into their own identity (Holt, 1995; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004b) or to support and develop their own identity (Dittmar, 1994; Douglas & Isherwood, 1996; Hirshman, 1988).

Hedonic Value: Hedonism describes the perceived subjective utility and intrinsically attractive properties acquired from the purchase and consumption to arouse feelings and affective states, received from personal rewards and fulfillment (Sheth et al., 1991; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). These subjective intangible benefits include sensory pleasure and gratification, aesthetic beauty, or excitement (Roux & Floch, 1996; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004a)

Materialistic Value: Highly materialistic individuals may, in a general sense, find possessions to be desirable and tend to devote more time and energy to product-related activities (Belk, 1985) Also, because possession can serve as a communication signal, it is commonly used by consumers for portraying and managing impressions of who they are and what their status or position is (Dittmar, 1994; Hirshman, 1988; Holt, 1995).

Consumers of SLE products in a cross-cultural context are more complex: there are cultural outsiders who do not understand the cultural elements carried by SLE but are interested in design and other factors, there are people who are willing to buy based on a certain understanding of the culture, and there are also cultural natives who conduct purchase behaviors because of the feeling of intimacy in the foreign environment, etc. Therefore, the subjectivity of individual value is stronger. Based on this, we propose the following:

Proposition 4: Consumers' personal value perception comes from various and subjective sources, among which, it is very likely that consumers can adapt to their current living conditions by owning SLEs, so different from the social value which the satisfaction comes from the group-identity, the value derived from self-identity cognition may have a profound impact on behavior.

Conspicuousness Value: According to existing studies, the conspicuousness of a product was positively related to its susceptibility to the reference group (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Bourne, 1957). Conspicuous consumption plays a significant part in shaping

preferences for many products which are purchased or consumed in public contexts (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004a).

Prestige Value in Social Networks: People take the consumption of certain symbols as a sign of group membership to state their social status or differentiate themselves from other groups (Belk, 1988; Sirgy, 1982; Solomon, 1983). This tendency also implies that when consumers form attitudes, they tend to adopt the opinion that the majority of their group accepts (Festinger, 1954).

As mentioned above, the social practical meaning of SLEs in a cross-cultural context has changed away from cultural constraints, and because SLEs often rely on the halo of the brand, the following assumptions are put forward for the social design value:

Proposition 5: The social recognition value brought by cultural elements of SLEs does not have a significant impact on consumer behavior in a cross-cultural context, and the perception of prestige value also depends on their perception of brand awareness.

4. METHODOLOGY

In order to make up for the lack of motivation points caused by the fixed question design of structured interviews, the author validated the research approach as a semi-structured interview during the formal study phase, leaving the more subjective initiative to the interviewees in order to obtain more effective information. The proposed method of measuring the core values that affect behaviors is established on the well-accepted psychological technique: laddering (Phillips & Reynolds, 2009; Reynolds & Gutman, 1988).

4.1 Laddering Technique

The technical design of Laddering is based on the assumption that a product or service can generate a higher level of psychological or social satisfaction for the customers (Tybout & Hauser, 1981). It combines the insights from psychological motivations with the Means-end model (Gutman, 1982) to reveal the levels of transformation and steps of a hierarchical map from behavior performance to the core value: attributes, consequences, and core values (so-called A-C-V chain) (Rosenberg, 1956). Therefore, the author used the laddering technique to conduct semi-structured interviews with the interviewees around the issues exploring the core personal values following the A-C-V chain logic.

4.2 Research Design

SLE products are accessible for almost all categories on the market, from FMCG to luxury. Since the Air Jordan brand has been adopting the SLE strategy for years and has had abundant products launched in this category, we chose Air Jordan as the research brand in this study and searched the consumers as our targets.

After determining the research brand, the author discovered that buyers in this category are often active in sports forums, particularly those focused on basketball and sneakers. The author opted to contact consumers who left messages on the relevant sites of the SLE forum (bbs.hupu.com, sneakerfreaker.com, etc.), and the people who shared the Air Jordan SLEs on the social media (RED, Bilibili, and Instagram). Eventually found 6 consumers who fit the consumption criteria in a cross-cultural framework to conduct interviews. The investigation's final subjects include 8 people, in addition to the two consumers who were introduced by others.

The author arranged for around 40-minute, one-on-one interviews with 8 representative consumers in the target group. According to the above A-C-V theory, the process should start with the most obvious features that attracted consumers to purchase the products, then dig into the further value which is essential personally. The primary interview questions that figure this issue out are as follows:

- Please describe the pair of SLE shoes that you own, including when, where, and how you bought them? And what type are they, what elements do they contain? How much you paid for them?
- How is your consumption plan: did you make the decision through early information acquisition, or is the purchase a result of a whim? Is your consumption decision independent or is it the result of the participation of others?
- Can you talk about what was the most attractive attribute of this shoe when you bought it?
- What do you think is the most special feature of your shoe compared to the basic model or to a similar model?
- How did you envision its use when you bought it? What is its function first? Is it a daily necessity or a tool for identity display?
- Apart from the product itself, what other factors do you think to have an important impact on your decision?

After identifying the factors that consumers stated made them purchase, the questions should penetrate the reasons why those factors are important while making decisions. Then questions might be variable according to consumers previous answers, here display several examples of how the interviews are continued.

- Why these features attract you so much? Do you have any knowledge about them?
What is the meaning of this product having this feature?
- Why is the feature important to you? What does it mean to you?
- Have the features you envisioned at the time of purchase come to fruition after your purchase?
- To what extent do you think it satisfies you? Why?
- Are there any other values that you find satisfying?
- What values do you think are the most important to you in your entire purchase restriction process? Why?
- Do you feel good about the brand because of your judgment of the product? Or do you have the urge to make a second purchase?

Although there was a lot of information needed to keep track of, the questions were constructed by levels, while asking deeper and deeper questions close to the core values are essential to personal benefits, at higher and higher levels of abstraction can products' true values to individuals be understood.

4.3 Research Data and Analysis

The study's interviews took place primarily in the summer of 2021. Due to geographical, time, and unpredictable issues (Covid-19), the author chose to conduct the interview online. Each interview lasts between 45 and 90 minutes; online interview platforms used include Zoom and Tencent Meeting. Two of the interviews and the supplementary information were gained from online chatting due to practical reasons.

This study is conducted under the discourse of cross-cultural circumstances, interviewees background information is critical because the cultural background is the fundament of one's value perception. After collecting the language data, the author tried to construct the hierarchical value map of the data according to the value perception model in order to estimate the cognitive structure of the interviewees. It's worth noting that we will pay extra attention to the value bond with actual behaviors.

