

An Exploration of Cross-Cultural Behaviour: The Characteristics of Chinese Consumers' Decision Making in Europe

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Abstract—This study explores the effects of national culture on consumer behaviour by identifying the characteristics of Chinese consumers' decision making in Europe. It offers a better understanding of how cultural factors affect consumers' behaviour, and how consumers make decisions in other nations with different culture. It adopted a grounded theory approach and conducted 24 in-depth interviews. Grounded theory models are developed to link the causal conditions, process, and consequences. Results reveal that some cultural factors including conservatism, emotionality, acquaintance community, long-term orientation and principles affect Chinese consumers when making purchase decisions in Europe. Most Chinese consumers plan and prepare their expenditure and stay in Europe as cultural learners, and purchase durable products or assets as investment, and share their experiences within a community. This study identified potential problems such as political and social environment, complex procedures, and restrictions. This study found that external factors influence internal factors and then internal characters determine consumer behaviour. This study proposes that cultural traits developed in convergence evolution through social selection and Chinese consumers persist most characters but adapt some perceptions and actions overtime in other countries. This study suggests that cultural marketing could be adopted by companies to reflect consumers' preferences. Agencies, shops, and the authorities could take actions to reduce the complexity and restrictions.

Keywords—National culture, consumer behaviour, cultural marketing, decision making.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE past five decades witnessed a drastic increase of human mobility globally and there were millions of people living in a country other than their countries of birth. According to the Statista's report released in September 2020, there are 49.2 million Chinese people living outside China [63]. Among others around 2.3 million Chinese birth or descent live in Europe. Moreover, the number of tourists from China reached nearly 155 million in 2019, Chinese tourists spent about 254.6 billion U.S. dollars while traveling abroad. According to a study by Haupt, China has become the largest international outbound travel market and will reach to 259 million in 2030 [1].

Europe was a top destination for immigrants and international tourists with 744.3 million arrivals representing 51.1% of world market share. Among others, Chinese travellers made a great contribution with consumption reached \$262.1 billion in 2019 [2]. However, there was a significant decrease

of consumption because of COVID-19 and the international travel and tourism section was greatly impacted. Furthermore, uncertainties like Brexit, and geopolitical and social tensions may contribute to the slower recovery of the global economy.

The global economy is growing more multi-cultural. Managers and researchers will need to understand how culture effects customer behaviour in the upcoming years as marketers explore new foreign markets. With the development of economic globalization, more emphasis is being paid to cross-cultural consumer behaviour research [2]-[4]. Studies on consumption behaviours among countries find that cultural values are at the root of consumer behaviour, however, very little studies attempt to empirically link cultural factors to consumer behaviour in China [5]. Hence, there is a significant study gap in the extant literature which this study seeks to fill.

Moreover, some scholars [6], [8] claim that global consumers are embracing American values and that the world has become one standard Global Consumer, whereas others argue that there is great variation and culture drives different purchasing decisions [6], [8], [9]. Companies might make mistakes by conducting universal advertising campaigns if they misunderstood consumer behaviour. Furthermore, some academics feel that culture has remained relatively intact from generation to generation [7] while others found that cultural values change overtime and in different places and become Global Consumer Culture (GCC) [8]. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how Chinese consumers make decisions in other countries with different culture; identify the causal conditions and fundamental factors that determine their consumer behaviour; to examine whether Chinese consumers maintain their cultural characters in other countries. To achieve these objectives, we developed a theoretical framework that provides insights into the cross-culture consumer behaviour of Chinese in Europe by linking the cultural factors and decision-making process. Furthermore, this study separates the factors into external and internal categories and identified the fundamental drivers and detailed procedure in the decision-making process. Finally, we propose a cross-cultural persistence/adaptation theory and argue that cultural traits developed in convergence evolution through social selection during a long period of time and Chinese consumers persist most of characters but adapt some perceptions and actions overtime in other countries.

In the section that follows, we review relevant literature and

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discuss the theories of national culture and consumer behaviour. Section III outlines the research design and methods employed in this study. Findings and discussions are presented in Section IV which shows the results from data analysis and explain the results. Finally, we conclude with some theoretical implications and suggestions for practitioners and policy makers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. National Culture

Culture is defined as “collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” [9]. It is usually believed that cultural values are reflected in nation-level constructs shared by nationals [10], [11]. National culture is defined a set of shared values, beliefs, and norms of a national society [12]. National cultural theories [10], [13], [14] are used to identify unique cultural attributes and to understand the national cultural values inherited within a specific community. Among others Hofstede’s model for comparing national societies consists of six independent dimensions including Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity/Femininity, Long-Term/Short-Term Orientation, and Indulgence/Restraint [14]. Hofstede’s model has been a largely cited cultural framework and recommended to scholars in cultural research [15], [6]. This study employed Hofstede’s concepts and dimensions in assessing the Chinese national culture.

