

2008

## **An investigation of decision-making style of Chinese college student online apparel shoppers**

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**AN INVESTIGATION OF DECISION-MAKING STYLE OF CHINESE COLLEGE  
STUDENT ONLINE APPAREL SHOPPERS**

**A Thesis**

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the**

**Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science**

**in**

**The School of Human Ecology**

**By**

**Yao Zeng**

**B.A., Wuhan University of Science and Engineering, China, 1998  
December, 2008**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Chuanlan Liu, my advisor, and Dr. Jenna Kuttruff, my co-advisor, for their invaluable guidance and encouragement extended throughout the study. I also thank Dr. Bonnie Belleau and Dr. Haesun Park for serving as members of my advisory committee for their academic guidance during the period of my study.

I also want to thank Dr. Yongnian Chi for his valuable comments and suggestion that greatly improved the technical quality of this research. A special acknowledgment is given to Shu Zhou, Fenghe Xie, Wenhui Zhang, Jieli Lin and Xia Nin for volunteering to collect data for the survey in China. Without their help, I would not have been able to complete this work.

Finally, behind the scenes are my friends and family who were always there for me during my studies. I would like to thank Ms. Sue Jean Smock, who has been so dedicated to helping me and encouraged me through the whole process of my thesis. Thanks to Nan Jiang, she always had the answers to my statistics questions. I am beholden to you all for your fellowship, reassurance, and support. Special gratitude goes to my beloved husband Yixin and my sweet daughters Esther and Ivy, my Mom, and my sisters. I want you to know how much I appreciate the sacrifices you made for me to finish my thesis. They have been an incredible support system. I hope to honor them in all I do.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Internet users in China increased to 210 million with an annual growth rate of 53.3 percent in 2007 (CNNIC, 2008). This dramatic increase of Internet usage in China provides numerous opportunities for online marketers. Thirty-eight percent of Chinese netizens are 18 to 24 years old, among whom college netizens account for a large proportion in China (CNNIC, 2008). Given the market potential of targeting this group, research is needed to understand Chinese college students' online shopping behavior.

The purpose of this research was to better understand Chinese college student online apparel shoppers by investigating their decision-making style and explore the relationships between their decision-making characteristics and related online apparel shopping behavior and consumption. Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986) was adopted as a theoretical framework to guide this study. CSI has been recognized as a useful tool to understand consumers' shopping orientation. This market tool has been applied to effectively understand consumers from different countries and cultures (Lysonski, Srini, & Zotos, 1996). However, no research has been done to apply this tool to understanding Chinese college students as online apparel shoppers. This research intends to fill the identified gap.

This empirical study employed an online survey for data collection. A questionnaire was developed and administered to students at five universities from different cities in China. This study found that Chinese college students spent more time online on pre-purchase decision-making activities. Most of the respondents spent time looking for interesting apparel products and evaluating different apparel products online, but not on ordering the selected products.

The results demonstrated that some of the characteristics of the CSI are related to the frequency of buying apparel online, and the dollar amount spent online for apparel purchasing. The findings show that recreational consciousness, hedonistic consciousness, brand



consciousness, habitual consciousness, and brand-loyalty consciousness have significant correlations with the frequency of online apparel purchases. However, only brand conscious and habitual conscious, brand-loyalty conscious are significantly correlated with the amount of money spent online for apparel purchases by Chinese college students.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

With the adoption and diffusion of the Internet for commercial purposes, shopping online has become popular. With the online population growing, worldwide business has changed dramatically. According to a recent report, more than eighty-five percent of the world's Internet populations, more than 875 million people, are shopping online (Nielsen, 2008). Among all online merchandise categories, apparel has surpassed jewelry and automobiles to become the second most profitable category after books (Auchard, 2005). Although books are still the most popular items purchased over the Internet with 41 percent of the online shoppers in the world, clothing/accessories/shoes increased from 20 percent to 36 percent, which is the biggest increase in online shopping (Nielsen, 2008). The Internet has enabled apparel retailers of all types and sizes to reach global consumers. As more consumers are shopping online, traditional apparel retailers and manufacturers have stepped into this information technology-based marketplace to compete with e-tailers who entered earlier, as they try to take advantage of this retail channel. In the meantime, with more retailers and manufacturers around the world moving into this new marketplace, the competition is becoming more intense.