Sampling and Demographic Information

As previously stated, the study was conducted in a cross-cultural discourse, and the circumstances of participants vary. The research samples were separated into two categories: cross-cultural consumption scenarios and cross-cultural usage scenarios. At least one of those two study criteria should be met by every sample. Participants C and E, their purchasing situations are cross-cultural, while Participants A, C, D, and F, their usage scenarios are cross-cultural, as illustrated in Table 1. Although participant B does not match the above criteria, we believe it still fits the research requirements. It is because, as a result of the advancement of the Internet and the transportation industry, consumers indeed have achieved cross-cultural consumption without being limited by time and distance, and we have reason to believe that this will become a trend in the future. Hence, it is necessary to include it in the research.

Number	Age	Nationality	Professional	Cross-Cultural Background	The Pair of AJ Shoes Containing Seasonal Cultural Elements They Own	Cross-Cultural Buying Scene	Cross-Cultural Using Scene
A	26	China	Commercial director of luxury e-commerce company	-Studied film production in Australia for 3 years. -Working for several cross-national luxury brands	Air Force 1 Low "Shanghai Golden Era" -With the character "沪", which is the abbreviation of Shanghai		Yes
B	25	China	Chemical engineer	None	Jordan 1 Mid x CLOT "Fearless" (2019) - founder of the CLOT brand was a Chinese superstar; -Uses silk as the material		
C	25	China	College student in computer science	Studies and lives in the US for over 7 years	Jordan 9 "City of flights" Los Angeles (2018) -Los Angeles map-inspired graphic insoles	Yes	Yes
D	43	The US	Social media content creator	-Married cross-nationally -Currently lives in China with his wife and son	Jordan 5 Low Chinese New Year (2021) -suspicious red accents -canvas upper is designed to wear away to reveal graphics below that represent Chinese firecracker packaging		Yes
E	28	The Netherlands	Fashion editor; part-time Instagram influencer	-Mixed race, bicultural family; -Born and raised in the Netherland. Studied and works in France.	Jordan 1 low Paris (2020) -come equipped with a tumbled leather hang tag with a "PRS" hit :Parisian inspiration: refined details instead of bright colors	Yes	
F	22	Mexico	Engineering student to be	Plan to go to the US for college.	Jordan 1 Mid Día de Muertos (Day of Death) (2020) -the shoe's upper recalls marigolds, with contrast orange stitching throughout the fuchsia overlays -The lateral forefoot of each shoe sports 'Para Mi' and 'Familia'		Yes
G	32	Malaysia	Housewife	None	Jordan 5 Retro GG Easter (2020) -Flaunting an official mix of White, Laser Crimson, and Voltage Purple, the model boasts a white leather construction that is draped in a multicolor splatter print.		Yes
H	36	China	Interior designer; Started a sneaker channel on Bilibili from 2021	None	Jordan 1 Zoom Air CMFT PSG Paris Saint-Germain (2021) -A classic monochrome shoe gets a contemporary update -The PSG x Air Zoom Comfort White Psychic Pink uses a combination of ultra-luxe fabrics and bold colors to create a standout sneaker perfect on and off the pitch		Yes

Table 1
Demographic Info of Participants

Coding

Because this study adapts the luxury value perception model to analyze the linguistic data collected by the laddering technique, the collected data is encoded according to the A-C-V chain of the luxury value perception model and the Means-end model (Gutman, 1982), as presents in the following table:

Code	First Order Latent Variables	Code	Content	Antecedent Constructs	code	Content
V1	Financial Value	A1-a	the price is within one's budget range.	Price Value	C1-a	Reasonable price can bring people extra value while affordable
		A1-b	the potential deal value		C1-b	Hedge ratio/Investing value is a dimension when buying
V2	Functional Value	A2-a	the need for material for adapting to the life situation	Usability Value	C2-a	The fundamental function of the product category (sneaker) cannot be ignored
		A2-b	the need for material for building one's own style		C2-b	the trending brand, popular culture, they can serve as the carrier of symbol communication

V3	Individual Value	A2-c	the need for material for knowing/reinforcing one's identity	Quality Value	C3	The introduction of the new technology reinforces the existing brand value
		A2-d	the need for social interaction: as a gift	Uniqueness Value	C4	The Price range can make consumers feel special rather than unique
		A2-e	the need for a functional pair of sneakers.			
		A2-f	the appreciation for the breakthrough industrial technology			
		A3-a	the appreciation for the unique and beautiful design	Self-identity Value	C5-a	Cultural elements are materials for self-construction
		A3-b	the appreciation for the concept		C5-b	The influential brand can make the culture more interesting and popular
V4	Social Value	A3-c	the elements of the shoes are meaningful for individuals	Hedonic Value	C6	Hobbies, aesthetics, and consumptions are all presentations of self-fulfillment
		A3-d	personal hobby/preference	Materialism Value	C7	Material is a reflection of one's wish/ life situation
		A3-e	the abroad using scene expands the sense of uniqueness			
		A3-f	the scarcity message expands the sense of uniqueness			
		A4-a	the appreciation for the brand's reputation and other attributes brought by it	Conspicuous Value	C8	The conspicuousness brought by the products can serve as the identification of certain groups
		A4-b	the attention from the trending style/topic/advertising in public	Prestige Value	C9-a	The impact of the brand is undeniable whether you like it or not
		A4-c	the opportunity to learn and access the new launch		C9-b	the classical pairs serve as the long-term brand equity
		A4-d	the need for social interaction: as a group common interest/topic			

