How Culture Influences Consumer Loyalty
towards Cosmetic Products
A Comparison of UK and Taiwanese consumers

by

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Abstract

Culture is one of the most important factors affecting the marketing department to shape their strategy. This is particularly true when facing global marketing. This project is aimed at examining how the culture influences brand loyalty towards cosmetic products by comparing consumer behaviours of UK and Taiwanese consumers.

Semi-structured interviews are conducted in order to collect data. By applying a qualitative approach, this project provides an insight of the cultural factors influencing consumer behaviour. Furthermore, some managerial implication and directions of further research are presented in this project.
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Figure 3.2 Description for each of Hofstede’s Dimensions (Source: Hofstede, 2003, Taiwan- Taiwanese Geert Hofstede Cultural Dimensions)
1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

The aim of this project is to examine how individualism and collectivism influences consumer behaviour, especially the loyalty towards a particular brand.

There are a large number of scholars trying to define the concept of culture. Some consider culture as a matter of the mix of disciplines in history, linguistics, literature, anthropology, sociology, psychology and also economic, business and management science (Ulijn 2001). Solomon et al. (2006) define culture as the values, ethics and the material objects produced by the members in a society. Culture is not merely an abstract concept which sounds impractical or philosophical. It also has multiple applications in the business field. Managers and staff are facing issues generated from a cultural aspect nowadays. Successful multinationals are often those put culture management into consideration.

Culture also plays an important role in terms of marketing, communication, and advertising through media channels since it underlies every aspect of human interaction and social behaviour (Craig and Douglas 2005). The culture model of communication assumes that there is a shared space or map of meaning which coexisting with people; and communication is an instrument to construct it. Communication is possible because there is already a shared meaning that people take for granted (Grossberg, Wartella and Whitney 1998).

The most widely applied theory when considering the impact of culture is Hofstede’s national culture theory. Hofstede defines culture as often intangible and used to
distinguish one group, organization or nation from another (Jackson 1995). He distinguishes five cultural dimensions which illustrate the difference between cultures from different perspectives. Kolman et al. (2003) indicate that the theory of cultural dimensions is valuable in terms of demonstrating the relationship of management and organization. Hofstede’s theory can benefit multinational management in two perspectives. First of all, through interpreting the suggestion of the index scores, cultural differences can be explained to a certain extent. Second, by comparing the index scores among different countries, the importance of the cultural differences influencing management decisions can be identified.

1.2. Project objectives

‘Brand’ is viewed as one of the most important equity of a company (Hem and Iversen 2003) and may be a useful measurement of consumers’ behaviour and believes. Aaker (1991) suggest that brand loyalty is crucial to maintaining steady demand and sales. In addition, brand loyalty may help a company to reduce advertising and marketing expenditures (Hem and Iversen 2003). Thus, companies dedicated to build and sustain consumer brand loyalty towards their product. Thompson (2004) suggests that a number of consumer researches show a significant interrelationship between cultural structures and brand meanings.

Holt (2002) further indicates that marketers should focus on integrate their brands into various realms of popular culture in order to satisfy more customers. The most agreed definition of brand equity is the added value to a product. A brand name can help the consumers to identify the branded product and hence makes the product to
be differentiated (Hem and Iversen 2003).

Grimm et al. (1999) point out that personality is influenced by culture in various perspectives. Moreover, the research done by Grimm et al. (1999) suggests that individualism and collectivism theory has significant impacts on values and moods. Consumer behaviours may be different respectively in an individualistic or collectivistic society.

According to Hofstede (2004), cultures in the UK and Taiwan are seemed to be polar opposites of one another. Therefore, the study of consumers’ behaviour—brand loyalty—within these two different culture contexts in the cosmetic industry respectively would be useful for marketers in the cosmetics industry to consider the significant impacts of culture and develop a sustaining brand strategy to fit the globalisation market trend.

1.3. Organisation of the report

Chapter one illustrate the importance of this research. The background of the study and project objectives are introduces. Chapter two provides an insight of the cosmetic and toiletries industry review. The performance of global market, the United Kingdom market and Taiwan market are described. Chapter three aims at reviewing relevant literatures in the past and explaining the theory framework of this study in terms of culture theory, consumer behaviour model, and studies about culture and consumer behaviour done in the past. Chapter four introduced the methodology and research questions of this project. The design of interview
guideline, sample selection and interview process are detailed presented. Chapter five focuses on analysing the research findings and proposed implications. Finally, chapter six provides the conclusion of this research and specifies the recommendations, limitations and directions for further research.
2. Industry Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides information about the background of cosmetic and toiletries market. Furthermore, the make-up market in the United Kingdom and Taiwan are introduced respectively. Each market analysis includes market segmentation, distribution channel, leading companies and market value forecast in detail.

2.2. The Background of Cosmetic and Toiletries Industry

The use of cosmetics, fragrances and personal care products has a long history. It can be traced back to ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman eras (Kumar 2005): ‘cleanliness and beautification were considered as essential practices in ancient Egyptian society’ (El-Awaydy 2003). Cosmetic products are defined as

‘Any substance or preparation intended to be placed in contact with the external parts of the human body...or with the teeth and the mucous membranes of the oral cavity with a view exclusively or mainly for cleaning them, perfuming them, changing their appearance, and/or correcting body odours and/or protecting or keeping them in good condition’ (ASEAN 1993)

According to Oxford English dictionary, cosmetic products are something ‘relating to treatment intended to improve a person’s appearance or improving something only outwardly.’ The categories of cosmetic products are massive, including skin care products, hair care products, makeup products, fragrance and toiletry (Kumar 2005). Due to the fact that cosmetic products can enhance the appearance in a very
short time (a matter of minutes) without causing pain and huge expense as plastic surgeries, Davies (2006, p.48) states that ‘women the world over view color cosmetics as a staple of their beauty regimen.’

‘In general, cosmetics are fairly immune from shifts in the economy.’ (Jones 2006) Although there are few people considering cosmetics and fragrances as necessities, most people still appreciate the positive value of such products added to their self-image and are willing to buy them even in an economic recession (Jones 2006). According to Interbrand, 10 of the world’s 100 most valuable brands are related to cosmetics and toiletries. Although it worth mentioning that the value of a cosmetic or fragrance brand includes values derived from other products, the phenomenon still shows the importance and the wide recognition of the cosmetic industry.

Table 2.2 – 2005 Leading Global Cosmetics and Toiletries Brands and Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Value ($M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Gillette</td>
<td>17,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Louis Vuitton</td>
<td>16,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Gucci</td>
<td>6,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>L'Oreal</td>
<td>6,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Avon</td>
<td>5,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Chanel</td>
<td>4,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Hermes</td>
<td>3,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Bulgari</td>
<td>2,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Armani</td>
<td>2,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Nivea</td>
<td>2,576</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interbrand Corporation/JP Morgan Chase & Co/Citigroup/Morgan Stanley/Business Week (03/06)
2.3. Global Cosmetic and Toiletries Industry

According to Euromonitor International, in 2006, the global cosmetics and toiletries industry has grown more than 5% over 2005. Emerging markets as Eastern Europe and Latin America show rapid growth rates of 13%. The market in China is growing at an average of 11% per year. The sales in 2006 in China reached US$11.7 billion, accounting for the world’s largest and most dynamic market.

‘Despite global economic crisis, the cosmetic and fragrance industry still performed well with average growth rate almost 5% across the industry.’ (Kumar 2005)

2.4. Global Make-up Market

The global cosmetics, toiletry and fragrance market constitutes five main segmentations grouped by product categories: Skin care products, Hair care Products, colour cosmetics, fragrance and personal hygine. Colour cosmetics is the third largest segment in global cosmetics and toiletries market with sales of US$24.5 billion (Davies 2006).

Segmented by region, according to data derived from Euromonitor in 2006, Europe has the highest market retail value in colour cosmetics market, accounted for 34.1% of the market share; followed by Asia Pacific and North America, accounted for 26.6% and 25.7% of the market share respectively.
Euromonitor International forecasts an average annual growth of 3% to reach global sales of more than US$313 billion by 2011 (Davies 2007).

2.5. Make-up Market in the UK

The cosmetics and fragrances market in the UK is mature and highly competitive. The market has been driven by the expanding population and the increasing trend of the use of younger consumers. Jones (2006) states ‘key competitive factors for selling cosmetics and fragrances in the UK are quality, price and keeping up with the latest trends.’

Mainly, there are four segments in the UK’s make-up market: facial make-up, eye make-up, lip products and nail products. Facial make-up includes foundations, blushes and powder; eye make-up includes eye shadows, eye liners and mascara; lip products include lipsticks, glosses and lip pencils; nail products includes nail varnishes and glosses. In 2005, facial make-up products accounted for 37.2%, which has the biggest market share among the UK make-up market. Eye make-up products accounted for 30.0% of the sector; mascaras are the largest product type.
Lip products own 25.1% of the market share as the third position. Additionally, nail make-up products represent 7.7% of the sector.

**Table 2.3** 2004/05 Cosmetic Values, Growth, and Shares

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>2004 Value ($ Million)</th>
<th>2005 Value ($ Million)</th>
<th>2004-2005 % Growth</th>
<th>2005 Value Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facial Make-up</td>
<td>$564</td>
<td>$616</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye Make-up</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lip Products</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nail Products</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$1,576</td>
<td>$1,655</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Keynote*

According to Datamonitor, ‘the primary distribution channel is pharmacies and drugstores, which distribute products worth 49.4% of the UK make-up market’s value.’ *(Datamonitor 2005, p.16)* The main distributors in the UK are The Boots Company plc, Superdrug Stores plc, The Body Shop International plc. Other distribution channels are department stores, including Debenhams, House of Fraser, Joun Lewis, Harvey Nichols, Selfridges and Harrods, and supermarkets, including ASDA, Tesco, Sainsbury and Morrisons. The leading companies in the UK cosmetics market are Boots Group plc, Estée Lauder Cosmetics Ltd., Avon Cosmetics Ltd. and L’Oréal (UK) Ltd.; other key suppliers are Procter & Gamble Ltd., Unilever Group and LVMH Group.
The growth of retail sales of cosmetics and fragrances in the UK are forecasted to be around 2% on average in 2005-2010.

**Table 2.4** 2005-2010 Forecast: The UK Cosmetics and Fragrances Market By Sector and Value ($ million at current retail prices)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>CAGR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cosmetics</td>
<td>$1,655</td>
<td>$1,685</td>
<td>$1,725</td>
<td>$1,766</td>
<td>$1,798</td>
<td>$1,829</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragrances</td>
<td>1,445</td>
<td>1,474</td>
<td>1,501</td>
<td>1,532</td>
<td>1,565</td>
<td>1,609</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,100</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,159</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,226</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,301</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,363</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,438</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.1%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% change</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Keynote*

**2.6. Make-up Market in Taiwan**

Skin care products such as moisturiser, sunscreens, and especially whitening products have drawn most attention of Taiwanese consumers. Cosmetic products like facial make-up, lip colours, nail colours and mascaras are popular and widely used by Taiwanese women. On the other hand, the cosmetic market for men is growing in Taiwan. The estimated market share of this segment reached 18-20% in 2006. Clarins, Biotherm, Kiehl’s, Lab Series, Gatsby and ZIRH are major brands in skin care products for men in Taiwan.

In general, there are five main distribution channels in Taiwan. First, department stores, in which is the prime channel for high quality and internationally known brand products being sold. Despite the very competitive situation and relatively very high rent in getting retail space on the ground floor department stores, prestigious brands are desired for that displaying space. ‘Around 42% of total cosmetics sales are conducted through Taiwan’s 65 major department stores.’ (Chou 2006, p.3)
second distribution channel is specialty chain stores such as Sasa, Marsa, Cosmed
and Watson’s. These stores provide discount name brands and new-to-market
products. Its competitive pricing strategy has worked to gain a more than 10%
market share. Thirdly, beauty and skin care salons appeal to customers by providing
strong sense of belonging and establishing good customer relationships. This
channel accounts for 15% of cosmetic sales. Besides, direct marketing channels are
prospering in Taiwanese market for health foods and cosmetic products. Companies
as Avon, Amway, Nuskin, Mary Kay and Sunrider are specialised in recruiting people
with high level of sales skills. It is estimated to be as many as 3.5 million people
working for the 600 ‘direct sales’ businesses in Taiwan. This channel contributed
around 21.8% of total cosmetic sales. Finally, there is a new distribution channel
which is through home shopping. There are seven major players selling skin care
and personal care products on local television. Additionally, the percentage of
purchasing skin care products on internet is rapidly growing.