Cultural studies could be conducted at different levels such as individual or national levels [16], [17]. Reference [5] found that most researchers have adopted Hofstede’s dimensions for use at the individual level, which might lead to inappropriate conclusions. Reference [19] argues that cultural studies should focus on specific individuals or groups of people and national culture dimensions are irrelevant for consumer decision making. However, if carefully constructed, it is possible to investigate how national-level variables affect characteristics of individuals [20] as individual perceptions are shaped both by unique personal characteristics and by collective cultural factors [18]. However, national cultural theories commonly fragmented the culture across national boundaries and there is little study conducted on the effects of national cultural attributes on decision making when they are traveling or moving to a country with different cultural attributes [14], [21].

B. Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is defined as “those acts of individuals directly involved in obtaining, using, and disposing of economic goods and services, including the decision processes that precede and determine these acts” [22]. Reference [23] argues that consumer behaviours typically analyse the processes of groups or individuals purchasing/disposing of products and services, and the concepts or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires. Customer value, “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others [9]”, can be used for understanding consumer behaviour as values of individuals can be related to some attitudes and behaviour [16]. Reference [9] measures the desired, [10] reflects the desirable and [24]

concerns both the desired and the desirable values.

Consumer behaviour is essential to understand what consumers need and what exactly influences their buying behaviour. Many organizations spend lots of their resources to study how consumers make their buying decision, what they buy, how much they buy, when and where they buy [25]. The black box model [26] shows the interaction of stimuli, consumer characteristics, and decision process and consumer responses. The marketing stimuli are planned and processed by the companies, whereas the environmental stimuli are given by social factors [27] based on the economic [28] political, and cultural circumstances [29] of a society. However, the black box model focuses on the processes inside a consumer, which is difficult to predict. Yet, study investigates the cultural characteristics and the relationship between structural factors and the decision making of the consumers.

C. Consumer Decision Making

The study of consumer behaviour focuses on the processes that individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products or services to satisfy needs and desires [30]. Consumer decision making is a systematic process that the consumer goes through before making the purchase decision [31]. Every consumer is distinctive, and the decision-making ability might be different between one and another but may be based on a process [27], [32]. A consumer decision making process involves need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, selection, and purchase decision, post-purchase behaviour and disposal options [31]. Nevertheless, it is not necessary for every consumer to pass through all the stages and some stages can be skipped as there are a variety of types of consumption [32].

There are numerous models of consumer decision making process [33]. The Anderson Model of Decision recognizes the importance of information and emphasizes the importance of consumer attitudes [34]. The Nicosia model consists of four fields and explains the buying decision for a new product by confusing on the communication between the firm and its potential consumers [35]. Model of [36] consists of two levels of factors that influence the consumer. The first level includes personal and psychological factors, such as perception and learning and the second level includes family, group, and social influences. Reference [37] presented an adapted model for the service industry, which was termed the stimulus-response model. This model is based on four interactive components including stimulus, communication channels, buyer’s characteristics, and purchase. However, the traditional model is criticized by saying that it is a rational perspective, but people may behave irrationally [23]. Some consumers might not go through the sequence whenever they make decision. A consumer might be impulsive and make an unplanned purchase at the last moment. Reference [38] argues that shopping momentum may occur when an initial purchase provides a psychological impulse that enhances the purchase of a second, unrelated product. Reference [39] develops a Marketing Spiral model of the decision process and explains that the more the consumer engages, from interaction to engagement, to

participation, to conversation, to affinity, to a community.

D. Cross-Cultural Consumer Behaviour

The last few decades witnessed the increase of international trade, worldwide investment, and the development of multinational companies (MNCs), information technology and the growth of global media [40]. The market globalization might lead to increasing cultural homogenization [41] and therefore the development of GCC [42]. It is a proposition that consumers and businesses around the world have a common understanding or a shared set of consumption related symbols and behaviours [43], [44]. Consumer Culture (CC) refers to the practices of a specific group of consumers when bought products and services, are similar to their lifestyles [44]. Reference [40] suggests consumer's cultural positioning could be spread from global, to regional, national, and ethnic and individual CC. During the last few decades, GCC has been a dominant phenomenon. However, in recent years, anti-globalization has been increased by political and economic forces, which leads to renewed interest in national consumer culture (NCC) [21].