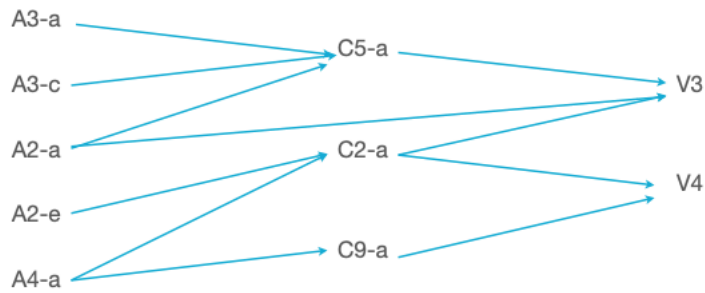
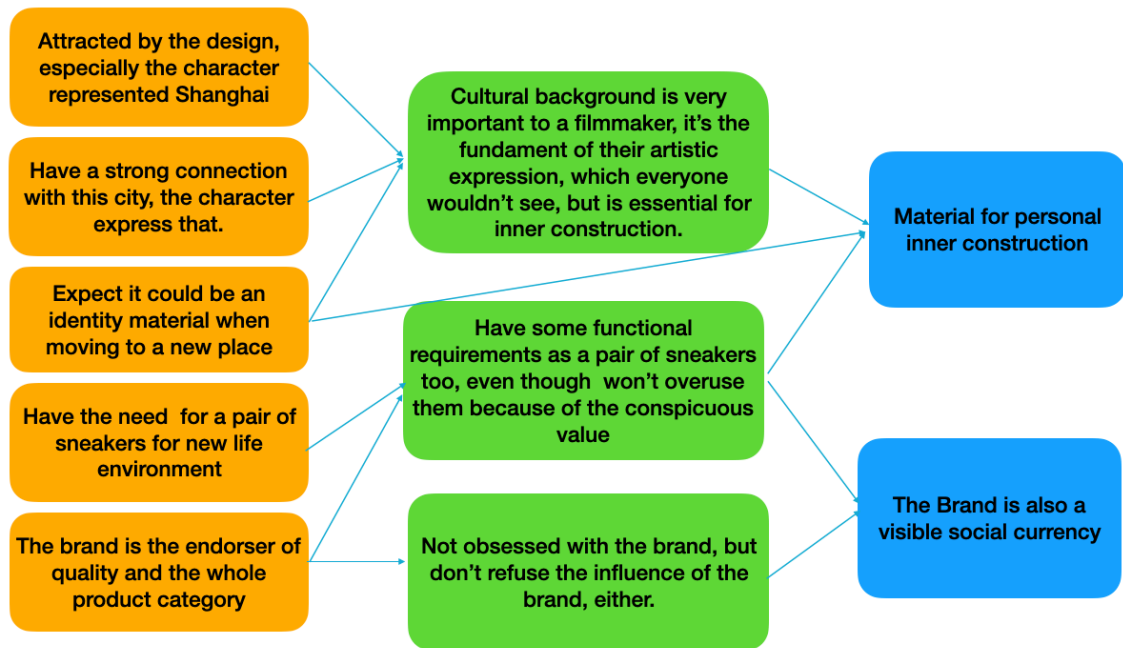
Table 2

A-C-V coding

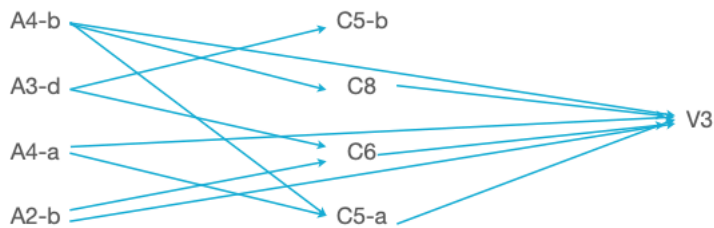
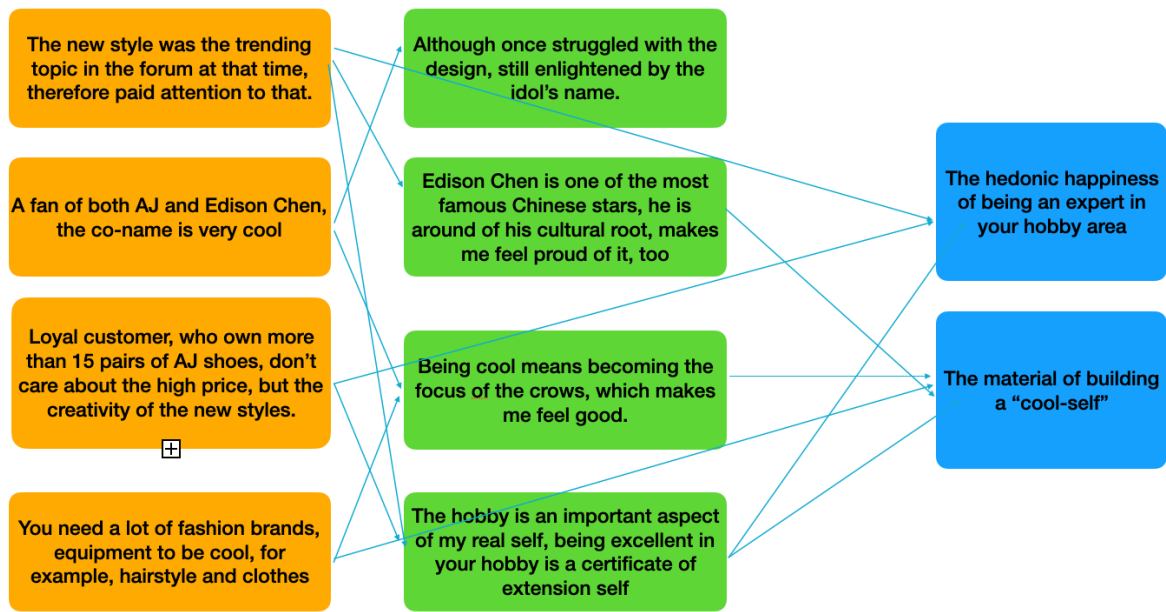
Laddering

According to the above coding, the data laddering is displayed as follows:

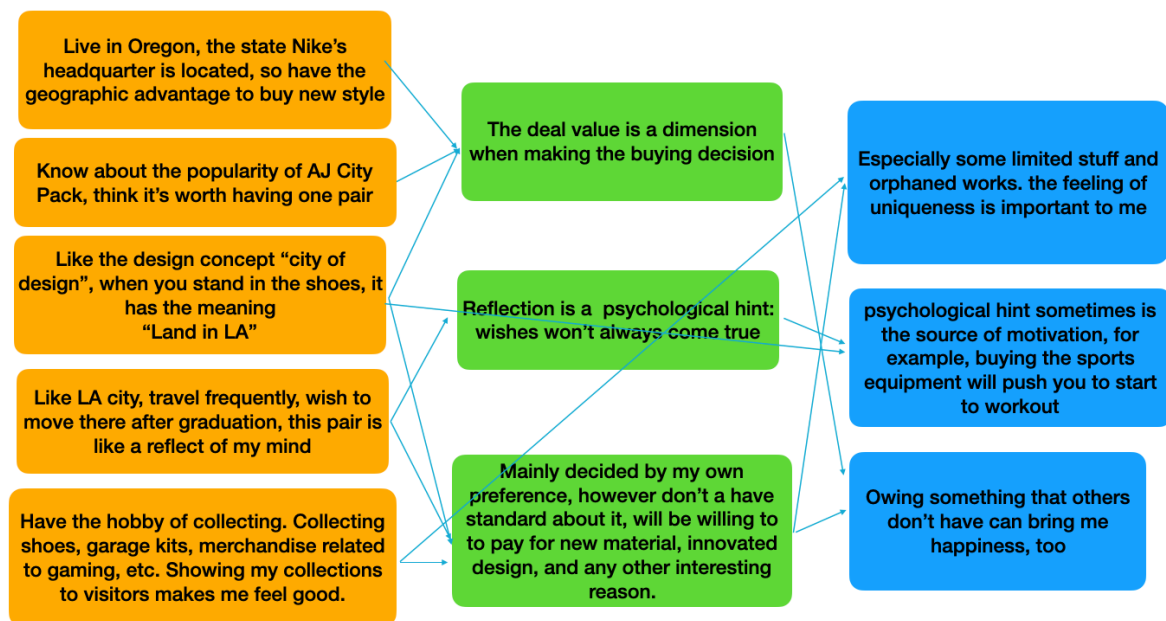
- Interviewee A:

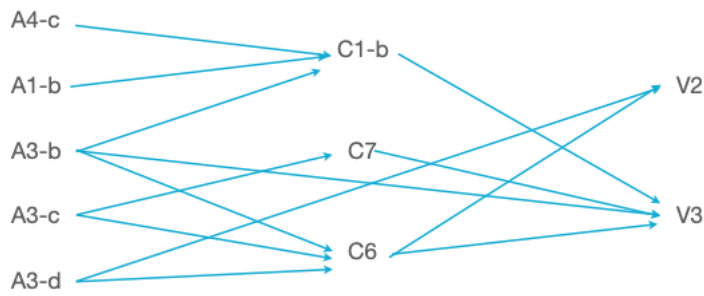


- Interviewee B:

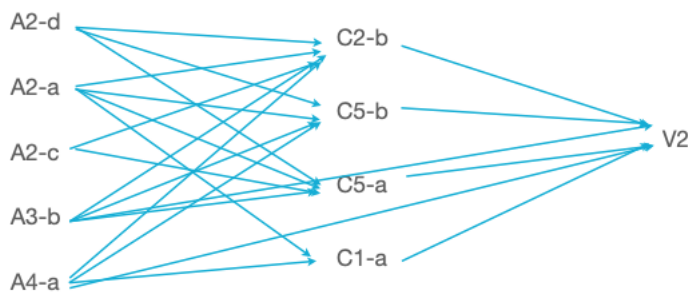
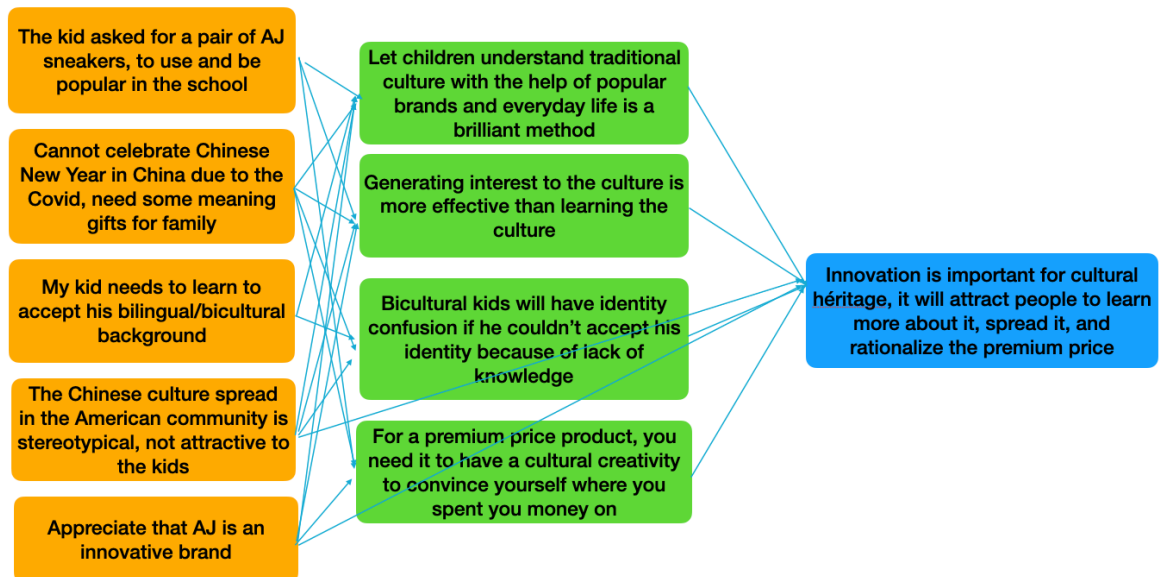


- Interviewee C:

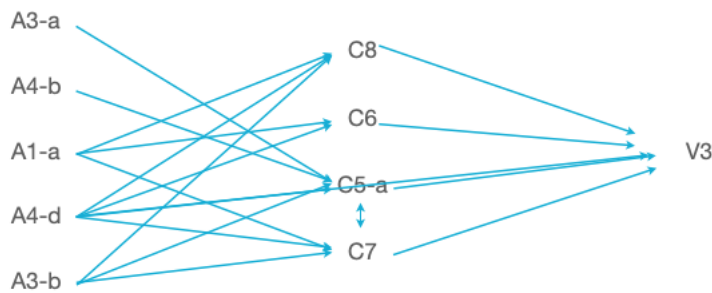
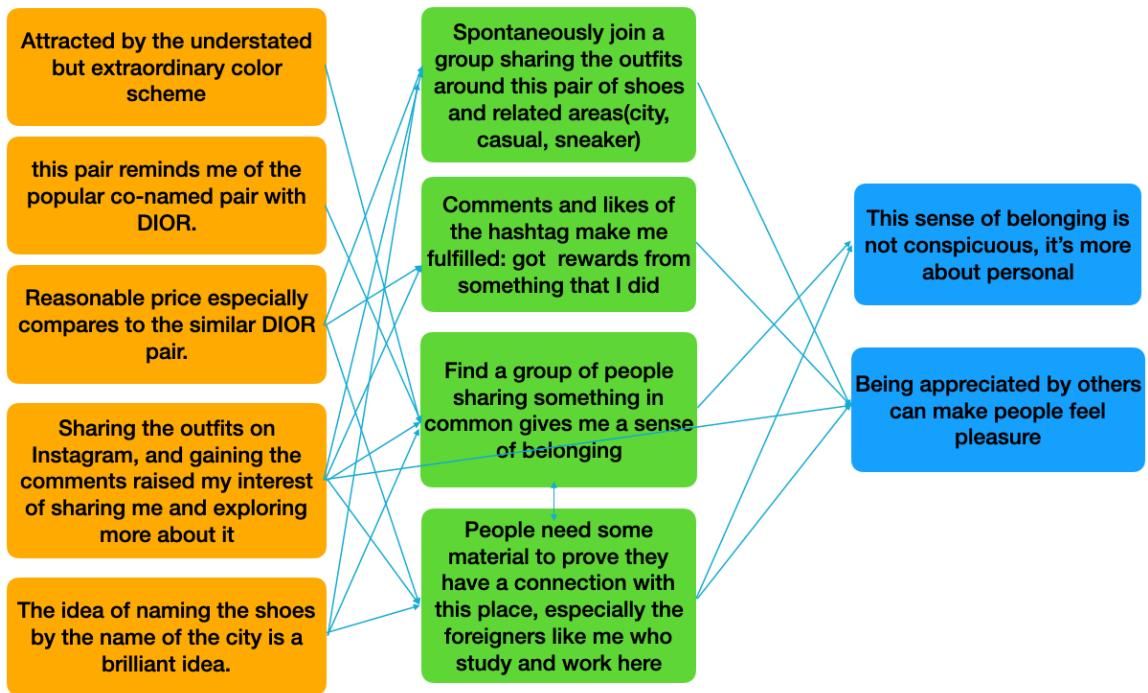




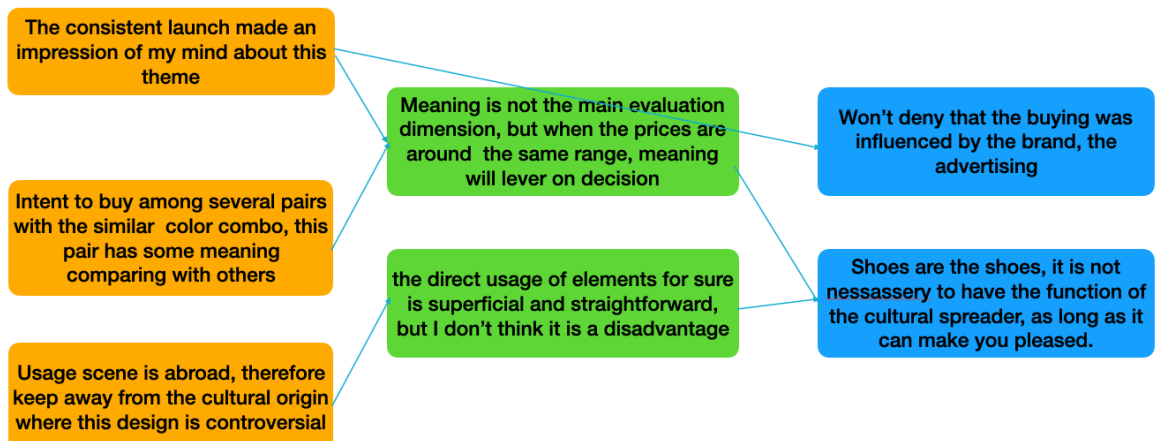
- Interviewee D:

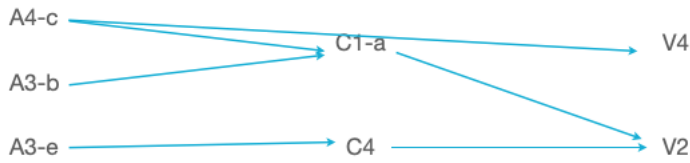


- Interviewee E:

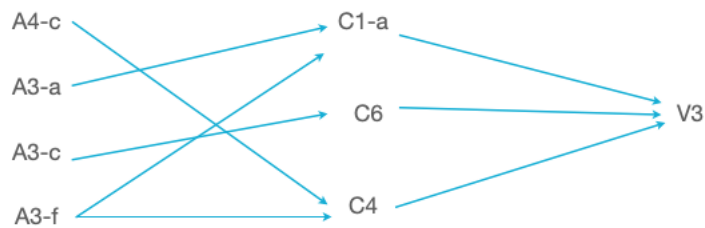
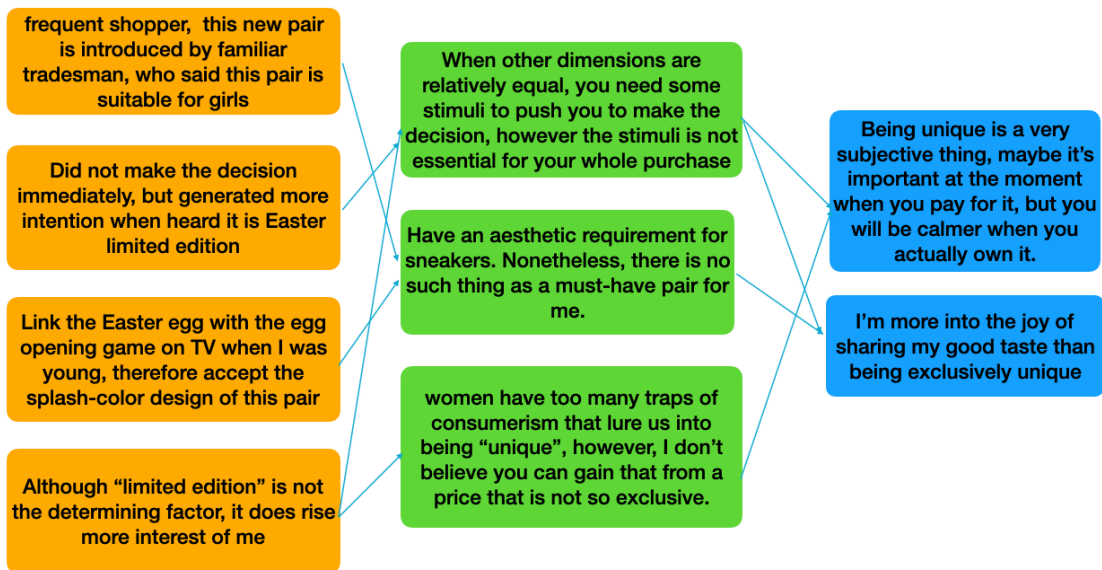


- Interviewee F:

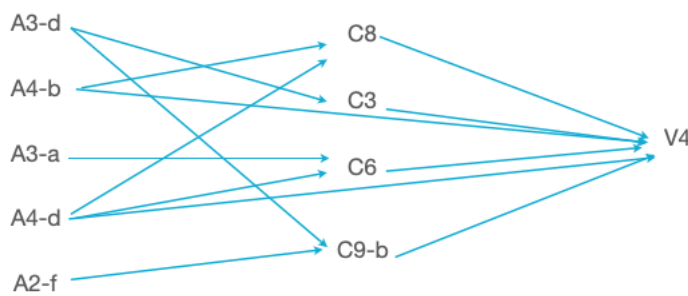




- Interviewee G:



- Interviewee H:



Hierarchical Value Map

By arranging the A-C-V chain of each individual interview, we comprehensively organize all the data into a Hierarchical Value Map, (HVM for short) according to the coding and the original luxury value perception model (See Figure 3).