Japan-made brands such as SKII, Shiseido and Shu Uemura are more preferred
than US and European products in Taiwan. Major local suppliers include Taiwan
Shiseido, Kiss Me Cosmetics and Grandglory supply to the low-end market sector.
Premium brands like Nivea (Beiersdorf), Dove Skin (Unilever), Olay (P&G), Vichy
(L’Oreal), and Neutrogena (J&J) are major players in Taiwan’s drug store chain
market.

It is estimated by the US commercial service that the cosmetics and toiletries
market in Taiwan was worth approximately US$748 million in 2005; and the import
market for skin care and a colour makeup products was US$521.3 million (Chou 2004). The value of Taiwan’s make-up market is US$1.8 billion per year and is estimated to grow by 3% annually (Teng 2007).
3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction

The literature review provides insight of previous studies about culture theory, brand, brand loyalty and the relationship between culture and consumer behaviour. Firstly, the culture theory of Hofstede’s is introduced. Second, a few consumer behaviour models are discussed. Third, the definition and importance of brand and brand loyalty are examined. Finally, specific theories about culture and consumer behaviour are presented and discussed.

3.2. Culture

Culture is everywhere in our daily lives, it has a profound influence on human behaviour in every perspective. The impacts of culture on human lives are in different ways and sometimes it is hard to distinguish the specific way of how it is woven in daily lives (du Gay et al. 1997). There are a large number of scholars trying to define the concept of culture. Some consider culture as a matter of the mix of disciplines in history, linguistics, literature, anthropology, sociology, psychology and also economic, business and management science (Ulijn, 2001). Hofstede defines culture as often intangible and used to distinguish one group, organization or nation from another (Jackson, 1995; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2004). Lewis (2002) points out cultures are formed base on the meanings that human beings construct and share. In other words, culture is the process of meaning-making within a social group.
Levitt (1983) has suggested according to the trend of globalisation, the world is becoming a single market which has a homogeneous preference and therefore the difference between cultures and countries may be neglected. Others have supported his view and stated business should view the market as a uniform global market (Alashban, et al. 2002; Holt et al. 2004). However, other scholars argue the cultural differences are too important to ignore. Hill (2005) points out inter-cultural differences will still exist and have a great impact on companies’ marketing strategies.

The concept of self is deeply affected by the culture in a society. Moreover, Belk (1988) indicates that consumer behaviour is often implied by the concept of self since such behaviour is dominated by identities that people reflect, meanings that people pursue and the ‘ideal’ self that people set upon (Wong and Ahuvia 1995 cited in Usunier 2000). In other words, it appears that culture has a great influence on one’s consumer behaviour.

3.3. Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions

The concept of Geert Hofsteds’ cultural dimensions is based on his study on IBM’s employees in over 50 countries. The aim of his study is to examine the national culture differences among the subsidiaries of the multinational corporation. These four cultural dimensions help corporations to deal with the differences in the ways people think, the ways people feel, and the ways people act in different regions in the world. Moreover, the theory is widely used within the arena of developing a successful marketing while dealing with cultural differences around the world.
Hofstede’s theory is applied in this project as the main source of comparing cultural differences in two cultural context—the United Kingdom and Taiwan.

Figure 3.1 Description for each of Hofstede's Dimensions

![United Kingdom](image1)

*Source: Hofstede, 2003, United Kingdoms, Great Britain, England- English- Geert Hofstede Cultural Dimensions*

Figure 3.2 Description for each of Hofstede's Dimensions

![Taiwan](image2)

*Source: Hofstede, 2003, Taiwan- Taiwanese Geert Hofstede Cultural Dimensions*
3.3.1 Power distance

Power distance measures the degree of how well people accept the fact that power is distributed unequally in a society. It is defined from the aspect of the less powerful members, illustrating the extent they accept and expect the unequally distributed power. For example, in a small power distance society, children are encouraged to have their own opinion in their family and parents are viewed as equal as children. The index of power distance shows how a society handles the fact that people are unequal (Jackson 1995; Hofstede and Hofstede 2004).

From the survey conducted by Hofstede on IBM employees in different country, it can be concluded that the power distance indexes illustrate the dependence relationship in a country. For instance, in a country with smaller power distance index, subordinates tend to have little dependence on their bosses than the ones in a country with larger power distance index (Hofstede 2004; Hofstede 2005).

3.3.2. Individualism versus collectivism

The role of individual differs in different societies. The fundamental human issue in each society is the balance between the importance of individual and the group. Hofstede defines a society in which the interest of the group overwhelms the interest of the individual as collectivist. The word ‘collectivist’ here does not contain political meanings but refers to the power of the group over the individual. On the other hand, societies in which the interest of individuals overwhelms the interest of the group is called individualist. Individualists tend to look after only themselves and their immediate family but no one else while collectivists tend to look after also
their extended family and integrate to the group with the exchange of loyalty (Jackson 1995; Hofstede and Hofstede 2004).

The second dimension is to measure the extent individuals integrate into groups in society. It is about the behaviours towards the group conducted by individuals. Societies with a comparatively higher individual index score means in which the connections between people are loose. On the other hand, societies with a comparatively higher collective index score shows in which people are integrated into groups since birth.

3.3.3. Masculinity versus femininity

Although gender roles differ in different countries, there is a common trend of considering the distribution of social sex roles. For instance, men are usually concerned as assertive, competitive and tough whereas women are more likely to be seen modest and caring. This dimension illustrates how people act according to gender differences. Hofstede also indicates that different professions are dominated by different genders in different cultures. For example, in the Soviet Union, jobs in medical field are dominated by females whereas it is males that dominate in the United States.

In a masculine society, which has a high masculinity index score, competition and achievement are stressed in family, student’s academic failure is not allowed in school, and assertiveness is appreciated at work. In contrast, in a feminine society, which has a high femininity index score, compromise and negotiation are valued as
solution to conflicts in family, student’s failure are comparatively acceptable in school, life quality and intuition are stressed at work.

3.3.4. Uncertainty avoidance
The dimension of uncertainty avoidance concerns the degree of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity in a society. This dimension measures to what extent people in a society feel comfortable or uncomfortable in uncertain circumstances. In other words, due to the fact that we human do not always know what will happen tomorrow and we must deal with the unknown; uncertainty avoidance is to indicate how a society view and react with this fact. Every society has developed ways in the domains of technology, law, and religion to reduce the anxiety of the unknown future. Feelings of uncertainty may be more than a subjective experience which can be shared within a group.

The index of uncertainty avoidance describes the need for structure in a society (Hofstede and Hofstede 2004; Jackson 1995). Hofstede (2004) also points out that people from strong uncertainty avoidance cultures may have personalities that are busy, emotional, aggressive and suspicious while people from weak uncertainty avoidance societies are often quiet, easygoing, controlled and lazy.

3.3.5. Long term versus short term orientation
Hofstede established the fifth dimension in order to explain how a society defines Virtue. A long term orientation (LTO) is ‘the fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards—in particular, perseverance and thrift,’ while a short term
orientation is 'the fostering of virtues related to the past and present—in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of “face”, and fulfilling social obligations.'

In a society with a long term orientation, people tend to make sustained efforts to pursue slow results, value personal adaptiveness and are willing to dedicate themselves to a purpose. On the other hand, in a short-term oriented society, people tend to pursue quick results, value social and status obligations, and concern ‘face’ as an important matter (Hofstede and Hofstede 2004; Jackson 1995).

3.4. Criticism of Hofstede

McSweeny (2002) has criticized the theory of the four cultural dimensions using in multinational management in terms of Hofstede’s research methodology. McSweeny (2002) argues that Hofstede’s notion of culture and values should include more concept of culture. He described Hofstede’s theory as an ‘attempt to measure the unmeasurable.’ Finally, McSweeny points out that Hofstede’s theory is only suitable in small scale applications. In regards of the research methodology conducted by Hofstede, the population being surveyed is too narrow. Besides, Walczuch et al (1995) suggest that since the theory is established based on data collected from one single multinational company, IBM, it may be more suitable to view the dimensions as a measure to explain merely business culture perspectives rather than a wide use of national cultures. Hofstede constructed the cultural dimensions theory illustrating and describing ‘national’ culture based on the questionnaire answered by respondents from a single company (IBM). Kolman et al. (2003) also indicates the proportions of male and female respondents in different countries may have certain
impact on the research findings. Moreover, it is worthwhile to make the point that some situations examined by Hofstede’s examples have changed over time. Solomon et al. (2006) also argue the five cultural dimensions do not successfully account for how different cultures construct their meaning and concepts in different ways.

Despite of the criticisms towards Hofstede’s theory, it is widely agreed that culture does differ from countries to countries and has a significant influence on consumer behaviour. A lot of cultural researches aimed at simplifying the cultural variation to the emphasis on individualism versus collectivism (Solomon et al. 2006). Thus, in this paper, Hofstede’s theory is used as a basis for the cultural comparison, especially the individualism versus collectivism dimension.

3.5. Consumer Behaviour

A clear understanding of consumer behaviour helps companies to aim for the right target customers and make successful marketing strategies in order to offer their products. ‘……[U]nderstanding customers is the cornerstone upon which the marketing concept is built.’ (Jobber 2007, p116) Due to the fact that consumers change, it is crucial to understand consumer behaviour. For instance, in the European markets, consumers change their purchasing pattern due to uneven income distribution, the growing population of working women, and the increasing products concerning healthy, ecology, luxury and convenience (Jobber 2007). Moreover, Blackwell, Miniare and Engel (2006) developed the consumer decision process model to illustrate how consumers behave.
3.5.1. Decision-making model

Blackwell, Miniare and Engel’s (2006) model suggests the buying process starts with need recognition, leading to information-searching and the pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives; then cause the actual purchase behaviour and consumption and at last, the post-consumption evaluation of decision.

Need recognition is mostly functional (Jobber 2007). However, consumer purchasing is also often triggered by emotion or psychological needs. For instance, the purchasing of cosmetics or luxury goods is more likely motivated by emotional needs instead of actual functional needs (Jobber 2007). Nevertheless, need does not always activate the purchasing since sometimes the desired situation is not far from that of the present. Jobber (2007) identifies three marketing implications from the need recognition stage: first, marketers must be fully aware of the needs; secondly, must be aware of the need inhibitors, which is the lack of trust in receiving the product, e.g. eBay has recognised the need to overcome the need inhibitor; and thirdly, must be aware of the fact that needs are often result from stimulation, e.g. advertising campaigns and promotions, and consumer needs also change. Therefore, ‘...companies need to have a deep understanding of their customers and be sensitive to their changing behaviours.’ (Jobber 2007, p116)

The second stage of the consumer decision-making process will begin if the need is strong enough. 'Information search involves the identification of alternative ways of problem solutions.' (Jobber 2007, p122) According to Black well and Engel (2005), information search could be both internal and external. Consumers would search
information internally from memory, e.g. their own perception and recognition of the products or services. External search includes the information provided by the media and others’ opinions. The purpose of information search is to build up an awareness set which is consisted with a number of brands that may help to solve the recognised needs and problems.

The third and forth stage are the evaluation of alternatives and the purchase. The first thing is to reduce the awareness set to a short list of brands that the consumer is most likely to purchase. The filtering criteria may be the price and the brand names. Moreover, scholars suggest that involvement may be a critical factor of the evaluation of a brand. ‘Involvement is the degree of perceived relevance and personal importance accompanying the brand choice.’ (Jobber 2007, p123) Day (1970, p.45) defines involvement as ‘the general level of interest in the object, or the centrality of the object to the person’s ego-structure.’