Cultural compatibility is defined as the degree of consistency between the host country's culture and foreign cultures. However, [45] found that there is a positive effect of compatibility on purchase intention. Reference [46] found that cultural compatibility has direct positive effect on purchase likelihood. However, [40] examines the link between culture and global brand attitude and found correlations in only four of 14 national cultural dimensions. Moreover, the simultaneous exposure to two cultures becomes a research interest [47]. Cultural conflicts may emerge when a low degree of cultural compatibility exists, consequently consumer attitude and consumer behaviour may change. Some research findings suggest that cultural incompatibility will cause unfavourable brand evaluations [48]. Such incompatibility will influence consumer attitudes and behaviour responses and therefore different countries' consumers behave differently, such as in the European and Asian markets as the difference in cultural value systems causes consumer behaviour to vary [8], [49]. Most past research studies focus on the effects of cross-cultural differences on consumer decision-making and purchase behaviour [50], [51] but more study might be necessary to explore consumer behaviour in another market with different culture.

In general, consumer behaviour is driven by a variety of desires and conditions. Each person's distinct personality may affect his/her consuming behaviour because the personality refers to unique psychological characteristics in each person [52]. However, cultural factors [9] and social factors [53] might also influence consumer behaviour as every consumer belongs to a group and his/her purchase decision could be influenced by values and attitude of the group. Moreover, [9] believes that cultural attributes are shaped by individuals' social environment, not their genes. When a consumer moved to another nation with different culture, he/she might be influenced by another national culture and adapts his/her consumer behaviour.

Because the extant literature holds contradictory arguments and ambiguous results, we explore the characteristics of Chinese consumer behaviour in Europe and examine their decision-making process as China represents the archetype of Eastern culture which is different from Western culture [9]. Moreover, this study identifies the barriers when Chinese consume in Europe and make implications for the policy makers.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The research attempts to explore the Chinese consumer behaviour overseas to obtain a better understanding. We adopted a grounded theory approach [54] in which authors went into the locations and spoke with the persons involved. The study data were methodically collected and processed in the grounded theory, and the well-developed approach ensured that grounded theory models could be produced from primary data.

This study employs semi-structured interview as a main method to collect qualitative data. The concept of theoretical sampling is adopted that investigator goes to the place and meets and talks to people who are involved in the phenomenon [55]. The number of sample cases depends on theoretical saturation that no additional data can be found in developing the properties of the concepts. The interview questions include the reasons for consuming in Europe, the products, or projects they spend their resources on and how they make decisions, and their opinions on their current consumption of Chinese consumer in Europe. Broad questions allow the respondents to share their perceptions and experiences.

24 in-depth interviews were conducted in London, Paris, Rome, Beijing, and England in 2018 to 2021 (Appendix 1). The interviews were not audio recorded and the interviewees were anonymous because of some private information and sensitive opinions involved. Moreover, true information and personal perspectives were collected in an informal chat. At the beginning, five pilot interviews were conducted in London. As the categories emerged from the data, the sample was expanded to increase the diversity of the sample and to strengthen the emerging theory by defining the properties of the categories.

Other interviews were conducted in Paris, Rome, Beijing, and England with those who was travelling or living in European countries. This study utilised open, axial, and selective coding [56] to analyse data and to develop the concepts and relationships between them. The research findings were presented by using a set of interrelated concepts and interview quotes were used to support them [55]

IV. FINDINGS

The grounded theory model summarizes the findings, which combines the structure and process. The structure sets the stage and creates the context in which a phenomenon is situated while the process denotes the actions. The grounded theory provides a comprehensive picture by linking the causal conditions, process, and consequences.

The model (Fig. 1) shows that the phenomenon of interest in this investigation is cross-culture consumer behaviour, and the

context of this study is made up of Chinese consumers in Europe. The causal conditions influencing consumer behaviour include conservatism, emotionality, acquaintance community, long-term orientation, and principles. The actions include planning and preparing, seeing, and learning, purchasing, and sharing, spending, and investing, selecting, and persisting. The consequences include cultural recognition, adaptation, and the problems include political and social environment, complexity, and restrictions.

A. Cultural Factors

The cultural factors are those events or variables that lead to the occurrence or development of the phenomenon. In this study they refer to those factors that cause Chinese consumers' expenditure in Europe.