The HVM very intuitively shows the three core values that drive consumption for consumers: V2 (functional value), V3 (individual value), and V4 (social value).

Among them, consumers show more reliance on individual value (V3) in promoting behavior.

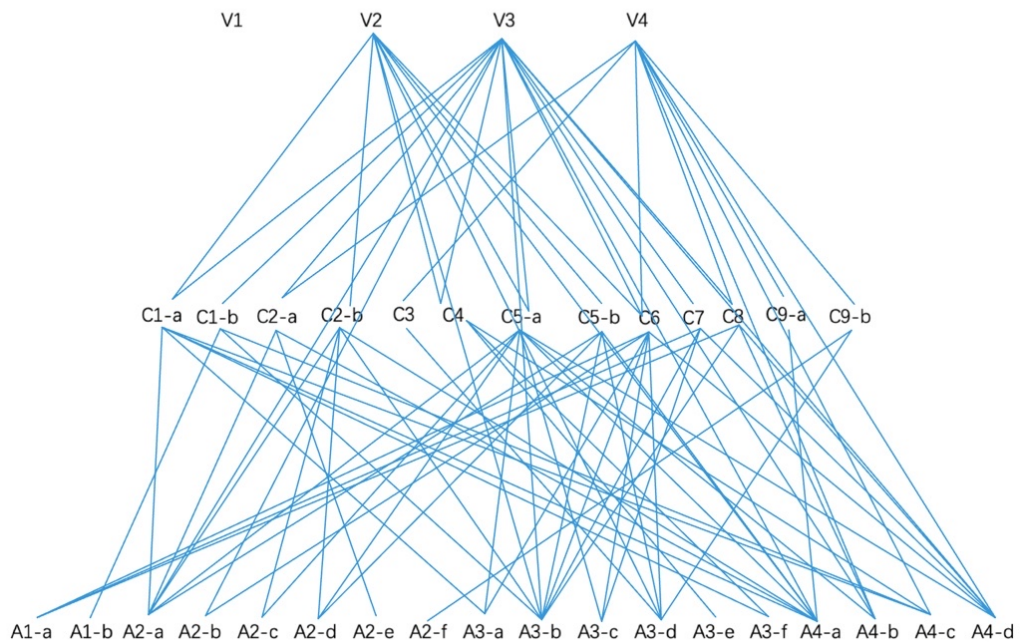


Figure 3
Hierarchical Value Map

Through the HVM shown in Figure 3 above, we find that in the A-C-V chain, some codes are repeatedly mentioned and associated (as shown in the red box in Figure 4); there are also some link relationships that have been repeatedly confirmed in the information from different respondents (as shown by the red line in Figure 4). These relationships will help us to verify the authenticity of the propositions in the Finding chapter.

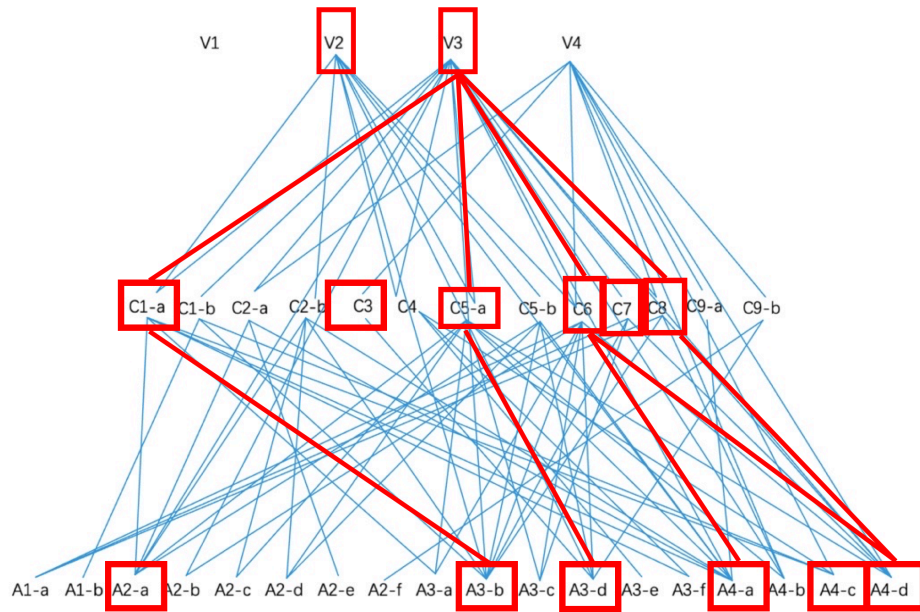


Figure 4
Key factors and relationships in HVM

5. FINDINGS

Finding 1

Attributes (A1-a, A1-b) associated with financial value are unexpectedly associated with the individual (C6, C7), and even social (C8) levels of consequences. Consumers who rarely mentioned the economic dimension mentioned that transaction value may be a consideration for purchases, but not a determining factor. On the contrary, consumers' emphasis on transaction value reflects the positive significance of premium price for decision-making.

Therefore, from the experimental data, it cannot be found that the premium would affect consumers' intention to buy. Proposition 1 cannot be proved in this study.

Finding 2

Functional attributes (From A2-a to A2-f) are closely related to V3 directly or indirectly, indicating that consumers are more from the perspective of their current living state when making decisions (A2-a). It reflects the uncertainty in the judgment of different consumers about their current state in the cross-cultural context. For example, Interviewee D mentioned that although the consumption space is cross-cultural, there are family reasons why the consumption of this product has time requirements. However, although Interviewee E should have been more sensitive in consumption scenarios and time due to his cultural background since the usage scenarios are out of his cultural origin, he is more flexible in his decision-making.