Blackwell and Engel (2005) describe five roles as essences of the decision-making process: initiator, influencer, decider, buyer, and user. Woodside and Mote (1979) found that roles differed according to product type and the respective roles may change as the purchasing process progresses. The purchasing process may be dominant by one partner in the early stage in general; joint decision-making may occur in the further steps. Obviously, the purchasing activities and patterns differ. For example, they differ from men to women and from working women to households.
The final stage is Post-consumption Evaluation. Consumers will keep their evaluations in mind and refer to them to make purchase decisions in the future. If the outcome of evaluation is positive, which means they feel satisfied, future buying behaviour is likely to be more possible. In other words, satisfied consumers are tended to buy the same brand. Moreover, the competitors’ brands or products would be struggling in the effort to appeal their offer to these consumers (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006). In contrast, dissatisfied consumers who have unhappy experience associated with the products or services are more likely to choose other brands in the future.

Cognitive dissonance usually occurs after the purchase; and is more likely to happen when the price is higher (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006; Jobber 2007). People may come up with concerns after making a purchase decision due to the uncertainty about if they made the right decision (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006; Jobber 2007). Firms can reduce dissonance by answering consumers’ doubts and questions about the product and follow-up services (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006).

3.5.2. Variables that shape the decision process

Blackwell, Miniare and Engel (2006) identified three major variables that shape the decision process including individual differences, environmental differences and psychological processes. Individual differences may result from demographics, psychographics, values, and personality. Also, the difference of consumer resources (i.e. time, money, and information reception and processing capabilities) may influence the decision making process. Moreover, the product involvement,
motivation of consumption, obtained knowledge about brands or products and attitudes toward a given brand or product also plays as directive roles on buying behaviour and are difficult to change (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006).

Environmental influences may arise from the differences of culture, social class, the concept of family versus individual and situational factors. At last, psychological processes would form consumers’ information processing, learning behaviour and attitudinal and behavioural changes (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006).

3.5.3. Motivation

It is believed that motivation is the driving force of an action. Applying the concept of motivation to consumer behaviour, it means the reason behind how consumers behave (Solomon et al. 2006). The concept of motivation is widely used in marketing strategies with the attempt to appeal to consumers and hence, leads them to the actual purchase stage. One of the most widely cited theories of motivation is Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs. Maslow believes that there are different levels of needs. In his theory, physiological needs are the most fundamental; safety needs comes to the next; social needs, as the need for friendship and love relationships, is the next level; then comes to esteem needs, the desire for respect from others. Finally, self-actualisation needs would occur when all other levels have been satisfied. The higher-order need would appear only if the previous level is at least partially satisfied. Namely, a lower-order need triggers the next level of needs.
According to Maslow (1954), similar needs may be fulfilled by various kinds of products and consumption styles. The implication of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is that a need can be much more than merely physiological. Needs may also be triggered by many other concerns such as the desire for security, the need for affection and personal reflections (Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2006).

However, Maslow’s theory has been criticised as simplifying the complexity of human nature and behaviour. Solomon et al. (2006) points out according to daily life experience, human needs can contain different levels of needs at the same time. Usunier (2000) also points out due to cultural difference and the level of economic development, Maslow’s theory is not always applicable from a cross-cultural point of view.

3.5.4. Involvement

Blackwell, Miniare, and Engel (2006) defined involvement as

‘...the level of perceived personal importance and interest evoked by a stimulus within a specific situation. To the extent that a consumer is involved, the consumer acts to minimise the risks and to maximise the benefits gained from purchase and use.’ (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006, p.93.

High or low degree of involvement is determined by the importance of the product or service perceived by the consumers (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006). ‘A person’s level of involvement depends upon personal relevance and the inherent
interest, needs and values of the individual, which motivate them towards the object of involvement (Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2006, p98). There are two types of purchase enduring different degree of involvement, which directly influences on the exhibiting consumer behaviour (Jobber 2007). One is high-involvement purchases. High-involvement purchases are usually those with high expenditure or personal risk, e.g. car/home buying. Another is low-involvement purchases, which often refer to simple evaluations, e.g. daily food. 'Simply stated, the more important the product or service to a consumer, the more motivated he or she is to search and be involved in the decision.' (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006, p.93)

According to Zaichkowsky (1985), consumers tend to demonstrate various responses in different involvement scenarios since they can be involved not only with a product but also with a brand an advertisement and a purchase decision (Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2006). Blackwell, Miniare and Engel (2006) distinguish some factors that determine the degree of involvement consumers have in making a decision, including personal factors, product factors and situational factors. Personal factors are self-image, health, beauty, and physical condition. They state that the more directly the purchasing decision has impact on an individual, the higher degree of involvement of whom would be.

'Without activation of need and drive, there will be no involvement, and involvement is strongest when the product or service is perceived as enhancing self-image. ... For example, the purchase of cosmetics tends to be a high-involvement decision because it affects directly a consumer’s self-image and looks.’ (Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2006, p98)
Product factors refer to the perceived risk arises with purchasing and using a product or brand. This will also determine the degree of involvement. There are several types of perceived risks concerning the consumer which are physically, psychologically, financially, and the uncertainty of the product’s performance. The greater the perceived risk recognised by consumers, the higher degree of involvement would be. Situational factors vary within different circumstances associated with the use of the product. For instance, the involvement may differ between the product is purchased for personal use or as a gift. For example, one’s involvement may vary from high to low depending on buying a bottle of wine for personal consumption or serving it at a party (i.e. social pressures). The degree of involvement will also be different between the situation of consuming alone or with others. Moreover, the timing of buying is also a factor in deciding the degree of involvement. For example, in the case of consuming trendy clothing, the involvement is high in the beginning but diminishes rapidly overtime. In short, product involvement may refer to the extent to which the product is motivating for the consumer (Mitchell 1998).

**The Fishbein and Ajzen model**

The Fishbein and Ajzen (1980) model is usually used to explain for high-involvement purchases. Fishbein and Ajzen distinguish several elements in order to explain for the factors which influence consumer behaviour in high-involvement purchases. *Beliefs* are the perceived consequences resulting from purchasing will form an
attitude towards a brand. In other words, consumers will set up a set of beliefs about a brand’s attributes. These attributes—how good or how bad—are weighted by the consumer’s beliefs and will affect a person’s purchasing criteria.

*Attitude* is how the consumer likes or dislikes a brand. In high-involvement purchase situation, the buying decision is complicated. Consumers not only evaluate the product with their personal beliefs but will also consider the attitudes of the important others. The model suggests a reasoned buying process. According to Jobber (2007),

‘*Consumers are highly involved in the purchase to the extent that they evaluate the consequences of the purchase and what others will think about it. Only after these considerations have taken place does purchase intention and the ultimate purchase result.*’ (Jobber 2007, p123)

**The Ehrenberg and Goodhart model**

The Ehrenberg and Goodhart (1980) model is used to explain for low-involvement purchases. Disagreeing with the Fishbein and Ajzen model, this model suggests a rather simple buying process. Ehrenberg and Goodhart argue that the typical situation of low-involvement purchases is the repeat purchase of fast-moving consumer goods. Consumers in this situation is rather passive than actively seeking for information and are therefore likely to satisfy. Ehrenberg and Goodhart developed a simple purchasing model for the low-involvement situations: awareness of buying triggers the trial of the bought product, if satisfied with the
product, then lead to repeat purchase. This reveals the behavioural model of consumer behaviour of which illustrating the unconsciously habitual buying behaviour. In this model, purchase has limited importance compared to the Fishbein and Ajzen model as the valuation of alternatives is not guaranteed.

As the degree of involvement is likely to lead to different consumer behaviour, there is a need to distinguish between high- and low-involvement situations. The distinct attributes of high- and low-involvement situations will influence the way consumers evaluate products and brands and hence, leads to different corporate marketing strategies. As a result, it is important to distinguish these two purchasing behaviours.

3.5.5. Perceived Risk

Bauer and Taylor state that the concept of perceived risk refers to the sense of uncertainty. However, this definition can not explain the situation where consumers have perfect understanding about a brand and thus are ‘certain’ with it, but the brand is still unacceptable. Therefore, Peter and Ryan (1976) argue the meaning perceived risk at the brand level should be specified and defined as ‘the expectation of losses associated with purchase and, as such, acts as an inhibitor to purchase.’ (p.185)

It is a well established concept that consumers are facing certain levels of risk when making purchases decision. The levels of risk are depended on the type of product and the person. The perceived risk of consumer behaviour is first defined in 1960 as
'any action of a consumer will produce consequences which he or she cannot anticipate with anything approximating certainty, and some of which at least are likely to be unpleasant.’ (American Marketing Association 1960)

Besides, perceived risk also occurs when the outcome of the decision cannot meet the buying goals of consumers’ (Cox 1967).

The implication of perceived risk in marketing is twofold. It includes risk deduction both in pre-decision stage and post-purchase level. It can be reduced in the pre-decision stage by proving adequate information about the product and the use of samples and trials (Hoover, Green and Saegert 1978).

3.6. Brand

3.6.1. The definition of brand

The American Marketing Association (1960, p.37) defines a brand as 'a name, term, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers from those competitors.’

De Chematony and Dall’Omo Riley (1998, p.427) define brand as a ‘multidimensional construct whereby managers augment products or services with values and this facilitates the process by which consumers confidently recognise and appreciate these values.’
Keller (2003) points out that in order to define what a brand is in a practicing way, a brand may refer to something that creates concrete awareness, reputation, and prominence for the product or company it represents in the marketplace. Moreover, he suggests that a brand is about differentiating the product it represents from others in order to serve the same need.

Brand is more than the concept of a name, a logo, and large expenditures. It is

‘a product or product line, store, or service with an identifiable set of benefits, wrapped in a recognisable personality, carrying with it a connection between product and customers’ (Blackwell and Stephan 2003 cited in Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006, p.57).

### 3.6.2. Importance of brands

According to Blackwell, Miniare and Engel (2006), a brand can be viewed as the greatest intangible asset of any company. Moreover, from the accountant perspective, a good branding strategy may increase a company’s brand equity—the difference in value created by a brand less the cost of creating the brand (Blakwell, Miniare and Engel 2006)—and create a sound two-way communication between the company and its customers.

Therefore, it is important for companies to build a strong brand. In order to build a successful brand, functional elements and emotional elements should both be taken into account. Functional elements include performance, quality, price, reliability,
and logistics (meeting the expected problem-solving function). Emotional elements include image, personality, style, and evoked feelings (the emotional connection between consumers and the products) (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006).

3.7. Brand loyalty

3.7.1. The definition of brand loyalty

Academicians widely accepted that the status of development of concept of brand loyalty lacks of agreement due to the different approaches applied in studying brand loyalty and their determinants, as well as brand loyalty is a complex construct (Rundle-Thiele and Bennett, 2001; Javalgi and Moberg, 1997). Evan, Jamal and Foxall (2006) view loyalty as something beyond repeat purchase. They suggest loyalty involves commitment and trust towards the brand and strong affective motivations. Similarly, Oliver (1999) defines brand loyalty as

‘a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronise a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour’ (Oliver 1999,p.34).

Moreover, American Marketing Association (AMA) defines brand loyalty as

‘The situation in which a consumer generally buys the same manufacturer-originated product or service repeatedly over time rather than buying from multiple suppliers within the category’ (AMA 2005).
And

‘The degree to which a consumer consistently purchases the same brand within a product class’ (AMA 2005).

Largely the concept of brand loyalty is defined and measured in either behavioural or attitudinal terms (Mellens et al., adapted in Thiele and Bennett, 2001). Although the debate has encouraged researchers to view on this issue in their own way (Baldinger and Rubinson, 1996; Ehrenberg, 1997), the most utilised definition of brand loyalty, according to Rundle-Thiele and Bennett (2001), is the reconciled composite definition of brand loyalty encompassing both behavioural and attitudinal which was proposed by Jacoby and Kyner (1973), and the definition is:

The biased (non-random) behavioural response (purchase) expressed over time by some decision-making unit with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of brands and is a function of psychological processes. (Jacoby and Kyner, 1973, p.2)

3.7.2. The importance of brand loyalty

Brand equity is one of the most valuable assets of a company (Hem and Iversen 2003). The level of brand loyalty has been viewed as a measurement of effective brand strategy and brand equity of a company (Knox and Walker, 2001). Brand loyalty is crucial for companies and provides a basis for developing a marketing
strategy in order to enhance comparative advantages (Kotler 1994). Moreover, ‘the
brand loyalty of the customer base is often the core of the brand’s’ equity’ (Aaker
1991 p.5). Although Farquhar (1989) argues brand loyalty has a limited influence on
measuring brand equity, others (Azker 1991; Kapferer 1992; Uncles and Laurent
1997) have attached brand loyalty to brand equity as an important role in
measuring it.