One of the largest online consumer groups, with the greatest profit potential in the world, is in China. According to a survey by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC, 2008), there were 210 million Chinese individuals using the Internet in 2007. The size of the online population in China is still growing at a fast pace, along with Internet infrastructure improvements. Within the large online population of the total Internet users in China, 22.1 percent of them had online shopping experiences and 31.8 percent of them were between 18 to 24 years old. Therefore college students account for a heavy proportion of Chinese netizen (CNNIC, 2008). Students make up nearly a third of Chinese Internet users.

Furthermore, with consumers' purchasing power increasing, the apparel consumption needs of Chinese consumers are increasing and the amount of money spent on apparel products is increasing. For instance, according to a consumption investigation, Chinese career women spent nearly 10 percent of their salary on clothing (China News Service, 2007).

The lucrative online apparel retail market in China attracts both Chinese domestic and foreign apparel retailers and manufactures to establish a market share in China. Chinese entrepreneurs have been establishing brand names in the Internet based retail market. International e-tailers, such as amazon.com and ebay.com began to enter China's market a few years ago. However, e-tail profitability has not yet been realized for foreign e-tailers in the Chinese e-tail market (Ou, Sia, & Jee, 2007).

In fact, gaining a large enough number of loyal customers is the key to winning in this competition-intense global marketplace. Retailers must understand and target online consumers from different countries and cultures before they move into the global market for business expansion. Online apparel retailers, especially, need to thoroughly understand their target market in different countries. Apparel consumers not only look for functional features, but also for other non-functional features associated with apparel products such as style and brand name, which are perceived and interpreted differently by consumers in different countries. Understanding target consumer groups from different countries and cultures is imperative for retailers to adapt their retail market strategies to win at global retail competition.

One of the effective approaches to a better understanding of online consumers may be from a decision-making perspective (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1986). The consumer decision-making process consists of five linear steps, 1) program reorganization, 2) information search, 3) alternative comparison, 4) choice- making, and 5) purchase. Based on individual mental orientations, each consumer develops and practices this decision-making process in

different ways, which have been characterized as decision-making styles (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). The decision-making style in turn shapes individual purchase decisions. Previous researchers used the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) to categorize consumers into groups with different dominant decision-making characteristics (e.g. Fan & Xiao, 1998 & Hiu, Siu, Wang, 2001). The CSI has been used to profile consumer decision-making style successfully across cultures, including South Korea (Hafstrom, Chae, & Chung, 1992), New Zealand (Durvasula, Lysonski & Andrews, 1993), and Germany (Walsh, Mitchell, & Henning-Thurau, 2001), and it has been demonstrated to have valid variables used to segment target markets (Hafstrom et al., 1992; Fan & Xiao, 1998). This instrument has been used successfully to study apparel buying in both store and mail order catalog contexts (Fan & Xiao, 1998; Tai, 2005). Also, it has been shown to be a good tool for understanding online apparel shopping by U.S. college students (Cowart & Goldsmith, 2007). Comparable research needs to be conducted among Chinese college students.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Within an emerging economy, Chinese consumers obtain more skills and abilities to make better decisions and to develop some specific decision-making styles with more purchasing experience in all of the different retail channels. Previous scholars have investigated Chinese consumers' decision-making styles (e.g., Fan & Xiao, 1998; Tai, 2005; Wang, Siu, & Hui, 2002). However, Chinese consumers are currently in a dynamic process. Research is needed to understand Chinese consumer groups as China moves into different economic periods and technologically advanced stages.

Among the Chinese consumers, college students represent the biggest segment of the total Internet users (CNNIC, 2008). However, little research has been conducted to better understand this group of consumers. Understanding this group's online shopping behavior and

decision-making style are important for marketers to develop strategies to target big consumer groups.