Conservatism

About two thirds of interviewees think that they are influenced by traditional Chinese culture, and they are conservative. They believe that people should reserve some resources for the future use and should not run out of all of them financial resources. For example, an interviewee discloses that.

"My parents had never got out of the country because they were so poor and had to save money for their kids and for their future. Now the economy developed, and I have some spare money, but I will 'leave some leeway' for the future." (No. 5).

"I am not very generous, but the old generation says that 'you do not have money when you are young and do not have time when you are old'. I have a dream to travel all over the world and now I want my dream to come true." (No. 11)

Emotionality

Most interviewees express that emotionally "affection is on a journey". They had a dream a long time ago and treated the trip as a milestone and a nice experience in their lives. Some travellers accompany their elderly parents and use this opportunity as family time. A group of friends or colleagues would like to travel together to build or improve their friendships. Just-married couples took a trip as their honeymoon that they would never forget. For example, a female interviewee shares her story.

"I am living in America and my parents are living in China. They are getting older and older, and 'the child is raised but not to be kissed'. I would like to show them somewhere. I want them to have a nice time with me." (No. 4)

"We are a group of high school classmates, and we had an appointment at our graduation ceremony that we would have a trip together thirty years later. I haven't seen many of them since we graduated. Thank the online social platform we have a WeChat group and organised this trip." (No. 3)

Acquaintance Community

70% of Chinese customers believe that they are living in an acquaintance community. Although people live in a big city or

a big area, they do not know each other. Unlike those people who lived in a small village long time ago, they still have a relatively small community in which everybody knows each other. For example, a lady in Beijing shows her idea.

"I got a lot of information and opportunities in a community and without relationships with the members I would not be able to survive. A trip can be a common interest in our discussion and some products could be shared with others." (No. 2)

"The Chinese proverb 'birds of a feather flock together' shows that the members in a same community have a common idea. A trip would be a good opportunity to build or improve our relationships. Moreover, buying a gift abroad would be a good idea which means that 'you are always in my mind'." (No. 6)

Long-term Orientation

Two thirds of interviewees show a long-term orientation, and they would think about the future when consider how to use their time and money. When they spend their resources, they would consider the long-term benefits. When they choose products and services, they prefer durable and high-quality products and the future benefits they get. Although a few young boys and girls are quite confident about their future financial resources they would like to consumer more at current time. For example, a middle-aged gentleman who had been in the UK for 14 years expressed:

"A Chinese proverb says that 'good steel is used on the blade'. We are living in a good time, but we need to prepare for the worst situation. For example, nobody predicted the COVID-19 and who knows what will happen tomorrow. Another Chinese proverb is great 'plan ahead' or 'get ready for the rain'." (No. 22)

"I am confident with my future, and I would like to spend my time and money to enjoy my life. I have got family funds and policies to cover me. Do not have too much 'unreasonable worry'. There are many new technologies and products, and I should not be out of date." (No. 7)

Principles

There are some fundamental values in traditional Chinese culture and most interviews are keeping these virtues as principles in their daily life, which will influence their consumer behaviour. They realise some unethical activities like cheating, fake products, and fraud and some of them have got loss in their experience. Most interviewees argue that they would not consume immoral products and services and be careful when they are living abroad.

"I hate those businessmen or companies that cheat customers, and I would never buy their products again. I have experienced some bad events which gave me a terrible impression about the city and the country. I have my bottom line and I would not do anything that against my principles." (No. 9)

"I will consider a lot of factors when I purchase a product or choose a place, like price and quality but if I

know they have a bad reputation I would not give them a chance. 'Good things don't go out, bad things spread for thousands of miles. We have social media, and we can search relevant information online.'" (No. 14)

B. Actions and Reactions

The actions or reactions are taken by the consumers to respond to the causal conditions discussed above and demonstrate the characteristics of their consumer behaviour. The actions and reactions include planning and preparing, seeing and learning, purchasing and sharing, saving and investing, selecting and persisting.

Planning and Preparing

Most interviewees say they have been planning and preparing for their trip for long time. They would search for information online and get information from friends and relatives. Most of the interviewees preferred to join a group with a travel agency and then book the trips online or made telephone calls. One third of interviewees reminded that they would check the terms and conditions because there were many "cheaters" and "traps". For example, a very experienced traveller conveys that.