Brand loyalty is also often related to repeat purchase and customer preference to
the brand. The concept of repeat purchase is crucial to marketing is because the
cost of retaining existing customers is much more less than recruiting new ones
(Knox and Walker 2001). However, while the notion of repeat purchase is merely a
behavioural construct, brand loyalty involves both behavioural and psychological
perspectives (Knox and Walker 2001). Bloemer and Kasper (1995) indicate that
brand commitment is a necessary condition for brand loyalty. From the studies done
by Knox and Walker (2001), it also appears that brand commitment and brand
support are necessary and sufficient conditions for loyalty to exist. Furthermore,
there seems to be a distinction between brand loyalty and repeat purchase (Bloemer

3.7.3. Different loyalty measures

There are a number of factors influencing the degree and behaviour of customer
loyalty performed by consumers. Above all, the degree of involvement appears to
have great impacts on brand loyalty (Knox et al. 1999, Knox and Walker 2001).
According to the result of Knox and Walker’s (2001) study, four consumer
purchasing styles are identified based on how consumers are involved with the product and the degree they feel about the risk associating with making a brand choice. **Loyalists** are those with high product involvement and medium risk. **Habituals** are those with low product involvement and low risk. **Variety seekers** are those with medium product involvement and medium risk. **Switchers** are those with low product involvement and low risk. Evan, Jamal and Foxall (2006) state greater loyalty may imply consumers are having greater deal of passion and commitment towards the brand. Moreover, loyalty towards a brand may reduce the cost of information searching, perceived risk and reinforcement of self-concept (Evan, Jamal and Foxall 2006).

Brown (1952) identifies four patterns of loyalty: undivided loyalty, divided loyalty, unstable loyalty and no loyalty. In the pattern of **undivided loyalty**, consumers display a purchasing behaviour of buying only one brand within a product category. Under the situation of **divided loyalty**, consumers would buy alternative brands depending on different occasions. **Unstable loyalty** is very much like brand switching due to the fact that consumers switch brands as a regular pattern. In the circumstance of **no loyalty**, consumers do not buy from the alternative set of brands, instead, they buy from all the available brands (Evan, Jamal and Foxall 2006).

Reichheld (1988) claims the repeat purchase pattern demonstrated by consumers does not represent their real loyalty behaviour. Consumers may be indifferent to brands or in inertia. **Inertia** is a type of loyalty consists with several brands processing the equal importance for consumers to switch between. The switching
may be induced by promotions, new products or coupons (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006). Therefore, Dick and Basu (1994) develop a framework that illustrates loyalty as a both behavioural and attitudinal concept. The theory suggests consumers compare brands within a given consumption context to the perception already existing in mind. In this case, loyalty towards a brand becomes stronger when the extent to which a person perceives a brand to be more different.

3.7.4. Loyalty and satisfaction

According to Blackwell, Miniare and Engel (2006, p.83), ‘satisfaction occurs when consumers’ expectations are matched by perceived performance.’ On the other hand, dissatisfaction occurs ‘[w]hen experiences and performance fall short of expectations’ (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006, p83). Satisfaction can lead to repeat purchase. Consumers possessing positive evaluations of a brand or product are much more likely to buy the brand or product again than those who possessing negative evaluations. Besides, due to the fact that retaining an existing customer usually costs less than recruiting a new one, companies are dedicated to satisfy their customers (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006).

Satisfaction also shapes word-of-mouth communication, which is important for brands to build a good image and reputation (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006; Evan, Jamal and Foxall 2006). Post-purchase evaluation not only affects consumers’ future buying behaviour, but also influences other behaviours such as sharing consumption experiences, which known as word-of-mouth communication (Blackwell, Miniare and Engel 2006).
There are studies conducted by researchers (e.g. Dabholkar et al. 2000, Yang and Peterson 2004) show that there exists a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty (Pappu and Quester 2006). However, further research shows that satisfaction is more likely a necessary, not sufficient, condition which may increase loyalty or repeat purchase behaviour (Cronin and Taylor 1992, Homburg and Giering 2001). Therefore, it appears that satisfied customers are often loyal and engage in repeat purchase (Bloemer and Kasper 1995).

3.8. Culture and consumer behaviour

Despite the fact that consumer behaviour is universal in many aspects, culture still has a significant impact on it (Dubois 1987). De Mooij (2000, p.105) points out that ‘although there is evidence of convergence of economic systems, there is no evidence of convergence of peoples’ value systems’. Usunier (2000) distinguishes several cultural influences on consumer behaviour.

First, culture may have impact on the hierarchy of needs and therefore leads to different consumer behaviour. Usunier argues due to the level of economic development in different countries, people tend to have different kind of needs. For instance, basic survival needs are more important in a less developed country while self-actualisation (the highest level in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory) is being concerned more in a developed country.

Second, values based on different culture contexts, especially individualistic or collectivist orientation, would have significant influence on consumer behaviour.
Though being aware of the difference between an individualistic and a collectivistic society, marketers tend to view family as a group of individuals influencing each other’s decision. However, others have argue a group should be view as an organic entity due to the fact that the members in a family share information, common interests and constrains together, especially in Asia (Usunier 2000; Redding 1982). Yang (1989) also points out the significant impact of family on individuals’ behaviour and consumption decision in Chinese society.

Finally, the institutions, social conventions, habits and customs of a society may also influence how consumers behave. Institutions like the state, the church and trade unions may heavily influence the way people live and consume (Usunier 2000). Moreover, eating habits play an important role in structuring the consumption domain in a society (Usunier 2000; Wilk 1995).

According to Usunier (2000), loyalty is appeared to be a critical concept in collectivist cultures. The study done by Robinson (1996) has shown single brand can have a great level of dominance in many Asian markets. Moreover, Chiou (1995) states consumers in collectivist societies are more likely to be loyal. The reasons may be the higher level of reliance upon word-of-mouth communication than on information provided by media (Chiou 1995).

Consumer’s involvement, perceived risk and cognitive styles differ from culture to culture and therefore influence their tendencies of loyalty towards a brand (Usunier 2000). Yang (1989) argues consumers in a collectivist society (e.g. China) are likely
to be in a low-involvement situation when doing private consumption. On the other hand, they are likely in a high-involvement situation when buying products under social pressures. This might be resulted from the fact that in a collectivist society, ‘the social significance of a product is highly important: it may express status, gratitude, approval or disapproval’ (Usunier 2000, p.111). The perceived risk of purchasing a product may be quite different from eastern countries to western countries, which also helps to form different purchasing behaviour (Usunier 2000; Van Raaij 1978). The cognitive styles also vary in different cultures. Lazer et al. (1985) illustrate the thought patterns of Asian consumers are more synthetic, concrete and contextual oriented.

3.8.1. Individualism versus Collectivism on Individual Level
Hofstede’s cultural dimension has illustrated individualism and collectivism on national culture level. However, the dimension is also worthy to be discussed on individual emic level (Triandis et al. 1985) in order to take a closer look on its influence on consumer behaviour.

**Idiocentricism and Allocentricism**
According to Sun, Horn and Merritt (2004), *idiocentricism* and *allocentricism* are personality traits that refer to individualism and collectivism respectively. The personality traits of idiocentricism are focused on self-reliance, competition, uniqueness, hedonism and emotional distance from in-groups. In contrast, allocentricism emphasises on interdependence, sociability, and family integrity (Sun, Horn and Merritt 2004). Allocentrics tend to put the in-group members’ needs and
concerns to priority (Cross et al. 2000). There are both idiocentrics and allocentrics in every culture, occupying different proportions (Sun, Horn and Merritt 2004).

Moreover, Sun, Horn and Merritt (2004) imply idiocentricism and allocentricism help to illustrate the various buying patterns, fashion consciousness, personal appearance, and brand consciousness within different lifestyles. From the results of Sun, Horn and Merritt’s study (2004), idiocentric consumers are more brand-savvy, more innovative in terms of product usage, more fashion-conscious while allocentric consumers are more health-conscious and more into food preparation, more concerned about their personal appearance and more likely to avoid risks and uncertainty accompany with the purchase of products.

Though culture may not explain everything, it still provides an insight for managers and marketers to predict and deal with consumer behaviour in a cross-cultural context.

3.9. Culture and Decision-making Styles

As mentioned above, culture accounts for how people form their thoughts and value systems. Besides, it also plays an important role in the decision-making process. Sproles and Kendall (1986) distinguish eight different decision-making styles: quality conscious decision-making style, brand conscious decision-making style, innovative in shopping decision-making style, recreation conscious decision-making style, price conscious decision-making style, impulse buying decision-making style, confused by overchoice decision-making style, and brand loyal consumer
decision-making style. Furthermore, Leo, Bennett and Hartel (2005) examine how culture background affects these decision-making styles based on Hofstede’s typology of culture.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Power Distance</th>
<th>Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
<th>Individualism</th>
<th>Masculine Orientation</th>
<th>Long-term Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inequality in prestige, wealth and power</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance for ambiguity</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality conscious</th>
<th>Power distance involves a hierarchy of quality rather than equality</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovative</th>
<th>High risk propensity</th>
<th>Less concerned with</th>
<th>Greater emphasis on</th>
<th>Tradition outweighs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Table 2.5: Implications of Hofstede’s Typology for Consumer Decision-Making**

**Hofstede’s Singapore Score**
- High: Power Distance
- Low: Uncertainty Avoidance
- Low: Individualism
- Low: Masculine Orientation
- High: Long-term Orientation

**Hofstede’s Australian Score**
- Low: Power Distance
- High: Uncertainty Avoidance
- High: Individualism
- High: Masculine Orientation
- Low: Long-term Orientation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture Type</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Decision-Making</th>
<th>Social &amp; Cultural</th>
<th>Branding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreation conscious</td>
<td>and low resistance to change</td>
<td>making mistakes in front of others</td>
<td>material goods and increases propensity to purchase new things</td>
<td>the need for variety or innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price conscious</td>
<td>Individualist cultures are more price sensitive and don’t care about being perceived as ‘cheap’. Low price often means low quality.</td>
<td>Price-conscious behaviour results in items bought for less, more goods can be accumulated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse buying</td>
<td>Require little information before acting, resist innovation and change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused by overchoice</td>
<td>Less likely to consider a greater range of product information and alternatives</td>
<td>Tend to rely more on own sources of information rather than social networks for information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand loyal</td>
<td>Brand loyalty is a risk reduction strategy and thus less likely</td>
<td>Brands used to express individual identity</td>
<td>Long-term time orientation promotes continuity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality conscious decision-making style

Sproles and Kendall (1986) state quality conscious consumers seek for the best quality products by conducting a systematic and careful purchase, viewing quality as a significant factor in decision-making. As Hofstede’s (2004) cultural dimension of power distance deals with the degree people tolerance inequality; Leo, Bennett and Hartel (2005) argue cultures with higher score in power distance should tend to be more quality conscious. Furthermore, consumers in eastern cultures exhibit a more extensive searching behaviour comparing due to the desire and expectation for high quality and long-lasting products (Ackerman and Tellis 2001; Doran 2002).

Brand conscious decision-making style

Brand conscious consumers are more likely to buy expensive and well-know brands. Leo, Bennett and Hartel (2005) imply this decision-making style is relevant to both individualism versus collectivism and uncertainty avoidance dimension. As brands symbolise status and prestige, consumers in high power distance and collectivistic cultures (e.g. Eastern cultures) are assumed to be more brand-oriented. Due to the fact that brands are used to reduce risk (Lehmenn and Winer 1997) in purchasing, it seems to appeal to cultures that have high score in uncertainty avoidance.