Since the Internet impacts individual decision-making at every step of the decision-making process, online consumers may develop or demonstrate decision-making style that is different from those identified among Chinese shoppers by previous research. However, no systematic study has been conducted or published on understanding online Chinese shoppers from a decision-making perspective and specifically on profiling this group of consumers using the Consumer Style Inventory. This research intends to fill the identified gap. This research is the first one to apply CSI style to the research of online shopping in China.

### **1.2 Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the decision-making style of Chinese college students as online apparel shoppers and this group of shoppers' online apparel shopping behaviors. The conceptual framework of decision-making style designed by Sproles and Kedall (1986) was applied to understand this group of apparel shoppers. Specifically, the objectives of this research are to:

1. examine Chinese college students' online apparel shopping behaviors (e.g., website choices, product categories of online purchased apparel, decision-making steps completed through the Internet);
2. categorize Chinese online apparel shoppers' decision-making characteristics; and
3. examine the relationships between online apparel shopping behaviors and decision-making characteristics among the group of Chinese college students as online apparel shoppers.

### **1.3 Hypotheses**

H1: Chinese college students use the Internet to conduct pre-purchase decision making steps more frequently than to complete purchasing.

H2: Chinese College students as online apparel shoppers will show different decision-making characteristics compared with eight decision making characteristics initially identified by Sproles and Kedall (1986).

H3. There will be a relationship between decision-making characteristics and (a) the amount of money spent on online apparel purchasing and (b) the frequency of online apparel purchasing among the Chinese college students as online apparel shoppers.

### **1.4 Definition of Terms**

The following conceptual definitions are used in this study.

Netizen. Refers to general Internet users.

E-tailer. An e-tailer is a retailer that primarily uses the Internet as a medium for customers to shop for the goods or services provided.

Apparel online shopper. Refers to an individual who uses the Internet to complete one or more decision-making steps for buying an apparel product.

Online Apparel Pre-purchase Decision-Making (OAPDM). Refers to four steps of decision-making, (problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation and product choice of consumer decision-making activities) before the transaction for a selected apparel product.

Online apparel consumption. Refers to the amount of money spent online for buying apparel products and the frequency of buying apparel products online during a specified time period.

Online apparel transaction approach. Refers to the approaches of online apparel shoppers in paying for online selected apparel products.

Decision-Making Style. Is defined “as a mental orientation characterizing a consumer’s approach to making choices” (Sproles & Kendall, 1986, p.268).

Consumer Style Inventory (CSI). A tool used to classify consumer shopping orientation into different decision-making characteristics. The CSI, developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986), identified the following eight decision-making characteristics the initial research:

1. Perfectionist, High-Quality Conscious. A consumer has specific ideas about best quality products and the consistent look of these products in terms of their quality.
2. Brand Conscious, Price Equals Quality. A consumer associates quality with higher prices, national brands.
3. Novelty-Fashion Conscious. A consumer gains pleasure by seeking out the newest, most modern, and exciting product.
4. Recreational Shopping/Hedonistic Shopping Conscious. A consumer gains pleasure from the shopping experience.
5. Price Conscious, Value-for-Money. A consumer consistently searches for sales, bargains, and lower-priced products.
6. Impulsive, Careless. A consumer does not plan what he or she will shop for and is not concerned about the amount of money spent.
7. Confused by Overchoice. A consumer is confused and overwhelmed with too much product information and/or too many product choices.
8. Habitual, Brand-Loyal. A consumer tends to consistently stick with the same brand of product.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This section includes 1) background information about online shopping in China, 2) college students as online shoppers, 3) Consumer decision-making and Decision-Making Style as the conceptual framework for this study, and 4) Chinese college student online apparel shopping behavior and online apparel consumption.

#### **2.1 Online Shopping in China**

As the Internet becomes more developed in China and Chinese consumers' economic conditions continue improving, more people adopt and use the Internet for many purposes. According to a recent report issued by the China Internet Network Information Center (2008), the number of Internet users in China was 137 million in 2006. By the end of 2007, the number of Chinese Internet users had surpassed 210 million. Some analysts argued that China's Internet users will overtake the U.S as the largest group within the next few years since the Chinese economy is the fastest growing economy in the world as of the past decade (Rein, 2007). The number of Internet users in China is increasing with an annual growth rate of 53.3 percent last year (CNNIC, 2008). In fact, according to The Wall Street Journal (Riley, 2008), China is now just five million users short of surpassing the United States as the world's largest Internet market. Such a dramatic increase in Internet usage in China provides numerous opportunities for e-commerce. Such a dramatic increase in Internet usage in China provides numerous opportunities for e-commerce.