"Word of mouth" is very important when I choose my destinations and the types of travel. Advertisement and promotions are noticeable, but I trust my relatives and friends rather than a travel agent or a leaflet. They shared some good experiences and lessons with me". (No. 1)

"We always say 'preparedness ensures success, unpreparedness spells failure. I joined a group with a travel agency because I do not know the local language and could not find the tourist attractions by myself". (No. 9)

Seeing and Learning

More than half of the interviewees treated their trips as a seeing and learning journey. Sightseeing was still the main purpose for many travellers, which was so-called "daka" visiting the must-see places, including landmarks, attractions, and pop-up stores or installations, by taking a photo or video to show they had been there on social media. But more and more visitors focused on the cultural travel, visiting cultural attractions like museums, compared with shopping. It indicated that Chinese tourists changed gradually from sightseeing and shopping to in-depth learning. For example, a middle-aged gentleman shared his opinion that:

"A Chinese proverb says that 'it is better to travel ten thousand miles than to read ten thousand books.' We can only get a deep impression when we see it by our own eyes and hear it by your own ears. It is always superficial when you learn it on a paper." (No. 8)

"Confucius said 'when three are walking together, I am sure to find teachers among them. They are very much different from us. They are well developed and have advanced knowledge and experiences and we can learn a lot from them.'" (No. 8)

Purchasing and Sharing

Most interviewees claim that they would purchase some

higher quality and regionally distinctive products for themselves, family members or friends when they are traveling abroad. A tangible and visible product could remind them of a happy time and an exciting experience in their life. Customers would like to shop together (group buy) and share their experiences with their group members. For example, a young lady shares her opinion:

"I enjoy shopping. It is a good experience and a beautiful memory in my life. Some products are quite expensive and require delivery fees if below a total amount and therefore I would like to shop together with my friends, and we can share the products. I would like to share my products and experience with my friends and otherwise 'you are walking with beautiful dress at night'." (No. 14)

"I will need to buy every family member a present when I come back from another country. Many friends might ask me to buy some products on their behalf. 'Travel a thousand miles to bestow a goose feather, and a small gift may be a token of profound friendship.'" (No. 13)

Spending and Investing

More than half of the interviewees treat spending as investing. They treat a trip and a present as an emotional investment. They believe that paying tuition fees for their children is an educational investment – investing in people. They buy a property and see this expenditure as a life investment – investing in your living. They spend the money now but obtain long-term benefits in the future. For example, a gentleman in his 50s express his perceptions.

"I would like to spend my money in some long-term projects. It is more like an investment. You enjoy the "value in use" now and get some return in the future. You may think it is confusing, but it is clear for me. If you spend 500 pounds on renting, it is consumption but if you pay 500 pounds for mortgage it is an investment. You change a cash asset to a property asset and enjoy living in the house." (No. 21)

"I spend a lot of money to pay my child education, but I see this as an investment. It worth doing as you just transfer your financial asset to intellectual property. A good child is the best output, and you will get good return in the future. I spend some money on this trip, and I learnt a lot of life-long knowledge, which is a good investment project." (No. 22)

Persisting and Adapting

About 60% of interviewees argue that they would choose a project according to their principles and keep doing it. They would not give up easily because an opportunity may fleet and never come back. However, some young interviewees who have been in Europe for a long period of time would like to change the plan and move onto other alternatives. Older Chinese consumers would like to keep on choosing same brands or shops, but younger consumers prefer to try things different. For example, an older lady shares her opinion on this point:

"I prefer to buy the product that I know and from a shop

I familiar with. If I decided to do anything, I would persist till I succeed. Some young men or women give up easily and change very often. Maybe life is too easy for them, or they have too many opportunities. But 'easy chance easy go'. They are too weak under pressure." (No. 10)

"I think some older people are very stubborn and they do not want to accept new things and do not want to change. You have many choices why not try another one. 'Do not put all your eggs in one basket' and keep your mind open. I like challenge and I would like to do something different, learn something new at a new place." (No. 20)

C. Consequences

Interviewees share their opinions on their experiences and identifies some difficulties or problems that negatively influenced their decision making. 80% of interviewees recognise traditional Chinese culture, but 30% show the changes when they live in another country. Most interviewees claim that they would consider political and social environment when selecting a destination. 60% of interviewees believe that the complexity of the procedure influenced their decision on the trip and purchase of products. Half of the travellers complain that restrictions held back their decision and damaged their experience.