Innovative in shopping decision-making style

An innovative decision-making style refers to variety-seeking consumers who enjoy pursuing something new and unusual when purchasing (McAlister and Pessemier
Based on the theory of Hofstede’s, cultures score high in individualism and future orientation tend to purchase new and novel products and brands (Hofstede 1980). Consumer innovativeness is observed to be shown in more individualistic, masculine and lower uncertainty avoidance cultures (Steenkamp, Hofstede and Wedel 1999).

Recreation conscious decision-making style
Recreation conscious decision-making style refers to the pleasure and fun accompanied with shopping behaviour (Sproles and Kendall 1986). According to Leo, Bennett and Hartel (2005, p.41), ‘culture is not expected to influence the experienced pleasure of shopping but rather the types of shopping pursued.’ Therefore, there seems to be little differences in the perception of pleasure and fun during shopping between Eastern and Western cultures.

Price conscious decision-making style
Price conscious decision-making style refers to the extent to which a buyer is unwilling to buy products with a higher price (Lichtenstein, Ridgway and Netemeyer 1993). This dimension is similar to brand conscious decision-making, cultures score high in collectivism are expected to view price as a guarantee of quality and value prestige accompanied with the purchase of a given brand (Zhou and Nakamoto 2001). In other words, collectivist cultures, such as Chinese culture, are willing to pay more in order to maintain their status. Therefore, individualist and masculine cultures are assumed to be more price conscious due to the fact that they do not mind to purchase products considered as ‘cheap’ (low in price).
Impulse buying decision-making style

According to Rook and Hoch (1985), impulse buying refers to unplanned purchase. Leo, Bennett and Hartel (2005) argue consumers from high uncertainty avoidance cultures would be expected to conduct less impulse buying. On the other hand, individualist cultures may tend to support impulse buying since individual interest and pleasure gained by shopping are being valued (Leo, Bennett and Hartel 2005).

Confused by overchoice decision-making style

It is being observed that consumers might get confused due to overloading information (Leo, Bennett and Hartel 2005). Leo, Bennett and Hartel (2005) suggest that consumers from collectivist cultures are more likely to be information overload. This is due to the fact that collectivist consumers tend to make inter-comparison between brands and products while individualist consumers appear to evaluate one brand at a time by considering each brand’s attributes (Cowley 2002).

Brand loyal consumer decision-making style

According to Sproles and Kendall (1986), brand loyalty refers to the habitual purchasing behaviour of consumers from a range of favourite brands or stores. While brand loyalty is often considered as a tool to reduce risk, it is assumed by Yau (1988) that cultures with high uncertainty avoidance would be more loyal.

The study done by Leo, Bennett and Hartel (2005) implies that in Singapore and Australia, which are two polarised cultures according to the score of Hofstede’s
cultural dimension index, cultural differences do have a significant impact on
decision-making styles. The result indicates that there are significant differences
among consumers from Singapore and Australia in brand consciousness,
innovativeness and confusion resulted by overchoice.

3.10. Word-of-mouth Communications on a Cross-cultural Level
Brown and Reinen (1987) state the word-of-mouth communication is a crucial factor
of the construction of consumers’ attitude and behaviours. Researchers (Assael
1992; Duhan et al., 1997; Feick and Hegie 1992) also point out word-of-mouth
communications between individuals in a group will have significant influences on
decision-making process. Word-of-mouth recommendations are basically made by
consumers who have no personal interest relating to a certain brand or product
(Cheung, Anitsal and Anitsal 2007). Therefore, these recommendations are valued
with higher credibility. There are several factors explaining why people are involved
in word-of-mouth communications: dissonance reduction, product involvement and
self-involvement, concern for others and development or enhancement of
relationships by using word-of-mouth communications (Arndt 1967; Dichter 1966).
In past research, word-of-mouth communications refer to companies trying to get
opinion leaders to say ‘good things’ about their brands or products. However,
Cheung, Anitsal and Anitsal (2007) claim that the traditional view of word-of-mouth
communications is limited and need to be extended to investigate the internal
motivations to initiate word-of-mouth communication by the majority consumers. It
appears that satisfaction and positive attitude toward a product are not enough to
motivate an individual to recommend it to someone else (Cheung, Anitsal and
Consumers often engage in both positive and negative word-of-mouth communications. Satisfaction with the product and service may contribute to pleasant shopping experience and pleasant feelings. Moreover, with a higher degree of product involvement, people are more interested in it and are more likely to talk about their purchase to someone else (Arndt 1967). Similarly, on the other hand, bad shopping experience brings unpleasant feelings to the consumer. With these pleasant or unpleasant feelings, consumers are more likely to engage in positive or negative word-of-mouth communication. However, these feelings alone are not enough to initiate actual word-of-mouth communications. Based on Cheung, Anitsal and Anitsal’s (2007) research, there are some other important internal factors listed in the table below.

Table 2.6 Internal factors that influence the tendency to initiate WOM by nonopinion leaders: A comparison between U.S. and Chinese informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of WOM</th>
<th>U.S. Informants</th>
<th>Chinese Informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>-Strength of social ties</td>
<td>-Strength of social ties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Altruism toward family and friends, business organisations</td>
<td>-Altruism toward family and friends, business organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Expressing sense of achievement</td>
<td>-Expressing sense of achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Seeking confirmation of own judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Seeking advice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The study done by Cheung, Anitsal and Anitsal (2007) shows the similarities and differences in word-of-mouth behaviour of majority consumers between two very different cultural contexts—the United States and China. They found that the view about ‘good things’ in life and information search behaviour differ from individualism and collectivism cultures. Furthermore, their findings show that consumers from the United State (a highly individualistic society) rely much less on social network to obtain information than consumers from China (a highly collectivistic society). Despite these differences, the caring for people with close social ties is a common motivation for both U.S. and Chinese to initiate word-of-mouth communications.

### Summary

Despite the fact that the global market is seemed to converge (Levitt 1983), cultural values in different region around the world tend to remain different instead of becoming homogenous (De Mooij 2000). The consumer behaviour model explains for consumer decision-making process in different stages. Culture has great

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Strength of social ties</th>
<th>Strength of social ties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Altruism toward family and friends, fellow consumers</td>
<td>-Altruism toward family and friends, fellow consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Seeking therapeutic effect</td>
<td>-Seeking therapeutic effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Seeking correction/compensation</td>
<td>-Seeking retaliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Seeking bargaining power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Cheung, Anistal & Anitsal 2007, p.241.*
influence on different behaviours conducted by consumers from different countries. Consequently, culture difference is inevitable in terms of developing cross-cultural marketing strategy. Furthermore, in order to improve brand loyalty effectively in different culture context, it is critical to understand the influences may cause by different culture value on brand loyalty.
4. Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter illustrates the methodological aspects of the paper. First, the concepts of qualitative and quantitative research method are compared; and the reason for choosing qualitative methodology is explained. Second, the chosen method, namely semi-structured interview, is introduced. Next, the qualitative structure, including the research design of interview guideline, sample selection and the procedure of data collection is clearly stated and justified. Finally, the limitation of the chosen method, including the issues regarding reliability, bias and validity and generalisability is discussed. Moreover, the way how the researcher has used to overcome these issues is presented.

4.2. Reason for using a Qualitative research method

Quantitative methods emphasise the strict quantification of observations and careful control of variables and often examines group means and variances by integrating large-scale sampling and the use of statistical procedures (Ponterotto and Grieger 1999). The aim of quantitative research is to measure and analyse the causal or correlational relationships between variables. On the other hand, qualitative methods refer to various empirical procedures designed to describe and interpret the experiences of individuals in a context-specific setting (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). To state more precisely, ‘qualitative research emphasises meanings, the multiplicity of realities in a family, and the general sociopsychological context.’ (Ambert et al. 1995, p.881)
Qualitative data are often presented by words, statements and experiences provided by the participants. Since human experience is difficult to be analysed by mathematical pattern, qualitative methods are often used to capture the depth and richness of personal experience. In order to record personal experience, data collection of qualitative research often takes the form of written texts. According to Ambert et al (1995, p.881), ‘qualitative research is contextual research.’ Written evidence is gathered in documents or oral form, for example interviews, which is transformed into written texts through transcription (Polkinghorne 2005). However, it is pointed out by Ponterotto (2005) that both qualitative and quantitative methods are empirical research in which they conduct the collection, analysis and interpretation of observations.

Ambert et al. (1995) distinguish several main differences between qualitative and quantitative research. First, it is depth that qualitative researchers seek for rather than breadth. On the other hand, quantitative method aims at deriving large and representative information from an entire population. Second, qualitative research is about investigating how and why people behave and think while quantitative research focuses on the beliefs that people hold on a large scale. Third, the spectrum of qualitative research is more flexible. In other words, the goal of a qualitative research can be set upon different levels. Fourth, contrasting to the verification-focused feature of quantitative research, qualitative research often puts emphasis on the new discovery from information provided by participants. ‘The primary commitment is to the empirical world, to convey its workings in its phenomenological integrity.’ (Ambert et al. 1995, p.880) Therefore, researchers
who use qualitative method often choose an inductive approach (Becker and Geer 1960).

Scholars (Dey 1993; Healey & Rawlinson 1994; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003) have distinguished several differences between quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data is, firstly, derived from statistic information by analysing the meanings from numbers; secondly, the results of quantitative research are collected in numerical and standardised forms; finally, the analysing process of quantitative data is often presented by diagrams and statistics. On the other hand, qualitative data is, firstly, based on meanings expressed through words; secondly, qualitative data is usually collected in non-standardised forms and needs to be classified into categories; finally, the analysis is a conceptualising process.

'A final goal of qualitative research is to refine the process of theory emergence through a continual "double-fitting" where researchers generate conceptual images of their settings, and then shape and reshape them according to their ongoing observations, thus enhancing the validity of their developing conceptualisation' (Ambert et al. 1995, p.881).

The purpose of the project is to investigate the cultural influence on brand loyalty towards cosmetic products. The researcher is dedicated in seeking for explanations of different loyalty behaviours among consumers in two countries. As mentioned above in the literature review, culture and brand loyalty are rather abstract concepts without a precise definition and are difficult to measure and quantify. On the other
hand, consumer behaviour is a sophisticated decision-making process which involves not only within the business field but also the status of human minds and psychological theories. Moreover, it is depth that the researcher attempt to discover and investigate in this project. Hence, a qualitative method is conducted in this project.

4.3. Semi-structured Interviews

An interview is defined as an in-depth discussion between two or more people which has a specific purpose (Kahn and Cannell 1957). There are three types of interview: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews. Qualitative research interviews are suitable to use when undertaking an exploratory study (Cooper and Schindler 1998). Specifically, semi-structured interviews are helpful in collecting 'probe' answers. By conducting interviews, it is easy to gain explanation and structured answers with the interviewees’ responses (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003).

‘Interviewees may use words or ideas in a particular way, and the opportunity to probe these meanings will add significance and depth to the data obtained. It may also leads the discussion into areas that you had not previously considered but which are significant for your understanding, and which help you to address your questions and objectives, or indeed to help you formulate such a question’ (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003, p. 250).

Moreover, North et al. (1983) indicates that participants are more willing to be
interviewed rather than fill in questionnaires. Furthermore, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003 (p. 250) claim ‘the use of personal interviews, where appropriate, may therefore achieve a higher response rate than using questionnaires.’ The use of interviews can also enable interviewer to receive direct feedback from the interviewees (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003).

Since this project is set to investigate the different consumption behaviours among UK consumers and Taiwanese consumers, it is explanations and reasons the researcher is looking for in order to address the phenomenon of different loyalty behaviours in two different cultural contexts. In other words, it is ‘why’ the researcher is asking instead of ‘what’. As mentioned above, interviews are an effective tool to collect structured and in-depth answers through meanings expressed by words. Due to the aim and the type of answer the researcher is looking for, it is suitable to use interviews as the data collecting tool.