According to the above analysis, it can be deduced that in a cross-cultural environment, consumers evaluate the functional value of SLEs more according to their own actual situations and emotional preferences, so Proposition 2 cannot be proved from the data.

Finding 3

In this study, the only A-C-V chain associated with the quality value (C3) is A3-d -- C3 -- V4. It can be seen that consumers who are concerned about the quality usually already have a certain understanding of the brand or the product, and even their expectations for quality innovation are based on a certain degree of brand belief. Therefore, it is usually the regular customers who value the quality value, and the quality value they seek has nothing to do with whether it is an SLE product itself.

The A-C-V chain surrounding the uniqueness value (C4) is A3-e, A3-f, A4-c -- C4 -- V2, V3. It can be seen that whether people are attracted by the "Limited edition" that conveys scarcity (A2-e), or is it a scarcity caused by the distance between the using scene and the cultural native place (A3-f), it reflects consumers' awareness of uniqueness. At the same time, the uniqueness value acts on two of the three most important values which would influence consumers' first-order decisions (V2, V3).

The conclusion is as follows: quality value is often only valued by regular customers, and is not the main factor affecting the decision-making; However, in the cross-cultural context, the uniqueness value of SLEs is magnified, so scarcity and uniqueness of SLEs do greatly affect consumers' willingness to buy. Therefore, Proposition 3 is true.

Finding 4

In the data ladder, the attributes from all aspects (A2-a, A2-c, A2-d, A3-a, A3-b, A3-c, A3-d, A4-a, A4-b) point to the Consequence C5-a. Among them, multiple link relationships were repeatedly mentioned in different interviews (for example, A3-b -- C5-a appeared three times in total). It shows that the consumption of SLEs in the cross-cultural context is largely to meet the demand of consumers' identity construction. This demand also needs to be obtained from different attributes. For example, the superposition of social function and practical value can make the identity consolidated or confirmed in the exchange of information and material. The cultural element also satisfies the individuals' need for group

proof as well as unique and impressive self-expression because of its innovative interpretation. Therefore, it can be known that consumers of SLEs in a cross-cultural context expect to realize self-identity through consumption, and the realization of self-cognition can make consumers further exchange other values.

C5-b reflects consumers' pursuit of functional value (V2) according to the ladder. From its associated attributes (A2-a, A2-d, A3-b, A3-d, A4-a), The strength of popular culture/brand, whether it is the positive effect of self-construction or external display, promotes the subjective cognition and judgment of culture. Interviewees repeatedly mentioned that with the help of brand influence and innovation, the attractiveness of cultural elements to new scholars and those who already know will increase. The attractiveness of those who already know it will increase, which greatly improves the competitiveness of SLEs in the same functional category, and shapes the brand image responsively.

From the above analysis, we can draw the following conclusions: The self-identity value given by SLEs to consumers is based on the material itself and the brand value. Therefore, consumers hope that the self-identity established through SLE consumption has both abstract and practical significance. In self-construction through the SLEs consumption, brands and the pop culture force they represent play important roles. Conversely, consumers' self-construction deepens their understanding of and connection with brands, which may lay the foundation for their transformation into loyal users, and then further into brand equity such as word-of-mouth. Hence Proposition 4 is true.

Finding 5

In the ladder, the consequences related to brand awareness include C2-b, C3, C5-b, C9-a, and C9-b. the consequence related to cultural elements only has C5-a. Although there are more attributes associated with C5-a, it shows that the correlation between cultural elements and their related attributes and the final consumption behavior is not obvious.

The perceived characteristics of brands are more limited, but in decision-making, the brand and its popularity play an important role. Compared with the core value reflected by cultural elements (V2, V3), the core values (V2, V4) reflected by the brand implies that the social value of the brand is a more intuitive measurement basis for consumers to make purchasing decisions comparing with the value based on personal taste and usage. So it can be shown that Proposition 5 is correct.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Application in Marketing Practice

From the consumer culture theory and consumer psychology perspective, this thesis examines consumers' value judgments when purchasing SLE products in the cross-cultural context and the key factors influencing consumer decision-making. Purchase intention not only reflects the product's success, but also the brand's premium ability and market innovation ability.

The article's findings can serve as a reference for the brand's seasonal product design and marketing in a cross-cultural context: For instance, in our findings, we found that in the cross-cultural context of SLE product consumption, price fluctuation does not significantly affect consumers' value perception; therefore, there is no need to have too many different brand pricing strategies. Similarly, due to the subjectivity of individuals in the judgment of functional value, the universality of functions can be emphasized in marketing practice, especially since the SLE product itself has the attribute of a shorter lifespan. Universal functions can enable more consumers to generate demand recognition of value. In fact, in the category similar to SLE product positioning, affordable luxury (Alexandra & Cerchia, 2018; Dhaliwal et al., 2020; Mundel et al., 2017), scholars also gave similar suggestions. Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie (2006) brought up the 'luxurification of society' or so called "democratisation of luxury" (Brun & Castelli, 2013), to illustrate that brands sacrifice part of their cultural privileges without hurting the uniqueness, emphasizing widely accepted values to embrace a wider audience and encourage them to generate brand engagement. It is worth noting that although in the SLE category, loyal users still regard the introduction of functions and new technologies as important criteria for value measurement. Therefore, for brands, highlighting functionality in appropriate scenarios can become an effective means to manage the brand image and customer relationship (CRM).

In this study, the individual value centered on self-construction is emphasized by consumers in multiple interviews. It is embodied in the repeated appearance of the chain A3-d to C5-a to V3. In the literature about symbol consumption, we mentioned that cultural symbols can help consumers' self-expression as constructive resources of self-image (Sherry, 1998). As a result, marketers should place a higher premium on developing corresponding marketing strategies based on consumers' personal use scenarios; secondly, consumers are more eager to personalize their self-worth through niche consumption as a result of the homogeneity of information brought about by the Internet wave. Kotler (1989) mentioned that the mass market has died, at the same time big data and other technological improvements have brought us into the era of mass customization. Individualized marketing has proved to be a quick, cost-effective method to increase areawide public transport patronage (Broeg, 1998). Hence, we have reason to infer that compared with the original place of cultural elements, emphasizing individuality and diverse understanding is the key rather than accurately interpreting the cultural elements for SLE marketing in a cross-cultural context.