With the diffusion of the Internet, more Chinese are shopping online. It was reported that 22.1 percent of the total online population has had online-shopping experiences (CNNIC, 2008). In fact, the Internet was listed as the most frequently used channel for consumers to search for product information, followed by TV, and the newspaper (CNNIC, 2008). Consumers in China



reported that convenience in delivery and ease in purchase are the major reasons for shopping online (Lu & Rucker, 2006). The comparatively low price and large variety of goods are two other major reasons that lure people to online stores in China (Ou et al., 2007).

This growing Chinese online consumer group is the world's largest potential retail target market. Both Chinese domestic retailers and global retailers are trying to reach this group of consumers. During the past few years, several Chinese domestic e-tailors have built their brand names and captured significant e-tail market shares. International retailers, especially American-based e-tailors, have been trying to expand their business to China. For instance, Amazon.com and eBay.com launched their businesses in China in 2004 (Ou et al., 2007), trying to create a competitive advantage in the Chinese e-retail market. With many e-tailors around the world trying to obtain a market share, the competition in China is getting stronger.

Although the number of online users and online shoppers are increasing in China, problems still remain in credibility for web-based purchases. For instance, after comparing US eBay and China Eachnet, the two prominent online shopping ventures respectively, Ou et al. (2007) found that the major deterrents to online shopping in China are consumers' lack of trust in online vendors, legal concerns, low price-oriented market stimuli, limited choice of goods, and infrastructural inadequacy.

The eventual winners of online retailers will be the retailers who understand and target online Chinese consumers and, therefore, provide the right merchandise, service, and shopping experience to them for short term and long term profits. Since Chinese online consumers may be different from online consumers in other countries, it is important to understand this group of online shoppers for the following reasons.

First, retailers should realize that geographic and demographic of Chinese online shoppers are different from other countries. In China, most (74.9 percent) of the Internet users reside in

urban areas. The Internet users are relatively young, male, urban, and are disproportionately composed of students in China (Fallows, 2007).

Second, Chinese consumer online shopping behavior may differ from others. Richards & Shen (2006) found six dimensions of Chinese consumer online shopping behavior, which are: 1) recreational/fun shopping, 2) brand consciousness, 3) perceived risk, 4) deal proneness, 5) planned purchases, and 6) convenience as fundamental objectives. Furthermore, a strong preference for personal interaction in online purchasing behavior is prevalent in China (Efendioglu & Yip, 2004).

Third, Chinese culture has long favored face-to-face transactions (Efendioglu & Yip, 2004). People prefer to deal with someone who either possesses knowledge about the product, or who is a member of their social network. This strong preference is likely to have a negative impact on e-commerce development because online shopping is impersonal by nature (Haley, 2002; Samiee, 1998). Furthermore, since after-sale service is lagging in China, consumers strongly prefer to see and feel the products they purchase to make sure the qualities are satisfactory (Wong, Yen, & Fang, 2004).

This preference of face-to-face transaction tends to affect the payment methods of online shopping. In China, there are three types of payment methods: debit card, remittance from post office or bank account, and face-to-face cash payment upon delivery. Since the trust-worthiness of vendors is a major concern for doing business in China, and also because of the abundance of cheap labor in China, face-to-face cash payment is a popular method to handle online purchases (Bin, Chen, & Sun, 2003). At the current stage, the combination of online debit card and traditional face-to-face cash payment is considered acceptable practice by all parties in China (Efendioglu & Yip, 2004).

E-tailing is expected to grow in China. Online transactions have been increasing steadily over the past several years. By the end of 2003, about 40 per cent of all Internet users had become online shoppers.