4.4. Research Design

This study is based on the belief that reality is socially constructed (Kelliher 2005) and the perceptions of people’s own activities are more likely to be captured by taking account of the social context that they are in (Hussey and Hussey 1997). Therefore, by using qualitative method and applying this view, researchers can obtain rich and contextual information in order to address for their research question (Myers 1997). However, due to the nature of qualitative research, the validity, reliability and generalisability are often being questioned (Kelliher 2005).
The research questions of this project set to examine how culture differences influence brand loyalty towards cosmetics in two cultural context—Taiwan and the United Kingdom. The research questions are:

- What are the factors influencing decision-making process of buying cosmetics?
- How are these factors different by the influences of culture?
- How collectivism and individualism influences brand loyalty behaviour?

The semi-structured interview is conducted by following an interview guideline, which is attached in the appendix. The first part of the questions is designed to obtain personal information of the interviewees, which are their names, age and nationality. The second part is to examine the extent of involvement of the participants. For example, interviewees are being asked about the frequency and personal perception of wearing makeup. The answers to these questions provide information of how involved the interviewees are with cosmetics. The extent of involvement would affect the loyalty behaviour of a consumer. The definition and importance of involvement is already discussed in the literature review. The third part is to investigate the participants' perception towards branded cosmetics in general. For instance, participants are asked about their preferred brand(s) and how brand image influences their decision. The last part is intended to investigate the loyalty and the factors influencing loyalty of the interviewees such as price, quality, media, satisfaction and word-of-mouth communication. The researcher planned to investigate the research questions by exploring cosmetics purchasing behaviour of British and Taiwanese respondents respectively, and then find the cultural influences
by comparing the findings.

4.5. Sample Selection

There are two ways of sample selection: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Techniques of probability sampling are based on statistic method and emphasise on random sampling (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003). Non-probability sampling is used in circumstances of exploratory surveys with a need of subjective judgement (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003). Due to the aim of the study, a non-probability sampling is applied. Interviewees of this research are chosen from Taiwanese and British females who wear makeup and aged between 20 and 30. The participants are divided to two groups according to their nationality, Taiwanese and British; there are four participants in each group. The interviewees are friends or classmates of the researcher. Before conducting the interviews, researcher has confirmed the participants usually wear make-up and have certain knowledge about cosmetics. Besides, the participants are capable of presenting their opinions clearly as they are all studying master degree in University of Nottingham, which improves the credibility of the data collected. However, there are two British participants are friends of the researcher’s friends. These two British participants, Tamsyn and Abi, are recruited by friends of the researcher. They agreed to do the interviews voluntarily and also meet the requirements.
Table 4.1 Summary of Participants’ Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UK Participants</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tamsyn</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terri</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abi</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taiwanese Participants</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameo</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoe</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6. Interview process

The interviews were conducted in person and face-to-face as in this way the interviewees can be more comfortable and thus share more detail information about the question. All the interviews were recorded by an mp3 and the participants were informed and asked for approval of recording. The interviews were conducted in two languages respectively according to the mother language of the participants: English or Chinese Mandarin. The questions were translated carefully and faithfully by using the back-translation process (Sechrest, Fay and Zaidi 1972) in order to enhance the reliability of the research. The question guidelines were translated into Chinese and then translated back into English to ensure the same meaning is delivered. The translation process was done by the researcher with the help of a Britain-born Taiwanese friend, who also studies master degree in Nottingham
4.7. Limitation

Rigor and trustworthiness of the data is pursued when conducting qualitative research. However, unlike quantitative research, objectivity is not the main goal of a qualitative research (Cheng, Anitsal and Anitsal 2007). There are several data quality issues concerning qualitative data: reliability, bias and validity and generalisability (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003). Therefore, overcoming these issues and improving validity and reliability is the most important priority (Hirschman 1986) in this research.

Due to the non-standardised nature of interviews, there may be a lack of reliability (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003). This is because the research method, which is semi-structured interviews in this case, is not repeatable and therefore is difficult to obtain objective information from each interview. Moreover, it is being doubt that different researchers can obtain similar data by using qualitative research method (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002; Healey and Rawlinson 1994).

Furthermore, interviewer bias is likely to happen when the comments, tone or non-verbal behaviour are inappropriate and thus tend to lead the respondent’s answer. The inadequacy of trust between interviewer and the participant will affect the validity of the information collected from the interviews (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003).
While Taiwanese respondents in this project are all friends of the researcher, the data collected from them is more reliable as Becker (1973) claims the validity of collected data is higher when the participants are familiar with the researcher. To improve the validity of the data, the researcher tried to have a ten- to fifteen-minute conversation with British respondents before each interview in order to make them feel more familiar with the researcher and thus be more comfortable with sharing information. Furthermore, issues occurred in each interview is recorded and taken into account in the next interview in order to revise the guideline questions. By doing so can avoid neglecting important issues which were not included in the origin interview questions. To reduce interviewer bias, participants are allowed to ask questions when they are not sure about the questions being asked; the researcher answered the questions carefully without leading the participants to certain topics.

4.8. Summary

This chapter examined the difference between qualitative and quantitative research. Since the project aimed at searching in depth answers, the reason for using a qualitative research method by conducting semi-structured interviews is justified. Next, the research questions and the design of interview guideline is presented and discussed. Moreover, due to the aim of the study, a non-probability sample selection method is used. The way the researcher recruited respondents and the interview process are also illustrated. Finally, limitations of the methodology such as objectivity, interviewer bias, reliability of the collected data are discussed. Moreover, how the researcher overcame these issues is presented.
5. Findings and Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings of the project and discusses them with the literature. Firstly, the findings of variables shaping decision-making process—involvement, perceived risk and information search—are discussed; followed by the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty; moreover, the cultural factors influencing consumer behaviour discovered from the project are illustrated. Lastly, three managerial implications suggested by the findings are presented.

5.2. Research Findings—variables shaping decision-making process

5.2.1. Involvement

Most of the respondents show high-involvement in cosmetics purchases. First, six out of eight participants claimed they wear make-up almost everyday or whenever they go out. Second, the reason they wear make-up is under the expectation of make themselves look better, get attention by others and show others that they ‘made an effort for their appearance’. According to the literature, consumptions concerning one’s appearance are often a high involvement situation. Moreover, some even state that wearing make-up make them feel more secure and more confident about themselves.

‘I don’t want to go out without wearing make-up. I guess it makes me feel more secure. And I think I’m more confident when I wear make-up.’

(Janet, Taiwanese)
'I suppose if I don’t wear make-up when I go out, I’ll feel a little sloppy, like I didn’t make an effort.’ (Tamsyn, British)

At the same time, it is clear that their degree of involvement differ depend on how important the product is in their eyes. Respondents show different attitude towards different products. Most respondents view foundation and concealer as the most important cosmetic products and are likely to spend more time searching for information about them and willing to pay more. The reason that respondents view foundation as the most important product is for protecting their skin. Some also claimed that foundation is the base of make-up and thus, better-quality foundations will contribute to a better look. In terms of foundation, which is a high-involvement product, price became a minor consideration.

‘Basically, of anything is going to be on my face, I want it to be very good quality and I don’t care about the price. But like for my eyes, I don’t care as much. I usually only consider the colours.’ (Terri, British)

These findings also suggest that product involvement plays a significant role in brand loyalty, where repeat purchase behaviour for a high product involvement is an indicator of brand loyalty. In this case, respondents presented a high level of loyalty towards foundation and concealer.

‘For foundation, I only use Shiseido. I have used it since high school, and I don’t think I would ever change to another brand!’ (Grace, Taiwanese)
‘I switch from brands to brands for lip gloss and eye shadows, but in terms of foundation and face powder, I prefer Prescriptive, and I usually don’t consider other brands.’ (Susan, Taiwanese)

Also, the importance of variables influencing purchase decision, such as quality, price, brand and recommendations from friends or family also differ from products. Most respondents are quality conscious especially in the product categories they care the most. For rather low-involvement products, they are price conscious.

‘It depends on what product it is. If it’s for my skin, I think it would be first, quality and then recommendations and then price. For my lip gloss and eye shadows, it would be recommendations, and then price, and then quality doesn’t matter too mush for me.’ (Terri, British)

5.2.2. Perceived Risk

Almost every respondent consider trying new brands as a risk. The perceived risk in cosmetic purchase are mainly resulted from unfamiliar brands, the risk in terms of a wastage of money and the uncertainty of whether the product is suitable for the respondent’s skin. Similarly, the higher involvement of the product, the greater risk perceived.

‘I don’t like to try various brands because it’s just too risky.’ (Zoe, Taiwanese)
'There will always be a risk that if I don’t like the new thing I bought then I’m going to waste my money.’ (Tamsyn, British)

'It is a great risk to buy a new brand because cosmetics are not cheap and I might waste my money if the product isn’t suitable for my skin.’ (Grace)

'I think it’s safer to stay with a brand that I know I like.’ (Tamsyn)

While most respondents view foundation and concealer as the most important products and are tend to be more loyal to certain brands, they would be more comfortable to try various brands when it comes to colour make-ups as eye shadows and lip gloss. The reasons for considering these products as less important are variety seeking and the perceived less damage is likely to do to their skin. The perceived risk also differ due to the degree of involvement. The perceived risk within the relatively lower involvement products is lower.

'Like for my lips and for my eyes, I would like to try various brands. And blush, too. It would be ok as well. But for my skin, I’ll stick to one brand.’ (Terri, British)

The place or store of the cosmetics are displaying will also influence the degree of risk perceived by participants. They consider lower risk of buying cosmetics in well-known beauty drugstores or department stores.
‘I think the risk would depend a lot on the price and where you were buying it from. I would buy something sold in a reputable place, like Boots or a make-up counter of Debenhams.’ (Abi, British)

‘If the product is not displayed in some beauty drugstores like Watson’s or department store but just some random store that I’ve never heard of, I would not consider trying them. It just feels unsafe.’ (Grace, Taiwanese)

While some respondents think a well known brand means it is well-established and can more or less guarantee the quality, there are still some respondents perceive great risk of unfamiliar brands—even it’s a well-known one.

‘You do not know about the products well enough. A well-known brand can not guarantee the quality.’ (Zoe, Taiwanese)

5.2.3. Information Search

The collected data shows that respondents have different sources of acquiring information about cosmetics. Some respondents obtain their information from media as beauty magazines, commercials, and beauty TV programmes. However, Taiwanese respondents tend to obtain their knowledge for cosmetics mainly from recommendations from friends and family.
'My information about cosmetics is mainly from my friends. I do watch television and magazines, but it is recommendations from friends motivate me to buy a product most.’ (Janet, Taiwanese)

Taiwanese respondents show a heavy reliance on recommendations from friends or family. Most of the Taiwanese respondents state that recommendations from friends and family are the most important information source.

‘I think a friend’s reference is very important.’ (Zoe, Taiwanese)

‘Only if a brand that is very popular and being strongly recommended by professionals and friends I would think of giving it a try.’ (Cameo, Taiwanese)

‘If a brand is not tried or recommended by any of my friend, I won’t even consider it.’ (Janet, Taiwanese)

‘Recommendations from friend have great influence on my decision-making. The opinions of friends toward a brand would influence the way I feel about it.’ (Grace, Taiwanese)

British respondents also view recommendations from friends and family as an essential source, but they show a greater interest in gathering information from media and trying out products by themselves.
‘I think it’s the most important. For me personally it is. Because that means they’ve tried it and it worked. It’s like they’re someone I trust, I’m going to believe them.’ (Terri, British)

‘I definitely listen to recommendations from friends and I’ll go and check it out. But if I don’t like it, I’ll just say it’s not for me.’ (Tamsyn, British)

Taiwanese respondents tend to share detail information with their friends and family. The main source of information comes from recommendations of friends and family. This parallels with the theory that in collectivist society information is shared within groups. On the other hand, British respondents are more likely to be self-sufficient with the information. They tend to rely more on information obtained from media, magazines and TV commercials rather than recommendations from others. British respondents have little tendency in recommending actively products or brands to friends.