Cultural Persistence

Most interviewees admit that they are influenced by traditional Chinese culture. Those interviewees who were born and grown up in China recognise fundamental values and keep traditional virtues as principles in their daily life, which influence their decision making. For example, an old gentleman shares his opinion:

"We have many traditional virtues, and we should cherish them as precious wealth. Such as 'benevolence, righteousness, manners, wisdom, trustworthiness', working hard and saving. Whenever and wherever we live we should apply these virtues in our activities." (No. 3)

"I was born and grown up in the UK, but I agree to my parents' and my grandparents' instructions. We should not waste any food or recourses and make the best use of everything. We need to cherish our time and every opportunity and let everybody fully display his talents." (No.16)

Cultural Adaptation

About half of the interviewees argue that they have changed some views and activities when they are travelling or living in another country. Some middle-aged people have changed a lot since they moved in European countries including thoughts and behaviour. They believe that Chinese people have strong adaptation capability. For example, a middle-aged gentleman shares his experience:

"'When in Rome, do as roman do'. We are in another country, and we should respect their culture and follow their rules. I found many good points in western people, and we can learn these good things from them. We can through away the dross in our habits." (No. 4)

"'Renovate yourself, do so from day to day'. They should always learn and refresh ourselves. My kids were born in China and grown up in the UK and they can learn and adapt quickly. (No. 22)

Political and Social Environment

Most interviewees expressed that they would consider the political and social environment of the countries or cities when they choose a destination. In addition to factors like attractions and price levels, travellers will check a country's reputation and therefore "world of mouth" is important. They will review the comments by travellers and in particular some lower star feedback. For instance, an old lady expressed her opinion that:

"Confucius says that 'one will not enter a tottering state, nor dwell in a disorganized one'. I would not choose a country that does not welcome us. We are looking for a happy time, not carrying money and taking a long journey to see a horrible face. Some arrogant countries and unfriendly people hate you and you need to avoid their pride and prejudice. Fight or flight!" (No. 9)

"Many countries and many people are friendly but some politicians or people who have ulterior motives would smear Chinese people. We are sorry for any inconvenience we may cause for example traffic problems at a famous attraction or some noise in a big crowd. Some people might envy, jealousy or hate you and would never accept you. 'Mencius's mother moves home three times to choose a neighbour' and we need to do so" (No. 6)

Complexity

60% of interviewees perceived that if the procedure is very complex and time consuming, they would not put it as a priority. Travel abroad is expected to be an expensive and long journey and people will take much time to prepare, for example they must apply for a passport and a visa, then book flights but if it goes beyond their acceptable level they will stay away. There are many domestic attractions, and they will compare the choices and make a pecking order. Some interviewees leave the procedure to the travel agents, and this might be the reason why travel agencies are popular in China. Moreover, language barriers and difficulties in arriving at the attractions and booking accommodations make the travellers step back or ask an agent for help.

"When I was young traveling abroad was really difficult and time consuming. We needed to get many certificates for applying a passport. It took months to prepare the documents, to book an interview and to obtain a travel document. Now it is getting better but there are still some complex procedures with some countries." (No. 9)

"We are all expecting 'a spur-of-the-moment trip', a journey without a tedious procedure. Many rich people or movie stars hold a passport with which they can buy a flight ticket at the airport and fly away to anywhere all over the world. I bought some souvenirs, and I would need to refund my duty by queuing round the block. I need to arrive at the airport three hours before the flight taking off and to wait eight hours for a transit flight." (No. 12)

D.Restrictions

More than half of the interviewees were satisfied with the organization of the trips. But most of the time, the itinerary was fixed, and some tourist guides arranged a very short period at an attraction and much time in a shopping mall. They found that it was convenient to buy any products and pay in Europe. However, there were still some restrictions for example, limited amount, and using specific accounts and cards. Customers must exchange money to different currencies although in mainland Europe Euro is widely accepted. 60% of interviewees were not happy with the duty declaration and would like the authority to increase the allowance. They would appreciate delivery services international deliveries. An interviewee who had been working as a tourist guide expressed that:

“I know our travellers would like the trip to be freer and more flexible. I also hate to force the whole group to go shopping in a store as this activity wastes many people’s precious time. It is a balance. It takes much time and effort to organize a trip by yourself. You join a team and simply follow the tourist guide and leave the unfamiliar procedure to the agents, but you will lose your freedom and flexibility. We always adjust our itineraries according to customers’ feedback, but it is hard to please all.” (No. 14)

“I do online shopping, and my items will be delivered to my door. But I cannot buy everything some local style products. I really want to get a special product at this special time and special place but must carry them by myself. It would be great if I can get an international delivery service to my home or if I could buy it now and collect it later.” (No. 2)