In the ladder, we found that several key factors are related to first sight appeal, including A3-b, A4-a, A4-c, C3, and C8. This implies that SLEs may have advantages in acquiring new customers. Especially in a cross-cultural environment, consumers are freed from the constraints of cultural appropriation, and the visual impact and the novelty of the concept can greatly promote their willingness to consume. Experiential approach such as visual and auditory cues, creating multisensory stimulation, has positive impact on consumers' willingness to pay (Yoganathan et al., 2019). Packaging the consumption of the product as a life attitude, lowering cultural barriers to consumption through increased product functionality, are effective methods to attract new visitors' attention. Therefore, we can speculate that for brands, the marketing of SLE products in a cross-cultural context can be regarded as a favorable customer acquisition channel. Especially for the historical brands like Air Jordan, the research object of this paper, are more likely to face the dilemma of weak innovation and insufficient customer acquisition.

6.2 Suggestions for Future Research

Given that consumption of seasonal products is now a common marketing strategy for brands, as it not only promotes sales in the short term but also demonstrates the brand's innovative capability, thereby establishing goodwill and maintaining brand loyalty, however the study about the SLE strategy is still in a very early stage, there are still large gaps that need to be filled in the future.

First of all, the major differences between cultural insiders and outsiders in the interpretation of cultural elements have been mentioned many times in the previous: Cultural insiders pay attention to cultural appropriateness while focusing on innovation, and they are more sensitive to cultural misreading; however for the cultural outsiders, although there are expectations for the adaption of the existing cultural root, they are more concerned with whether these cultures can help them better express their extended-self. Therefore, for brands, how to balance innovation and cultural interpretation is the goal that needs to be persistently discussed.

Second, in this study, we found that SLE as a consistent product strategy can create an impression in the minds of consumers. For example, an important reason for Interviewee F to become an actual consumer is that the brand has been launching new shoes for this theme for many years, so that when he was in demand, he first thought of Jordan brand's SLE in this category. Although seasonal promotions have always been seen as a staged marketing tool, we found that they may have a sustainable role in building category impressions. Therefore, future research can explore whether consistent seasonal marketing using cultural themes can be used as a sustainable strategy for brands to help brands achieve benefits in the long run.

In summary, future studies can first focus on the underlying environment of reverse globalization of localized products, followed by in-depth strategy/product research, such as the SLE products discussed in this paper.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 Main findings

Since the SLE products examined in this research have distinct regional cultural characteristics, consumers' perceptions of their value are also more hierarchical than that of general consumer products. This hierarchy of perception is even more complicated in a cross-cultural context by factors such as consumer market culture, consumers' own cultural background, market volume, and others. Thus, in order to quantify the value judgments upon which consumers base their consumption decisions in this environment, this article introduces the luxury value perception model for structuring and classifying consumer perception data; it also discusses how these perceived values affect their buying behaviors.

In the study, we found that in the cross-cultural context, the impact of SLE product premium of mass consumer brands and ordinary product premium on consumers' perception of value is not much different. Although the perception of practical functional value is free from the shackles of the correctness of cultural use because it is divorced from the cultural native place, however, because the respondents differ in their backgrounds, identities, and circumstances, we did not find significant commonalities in their perception of functional value. As a result, this paper argues that, for brands, functional marketing of SLEs should emphasize the universal function of categories to weaken the possible decline in functional value perception caused by cultural misunderstandings or barriers. Notably, we found that loyal customers have particular attention to functional value, and although this attention has nothing to do with cultural elements per se, grafting functionality onto novelty-rich SLEs can enhance consumers' brand favorability, thereby increasing consumer awareness and profound effects on behavior. In our research, we found that consumers' emphasis on personal value perception in cross-cultural contexts. Compared with general products, SLEs have a heritage because of their uniqueness and scarcity, and because they are drawn from a specific regional culture. Many consumers adopt them as a

resource for self-construction and self-expression. As a result, we believe that the value brought by the innovativeness and uniqueness of culture can enhance consumers' perceived value rather than the satisfaction brought by precise cultural interpretation, and consumers are more willing to pay for such self-satisfaction. The perception of social value is crucial for some consumers. Some of them may be facing a new living environment needed to adapt, and some are willing to share any topic related to the brand with their community because they are loyal consumers of the brand. To sum up, we found that both psychological and cultural factors in SLE products are related to the satisfaction and pleasure brought by individual value perception. In most cases, we cannot consider them apart in the study, because they are two sides of the coin in consumer value perception. Although cultural satisfaction is perceived differently by people because of environmental diversity, they all provide consumers with emotional value that can support them to conduct behaviors.

Unexpectedly, we found that although it is a seasonal marketing tool, and the consumption context is cross-cultural, the consistent new launching every year does make consumers have impressions and even goodwill, and this goodwill can be transformed into actual consumption. We, therefore, believe that the sustainability of SLE strategies can be explored in future studies.

7.2 Limitations

Considering the lack of research on SLE categories, there are still many limitations in this paper. First, because the distribution of eligible respondents is scattered and the purchase of SLEs is also diverse, there is a lack of uniformity in measuring value. Also, our targets include not only loyal customers, but also new customers, and there may be huge differences in their consumption preferences and observation priorities. Ideally, in future research, the differences in the value perception of SLEs between old and new users can be explored separately. Secondly, in the findings, we mentioned that in cross-cultural

contexts, consumers pay special attention to the importance of SLEs in their own personality construction and expression. Regrettably, however, this paper does not further discuss whether, in all cross-cultural consumption, consumers will pay attention to the construction of personal identity, so as to verify the particularity of the findings.

7.3 Contributions

Theoretical contribution

Indeed, academics have long trailed behind actual industry applications due to the rapid expansion of the Internet and the worldwide market. In contrast to typical research that deconstructs cultural heterogeneity products and quantifies the impact of each dimension in engaging with consumers, this research begins by defining a strategic product as a new category and studying the features brought about by its various tactics. As a result, this study is a piece of constructive theoretical research.

Simultaneously, the focus of cross-cultural consumer research has been on the localization of international brands, but the reverse internationalization of localization has progressively become a new trend in recent years. As a result, this study serves as a foundation for future trends in the field of cross-cultural research.

Managerial contribution

As discussed previously, while SLE has been a widely used localization approach, its reverse internationalization has just recently gained extensive attention. In practice, whether reverse globalization of SLE is a viable strategy is highly dependent on the marketing performance.

Adhering to the idea that the category is greater than the brand (Fischer et al., 2010), this research describes the product of this heterogeneous strategy as a new category and

incorporates its qualities into research. For marketers, such a macro vision can aid in the product's early recognition and acceptance by the market.

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