‘No, actually I don’t (share information with my friends). Because I think at this point, when we’re at this age, I think a lot of my friends are already have established their favourite brands. So they’re not really looking for anything new. There’s really not much to recommend... I think that’s probably why we don’t talk a lot about this kind of stuff.’ (Terri, British)

‘I don’t think I’ve talked about make-up with any of my friends. The only
thing I could think of is if someone’s saying something that is really nice then I’ll ask where it comes from, I would like to try it myself.’ (Tamsyn, British)

According to Cheung, Anitsal and Anitsal (2007, p.244), ‘In a collectivistic culture (China), personal opinions do not exist—they are predetermined by the group…..whereas in an individualistic culture (the United States), personal opinions are respected.’ This is consistent with the findings that Taiwanese respondents, which are from collectivist society rely on in-group information more than UK respondents, which are from individualist society.

5.3. Research Findings—Satisfaction and Loyalty

Respondents tend to be more loyal to the products they are really satisfied with. Especially within the product category each respondent cares about most, they are often in a high involvement situation and tend to value quality most. Respondents show a strong trust and commitment toward the brand even other factors, say price, change. Moreover, they are holding higher expectations for a familiar brand than an unfamiliar brand.

‘Though I do hesitate when they raise the price, but I will still buy it. I wear make-up to make myself look better. It is not worth to take the risk to buy some cheaper brands which I’m not familiar with.’ (Grace, Taiwanese)
‘I expect to get what I’ve had before.’ (Abi, British)

Regarding the importance of store service, most respondents think service is really important. With good service, a brand will appeal to them more. In general, they tend to be more loyal towards brands with a high level of service.

‘Apparently their (Channel) products are expensive, you have to think twice when you buy it. But they have very good service. That makes me want to go back again.’ (Terri, British)

However, when it comes to the brands they are already loyal to, it is the product itself matters the most. Respondents replied that because they trust the quality they are going to get from their preferred brands, regardless of the bad service they are delivering, they are still going to buy the products.

‘I will still buy things from my favourite brands regardless the bad service they’re having. Because I know what I’m going to get. It is the quality of the product that matters the most’. (Grace, Taiwanese)

‘I will still buy it. Because I know what I want...so it really doesn’t matter that much I guess. But if I’m looking for something new and I’m getting a bad service, then I might be considering not buying the product. Because if someone is being rude to me, I don’t want to support that.’ (Terri, British)
It appears that the main reasons they stay loyal is because of the trust towards the brand, the certainty of they know what product they are going to get. Bloemer and Kasper (1995) also suggest that brand commitment is essential for brand loyalty to occur.

‘I’m loyal to a brand because I’m used to it. I’m afraid that new product won’t be suitable for my skin.’ (Janet, Taiwanese)

‘I get reassurance because I know roughly how long the product will last, I know that it is unlikely to give me any sensitivity or rashes and how to use it best.’ (Abi, British)

Moreover, respondents claimed that with loyalty programme and after-sale service can improve their sense of belonging and level of loyalty.

‘I use a lot of Boots make-up because I have an advantage card so I can gain points and by spending a certain amount you can often get money off vouchers.’ (Abi, British)

Additionally, respondents in two group show different responses when received a bad service. Although within the high involvement products stated before, loyalty remains despite of bad service, the action after purchase differs in two groups. It appears that Taiwanese respondents will initiate negative word-of-mouth
communication in a favour of ‘taking revenge’.

‘I will tell all my friends not to go to that counter again. It is not worth it...I hope by doing so no one will ever buy that brand again.’ (Janet, Taiwanese)

Moreover, the influence of service on loyalty differs from the degree of product involvement and the purpose of purchase.

5.4. Research Findings—Loyalty Measurement

According to the literature, Knox and Walker’s (2001) distinguish four consumer purchasing styles based on how consumers are involved with the product and the degree they feel about the risk associating with making a brand choice. **Loyals** are those with high product involvement and medium risk. **Habituals** are those with low product involvement and low risk. **Variety seekers** are those with medium product involvement and medium risk. **Switchers** are those with low product involvement and low risk. According to the findings, every respondent falls into the **loyal** category in terms of foundation and concealers. They stick to particular brands for these products and are highly-involved in them. They are less likely switch to other brands despite price-raising and bad service. At least one of the respondents, Abi, falls into the **Habituals** category. The respondent seems to have little information apart from one brand, and the main reason appeals to her most is advantage card and vouchers.
'Mainly I use Boots No.7 because I can get points for my advantage card and they often offer money-off vouchers...I think if there were some other brand that is cheaper I would try that ‘ (Abi, British)

In terms of products like lip gloss and eye shadows, respondents fall into Variety Seekers category.

5.5. Research Findings—Cultural Factors and Consumer Behaviour

5.5.1. Individualistic of Collectivist Orientation

Individualistic or collectivist orientation affects the respondents’ perception and expectation about their appearance and purchasing behaviour. For example, Taiwanese respondents wished to cover all of their flaws and spots on their face, while British respondents are more comfortable of accepting how they naturally look. Moreover, with loads of information sources from the media and social group members, Taiwanese respondents tend to know better about cosmetics brand than British respondents. Taiwanese respondents also care more about the negative opinion others may think of them for using a brand that doesn’t fit their image.

‘Brand doesn’t matter that much to me. However, I wouldn’t use a brand that its image is rather targeted for elder women. It just feels weird. I think people may think I’m rather old-fashioned.’ (Cameo, Taiwanese)

On the other hand, British respondents do not care as much about if the brand image fits them. They claimed it is whether they like the product or not; brand
image doesn’t matter that much. Besides, there are few British respondents stated that they don’t really know about the image of the brand they are using.

5.5.2. Institutions, Social conventions, Habits and Customs of Society

The institutions and customs of society have apparent influence on respondents’ make-up habits in two groups. Firstly, it appears to be a gap with the age started to wear make-up in two groups. In general, UK respondents started to wear make-up around fifteen or sixteen years old. Some even experienced wearing make-up earlier when they were eleven or twelve. On the other hand, Taiwanese respondents usually started wearing make-up in their twenty’s. This is partly due to the fact that wearing make-up is not allowed in campus before college in Taiwan. Moreover, Taiwan has higher power distance index than the United Kingdom. Wearing make-up is valued as a formal, mature behaviour in Taiwan; while in an individualist society, the United Kingdom, wearing make-up is only a personal behaviour without social pressure and expectation.

‘At my age, where I’m going to get a job soon, people may expect me to wear make-up. I think it’s a common sense that working female should wear make-up in order to show they’re socialised’ (Janet, Taiwanese)

Secondly, the attitude towards wearing make-up also has significant difference between two countries. UK respondents feel more comfortable to letting people notice they’re wearing make-up as a personal matter. In contrast, the attitudes of Taiwanese respondents toward wearing make-up are tended to be under social
5.5.3. Culture and Decision-Making Styles

The result of Leo, Bennet and Hartel's study (2005) seems to imply that in general, Eastern consumers are more likely to be innovative and confused by overchoice while purchasing. On the other hand, Western consumers tend to be more brand conscious. Moreover, there seems to be no significant difference in quality conscious, recreation conscious and brand loyalty behaviour between Western and Eastern cultures. According to the score of Hofstede’s cultural dimension index, Taiwan has similar scores as Singapore while the UK has similar scores as Australia.


Since Leo, Bennet and Hartel’s study (2005) is based on cultural contexts of Singapore and Australia, it was expected to be similar results from the comparison between Taiwan and the UK. However, the findings suggest.
The findings of this project mostly fitted the assumed themes. Nevertheless, the findings of this project indicated Taiwanese participants are more brand conscious in favour of massive information sources.

However, the expected cultural factors seemed to fail in several aspects. First, collectivism and individualism seemed not sufficient to explain the consumer behaviour on individual level. From the findings, the loyalty pattern of the respondents from the collectivist country, Taiwan, do not differ significantly from respondents from the individualist country, the United Kingdom. The main reason may be collectivism and individualism views defined on the national level sometimes fail to address both personal and group goals (Gregory and Munch 1996).

Second, since loyalty is an act of risk reduction, it is assumed that cultures with high uncertainty avoidance (such as Taiwan) should be more risk averse and therefore, more brand loyal. Nevertheless, the findings show there is no significant difference in brand loyal decision-making style. In terms of high-involvement products, respondents in both group show high loyalty towards particular brand(s).

5.4. Managerial Implication

1. The relationship between product involvement and loyalty should be seriously considered while in this study, high-involvement is closely related to loyal behaviour. High-involvement situation implies a sophisticated evaluation process which suggests marketers should provide adequate but not repetitive information about the product and the brand to the consumers, who actively seek for massive
information, in order to stimulate the purchasing (Jobber 2007; Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2006). Moreover, the influence of others should also be taken into consideration since they will have impact on consumers’ beliefs and attitude toward a product or brand. As a result, promotions and sales strategies are critical in this situation since they assure the consumers are aware of a product’s attributes, which play an important role in the evaluation process (Jobber 2007; Bridges, Brisch and Yim 2006).

In the low-involvement situation, the most important task would be gaining most awareness through advertising and promotions in order to lead to the trial process and hence the repeat purchase. In other words, contrasting to the high-involvement situation, providing massive information of the product is not as crucial as gaining market awareness and stimulating actual purchases (Jobber 2007).

2. Jobber (2007) also points out that consumers’ emotions should be carefully taken into consideration. Blackwell, Miniare and Engel (2006, p.84) state, ‘emotions play an important role in how someone evaluates a product or transaction.’ Emotion is high when consumers find their self concepts and identity in the reflection of the product and brand. Moreover, consumers believe that by owning this product they would be able to communicate and share the ideal images with others. This is especially important in a collectivist society. The consequences of emotion will lead to less thought, less information-seeking and the less will the negative factors may have influence while judging a product or brand (Jobber 2007). In other words, consumers will make their decision base on how they feel about the product or
brand. Therefore, branding strategies that provide positive and warm feeling about the product or brand are more likely to success (Jobber 2007).

3. From the literature review and the findings of the project, there are several proposed managerial implications for organisations. First, organisations should be aware of being fall into stereotype views about consumer behaviour by generalising Hofstede's typology. It appears from the study that the dimensions he proposed are not always adequate to predict consumer behaviour. Moreover, the findings also imply that criteria for goods service and quality need to be tailored to the cultural setting. Consequently, collectivism and individualism on the individual level—idiocentrism and allocentrism should be taken into account to measure culture in consumer behaviour related context.

4. Although the findings seemed to show little influence of cultural factors in terms of brand loyalty, they gave an insight for marketing departments to focus on the importance of word-of-mouth communications. The findings show the significance of word-of-mouth communications in both cultural contexts. Moreover, customer service also plays an important role in improving loyalty. Companies should put emphasis on loyalty programmes and after-sale services in order to keep their customer.

5.5. Summary

This chapter examined the finding of the project and compared it to previous literature and studies done by other scholars. Some of the findings fitted the
literature, while other findings outlined a few new ideas. Several managerial implications based on the findings are also presented in this chapter. This analysis provides insight of cultural influences on consumer behaviour and also concepts and directions for further research.
6. Conclusion

6.1. Conclusion

This research aims at understanding the cultural factors which influence brand loyalty towards cosmetic product in a comparison of two very different cultural contexts—Taiwan and the United Kingdom. The objectives and the background of the study was explained and described in the first chapter. A detailed industry review and forecast of the cosmetic industry in global, UK and Taiwan is presented in the second chapter. The third part of the project provided a relevant literature review and related studies other researchers have done in the past. Chapter four explained the reason, the process and the limitation of the methodology used in this project. In order to investigate the topic in depth, a qualitative research method, namely semi-structured interview is conducted. Afterwards, an analysis of the research findings is presented and compared to the literature. Moreover, some useful managerial implications are provided. These findings and suggestions are expected to provide new thoughts for cosmetic companies to set their international marketing strategy in terms of improving brand loyalty.

Finally, the conclusions resulted from the study will be illustrated in this chapter. First, participants in two countries behave similarly in terms of showing a higher brand loyalty towards products they are more involved in. Second, culture has significant influence on the perception of self-image and therefore, influences the factors of decision-making process such as involvement, perceived risk and information search. Finally, culture seems to affect brand loyalty to a certain extent. In other word, although cultural differences can not fully explain the different level
of brand loyalty in different culture context, they do influence the factors which help to improve brand loyalty.