V.CONCLUSION

This paper developed a grounded theory model (Fig. 1) of cross-culture consumer behaviour, which provided a full picture by linking cultural factors, actions, and consequences. A decision-making process model illustrated that consumer behaviour depends on the combination of external and internal factors (Fig. 2). A culture persistence/adaption theory proposes that cultural characteristics developed through social selection during the long history and Chinese consumers persist and adapt some perceptions and actions overtime in other countries (Fig. 3). In the literature, numerous attempts have been made to develop comprehensive framework of current research on cross-culture behaviour. However, extant models of influence of culture on consumer behaviour do not provide a framework in the literature, and are not firmly grounded in theory, or do not contain a full account of how specific cultural dimensions affect specific consumer behaviour components. In fact, existing models are often too complicated to put in practice, containing an abundance of abstract terms and constructs that manager may not fully comprehend, let alone to use to collect data on foreign consumers [57]. Therefore, comprehensive theoretical framework is developed to provide insights into cross-culture consumer behaviour by identifying the characteristics of Chinese consumer behaviour in Europe.

Chinese consumers prefer to join a team to visit popular

attractions as cultural learners, and purchase products together with group members. They share products and experiences in a community to build or improve relationships. Chinese traditional society still exist in that people are living in a small acquaintance community. These characteristics indicate the collectivism of Chinese culture [9]. They treat a product or an experience as a memory of a period in life. This is consistent with emotional perspective of culture [58], [11]. This study found that the cultural, social, and economic factors influence Chinese choices and decisions in Europe. Moreover, the Chinese consumption behaviour is influenced by environmental factors such as cultural and social [59], which support the black box model [26].

The decision-making process model developed for Chinese consumers in Europe (Fig. 2) emphasizes that external factors are conditions and internal factors fundamentally determine consumer behaviour. In addition to the factors mentioned in the black box model [26], political and ethical factors would be considered by the Chinese consumers. Recently, consumer attitudes and behaviours have been influenced by some phenomena including climate change and corporate social responsibility (CSR), and conscientious consumerism becomes a key determinant in consumer decision making [60]. This has made consumer make a purchase decision based on the social responsibility of the company [61]. The consumer gathers CSR information while selecting the product or service, and they evaluate these products based on the effectiveness [62]. Moreover, this model covers the detailed contents in the decision-making process including traditional Marketing Mix such as product, price, and place, and other specific like time, mode, and reflection. Customers’ evaluation and feedback are more and more used by future consumers and therefore marketing managers need to consider customer reflection.

A culture persistence/adaption theory (Fig. 3) is proposed that cultural characters developed in convergence evolution through social selection during the long history. If some people’s traits were not accepted by the community, they may extinct, and their gene would not be inherited. Chinese cultural traits persist through generations and some features are kept by most Chinese consumers when they are staying in another country. For example, they have more distress awareness than local people. This finding makes implication on Ethnic Consumer Culture (ECC) phenomenon that diversity exists in culture and unchanged from generation to generation [7], [6]. However, some Chinese consumers adapt their perceptions and actions overtime in other countries. For example, some young Chinese in Europe are more independent, socially aggressive, confident in decision making than those similar consumers in China. This finding reflects the GCC hypothesis [8], [21].

This study provides a better understanding of cross culture consumer behaviour, and managers and consumer researchers can use the frameworks as a guide to see how customers in other nations will react to their goods or services. Cultural marketing strategies could be adopted by the companies, which reflects cultural characteristics in product design, such as the emotional and collectivism consumer behaviour. The shops could provide more payment facilities, and some delivery services. Travel

agencies may design some more flexible products to reflect consumers' preferences. Moreover, the study identified potential barriers such as political and social environment, complex procedures, and restrictions. Therefore, authorities might consider reducing the complexity of the procedure and release some restrictions for example, passport and visa applications.

There are some caveats to this study and some areas may need more inquiry. Firstly, this study only investigated Chinese consumers' perceptions, but other nationals might have different views. Future research can investigate other nationals in Europe for example consumers from India or Arabic countries. This study only investigated Chinese consumers in Europe and future research could also extend to other regions or countries, for example Chinese consumers in Islamic countries. Finally, quantitative studies could be conducted to test the propositions in the future.

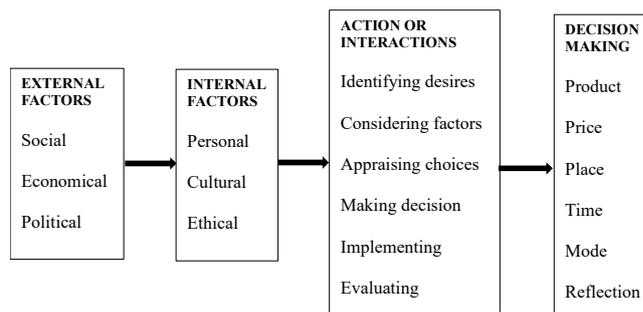


Fig. 2 A consumer decision-making process model

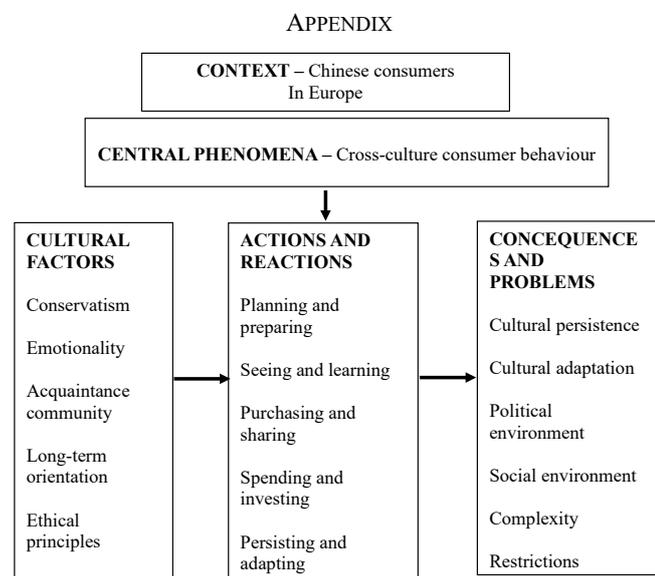


Fig. 1 A grounded theory model of cross-culture consumer behaviour

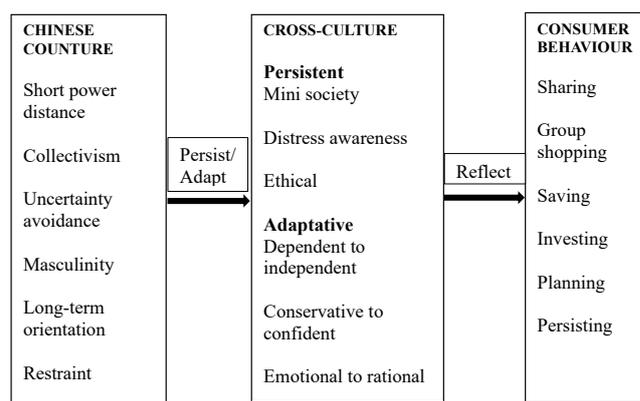


Fig. 3 A persistence/adaptation theory of cross-cultural consumer behaviour

TABLE I
INTERVIEWS

Interviews	Time	Place	Age	Years in Europe	Gender	Background	Interviews	Time	Place	Age	Years in Europe	Gender	Background
No. 1	10 th Aug 18	Paris	20s	2 years	M	Student	13	17 th Aug 19	Paris	50s	12 years	F	Professional
2	10 th Aug 18	Paris	40s	Lesson than 1	F	Professional	14	17 th Aug 19	Paris	40s	6 years	F	Professional
3	10 th Aug 18	Paris	70s	Lesson than 1	M	Retirement	15	19 th Aug 19	London	30s	2 years	F	Academic
4	12 th Aug 18	Rome	50s	2 years	M	Manager	16	19 th Aug 19	London	20s	15 years	F	Student
5	12 th Aug 18	Rome	50s	1 year	M	Manager	17	23 rd July 20	England	40s	14 years	M	Scientist
6	12 th Aug 18	Rome	40s	Lesson than 1	F	Manager	18	23 rd July 20	England	40s	13 years	F	Teacher
7	26 th July 19	London	30s	5 years	F	Academic	19	24 th July 20	England	20s	3 years	F	Professional
8	26 th July 19	London	40s	Lesson than 1	M	Professional	20	24 th July 20	England	30s	7 years	M	Academic
9	27 th July 19	London	60s	Lesson than 1	F	Retirement	21	6 th Aug 21	England	50s	15 years	M	Businessman
10	27 th July 19	London	60s	1 year	M	Manager	22	6 th Aug 21	England	50s	14 years	F	Businessman
11	16 th Aug 19	Beijing	50s	Lesson than 1	M	Businessman	23	7 th Aug 21	England	40s	12 years	M	Businessman
12	16 th Aug 19	Beijing	50s	Lesson than 1	M	Businessman	24	7 th Aug 21	England	40s	11 years	F	Businessman

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