In the next section, recommendations for international cosmetic companies are presented. However, there are some limitations of this project due to the research method and research design. The limitations will be discussed and provide directions for further research.

6.2. Recommendations

1. Companies should take a detailed examine in how consumer perceived risk from different degree of product involvement. There seemed to be a close link between high-involvement and loyalty. From the findings of this project, participants show a high-involvement in products like foundation and concealer. Within the highly involved product category, participants have high level of loyalty. Consequently, the expectation of quality is higher.

2. Companies should make more effort in evoking consumers’ emotion. Emotion is high when consumers find their self concepts and identity in the reflection of the product and brand. When marketing in collectivist countries, emphasis should put on creating positive and warm images that the consumers can share with others.

3. Collectivism and individualism on the individual level—idiocentrism and allocentrism—is worth more attention in order to investigate cultural influences on consumer behaviour as collectivism and individualism on the national level seemed
to be inadequate explaining consumer behaviour.

4. Although cultural factors have no significance in influencing brand loyalty, marketers should dedicate to providing loyalty programmes and after-sale services in order to improve customer loyalty. Moreover, the influence of word-of-mouth communication can not be neglected.

6.3. Limitation of the Study

6.3.1. Sample

Due to the fact that interview is a time-consuming data collecting tool, the number of sample is therefore limited. Moreover, the selection of sample may influence the result of the findings. The respondents in this study are mostly friends of the researchers, thus, the data collected from these participants may not be representative. In other words, the reliability and validity of the data may be limited due to the small sample size and lack of objectivity in sample selection.

6.3.2. Methodology

The interviews were conducted in two language—English and Chinese—and presented in English. There might be culture bias arises with this methodology while translating and interpreting data as the mother language of the researcher is not the language written in this project. Moreover, the researcher may misunderstand the expression of the participants and result in limitation of the reliability and validity of the findings. Additionally, the degree of factors influencing the research questions can not be ranked specifically.
6.3.3. Product category

According to the findings, it is obvious that participants have different attitude towards different products. Therefore, the factors discussed in this project may have different degree of influences on different product.

6.4. Further Research

First of all, it would provide a clearer insight of cultural differences on consumer behaviour by interviewing more participants. Future research can aim at recruiting participants with different perception of wearing make-up. Furthermore, a larger number sample size could improve the validity and generalisability of the research to a great extent. Moreover, by combining a quantitative research method may help to understand the degree of influences of different factors. Finally, further research should focus on different cosmetics product categories as consumers behave quite different among them.
**Reference**


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Appendix 1
Interview Guideline

1. Please introduce yourself (nationality, age and education level).

2. When did you begin to wear make-up?

3. How often do you wear make-up?

4. Why do you wear make-up?

5. How do you decide which make-up to buy?

6. Do you have a preferred brand(s)? Do you stick to some brand(s)?
   - buy everything from same brand(s)?
   - depend on products? For example? Why?

7. Do you like to try various brands? Why?

8. Where do you obtain information about cosmetics that you are going to buy?
   How do you know the brands in the make-up market?

9. How many brands do you normally consider? What are they? (Lancome, Chanel, Benefit, Estee lauder, L’Oreal, Shiseido, Boots No7, or others) Why?

10. Would you stick to a particular brand or like to try various brands? Why?

11. What product do you care the most and will spend most time and money on it?

12. Do you think it is a risk to buy a brand that you have never used or heard of before? Why? (If yes, would you just stick to some well-known brands? Why?
   Do you think a well-know brand can guarantee the quality? For example?

13. Do you think price is an important factor that influences your decision? Why?
14. If the brand is well regarded by your friends and widely used by them, would you buy it? Why?

15. How important are recommendations of a product or brand from friends?

16. Do you often share information about cosmetics with your friends?

17. What will make you want to recommend something to someone else?

18. What is your favourite brand(s)? What appeals you to them?

19. Do you think their brand image fit your self-image or the expectations of yourself?

20. If the preferred brand of yours raised its price, will you still buy it? Where is the line that you will stop buying it? Why?
Appendix 2

Transcription of an interview with British respondent—Terri

C: Please introduce yourself.

T: My name is Terri Bell, I am from England, and I am 24 years old.

C: When did you begin to wear make-up?

T: That was probably...um...maybe around the age of 15 or so, but not very much, you know. As I got older, it increases a little bit.

C: How often do you wear make-up?

T: How often um...usually just when I go out. Not every day, maybe four or five days a week or something.

C: Why do you wear make-up?

T: Because, would have because you know...maybe it does have to do a little bit with the media and like how...you just want to look good you know. And especially like your skin, like I want it to be like blemish-free and everything. So ya...even though I don’t use a lot during at day, I like to wear it...but you just want to feel good. It just feels better that way, you feel more confident or something.

C: When you first begin to wear makeup, what influences you the most?

T: I would say maybe friends a little bit, as well as the media too I think. When you are a young teenager you become more aware of that kind of stuff. When you were younger you don’t care as much about that kind of things so...ya maybe because of that and for the boys too.

C: How do you decide which product or brand to buy? And what is the reason?

T: Basically, if anything is going to be on my face, I want it to be very good quality. So I go for name brands then. Like more expensive ones. But like for my eyes, I
don’t care as much. Because I don’t feel that it will ruin my skin as much. And also lip gloss and something like that, not too expensive, just whatever looks good.

C: Do you have any preferred brand?

T: Yes I use Kanebo for my skin. And actually lip sticks I always use Chanel cuz I think they have really great colours. Also I use some cheaper brands for my lips and eyes which I don’t know their names.

C: Why do you use Kanebo?

T: Because I don’t like foundation. I feel my skin cannot breathe. I don’t like to have a cake on my face. I like light product. And the product from Kanebo is really good. It is light but it covers everything up quite nice too.

C: When you buy cosmetics, what are the factors you concern?

T: For my skin, the quality is first, I don’t care about the price. But for my lips and for my eyes, I usually only consider the colours. I use some name brands too but it doesn’t matter as much as for my skin. For my eyes, like eye shadows, I also use some Chanel, cuz I think the colours are nice. But I also have some products that are cheaper, which I don’t know the name of the brands, sorry. For mascaras, I usually use Maybeline or something like that.

C: What are the attributes of these brands appeal to you and make you want to buy them?

T: I think for Chanel it’s….basically it’s expensive, you know you’re going to get good product from it. Because it just make you feel it’s very well established in that department. So I think that’s why. It feels like you can rely on the product. Kenabo is also quite a good brand. And I used it for many years. So I know what it is and I know what I’m getting when I buy it. The cheaper brands, I just try in my way, like
I buy different things. What appeals to me...I think it’s depend on what I am looking for. If I am looking for a specific colour, then I will look at some different booths. And basically see the colours if it fits what I want. The brand doesn’t matter so much.

C: Are you happy to try various brands?

T: Ya, like for my lips and for my eyes yes. I would be. And blush too, it would be ok as well. But for my skin I’ll stick to one brand.

C: Where do you get information of the products and brands?

T: I don’t know...actually like Kanebo, that was like through my sister actually. She started using that and she recommended it and so I tried it and I liked it. Other things, a cheap lip gloss brand A’dora, another friend recommended that to me. And I guess like Chanel you see that in magazines and stuff, and that’s like a reliable brand I guess. And what else...I think you also get information when you go shopping. It’s like...ok, I’m looking for this and that, and the person will help you and so.

C: So how important are recommendations from friend or family to you?

T: I think it’s the most important. For me personally it is. Because that means they’ve tried it and it worked. It’s like they’re someone I trust, and I’m going to believe them. Ya so that’s probably most valuable I think.

C: Do you think it’s a risk to try a brand you’ve never heard of?

T: Yes, it is. Actually, recently I bought a blush, and it wasn’t that expensive but I’ve never heard of the brand. I tried it, and it was like...I don’t know...it didn’t really stick on your face... You know the odd, there’s always a risk if you try something that you haven’t heard of, but you know...it’s kind of worth it, cuz it’s not like you risk anything with an expensive brand. So it would be fine.
C: What if some unknown brand is recommended by your friend, will you be happy to try it?

T: Yes, I think I would be. If it's something new that I need, then I would be like talking to my friends: oh I need this new mascara, I don't know what to get. And they say, oh then you should try this. Then yes, I would be happy to try it.

C: What if the products of your preferred brand, say like Kenabo, suddenly raises its price, will you still buy it? Or where is the line that you will stop buying it?

T: Well... as long as it is not like extremely expensive. But.....yes I will still buy it.

C: If there's a new brand that is having a promotion with a really good deal, will you give it a try?

T: No, I don't think so. Because I think you see that all the time right? If you go into a store and there's always going to be new brands that try to promoting or some already established brands they try to sell you things...but...no...I don't really like to fall for that.

C: So do you consider yourself as a loyal customer?

T: Yes, I do think so.

C: What are the important factors influence your decision to buy cosmetics?

T: It depends on what product it is. If it’s for my skin, I think it would be first, quality and then recommendations and then price. For my lip gloss and eye shadows it would be recommendations, and then price, and then quality doesn’t matter too much for me.

C: What kind of look you pursue when applying makeup?

T: Well... I don’t want to look extreme... when I apply makeup, it’s usually like quite natural. Not like blue... and lots of blush... and like red lip stick... no... I like to keep it a
little natural but I don’t mind people aware of me wearing makeup, I think it just shows that you take good care of yourself. That you care about the way you look. Actually I think they do notice I wear makeup but I don’t mind. As long as they don’t think I look extreme or something...which I don’t think they do.

C: If there are some flaws or spots on your face, do you want to cover it all up completely or would you just leave it a little bit natural there?

T: I think I try to cover them, but I don’t use foundation so you can’t really cover it to the same extent. It’s like you’re always gonna see it a little bit. As long as it looks ok...in my eyes...I don’t’ really mind.

C: Do you think the service will influence how you are satisfied with a brand?

T: I think...well...it’s always nice to get good service. If you are trying to buy a product, but the person selling you is being rude to you...then the experience would be not worth it. Again, it is the quality that always matters. If the product is not good in quality and I just bought it...I’m going to be quite mad, or I would be disappointed. Because it’s like you waste a lot of money on something that you’re not going to use anyway.

C: If the preferred brands of yours have products with good quality but bad service, will you still buy it?

T: Yes, I will still buy it. Because I know what I want, I know the number of the product I need. So basically, I just give them the number and...it’s not like, ’oh can you recommend this and that to me? cuz I already know what I want. So it doesn’t really matter that much I guess. But if I’m looking for something new and I’m getting a bad service, then I might be considering not buying the product. Cuz if someone is being rude to me, I don’t want to support that.
C: Do you think good service is one of the reasons making you want to go back for a brand again?
T: Yes. Like I think Chanel is having a good service. Apparently their products are expensive, you have to think twice when you buy it. But they have good service. That makes me want to go back again.
C: What makes you want to recommend a product or a brand to someone else?
T: I guess it’s just err...if it worth, if it looks good, if it does the job. If it’s an overall good quality product, yes, if the quality is high I would recommend it to someone.
C: Do you often share information about cosmetics with your friends?
T: No, actually I don’t. because I think at this point, when we’re at this age, I think a lot of people...a lot of my friends at least, are already have established like their favourite brands. So they’re not really looking for anything new, so there’s really not much to recommend. Because they already have some brands they are using so I think that’s probably why we don’t talk a lot about this kind of stuff.
C: Can you re-state your favourite brands? Do you think their brand image fit your self-image?
T: Yes, they are Kenabo, Chanel, Maybeline, and that cheap brand I told you, A’dora. I haven’t seen their advertisements very often. But I think Chanel, it is like luxurious, elegant, and very lady, with a lot of jewelry. But I don’t think that’s why I buy the products. Take A’dora for example, they use a lot of colour in their campaign, like blue, exaggerating....that doesn’t really fit me, but I still buy it because I think their product is really good.