## **2.2 College Students as Online Shoppers**

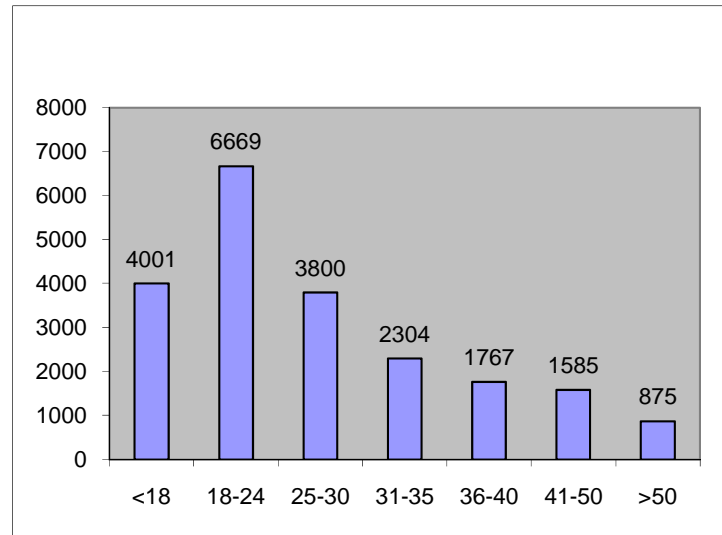
According to a survey (Gardyn, 2002), college students bring \$200 billion a year to the U.S market, with the average college student's available discretionary spending totaling \$287 each month. It is important for retailers and consumer behavior educators to better understand this group of the population because of their buying power in the marketplace (Xu & Paulins, 2005).

This younger group is also more likely to purchase products online. Shiu and Dawson (2004) found that the percentage of online users declined as age increased based on their study of Internet shopping in Britain, Germany, Japan, and Taiwan. However, college students are different in credit card usage as well as shopping behavior. Senior students should be more proficient than those in their first or second year of college after several years of computer literacy training. Also, senior students have more control over their finances since they are more likely to own credit cards (Lu & Rucker, 2006).

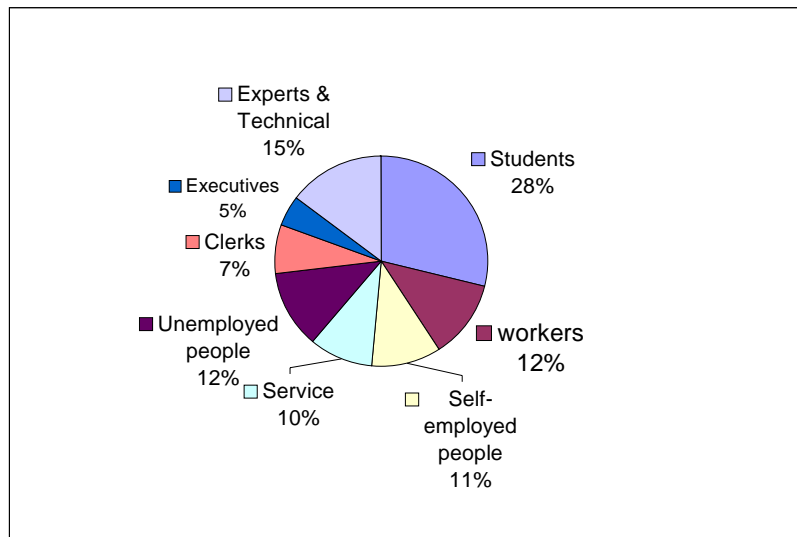
College students are the major online users in China (CNNIC, 2008). Statistics indicate that the largest proportion of Chinese Internet users is young people aged 18 to 24 (CNNIC, 2008) (Figure 1). Among all users, students make up nearly a third of Chinese Internet users (Figure 2).

The Internet is a relatively new channel to obtain the most updated fashion items. Young fashion leaders have more positive attitudes toward new fashionable items (Beaudoin, Moore, & Goldsmith, 1998). College students are more likely to accept new fashions because they are a young group of consumers. Although many researchers have examined demographic factors in

relation to fashion leadership, the only demographic factor that seems associated with fashion leadership is that fashion leaders are more likely to be young (Goldsmith & Hofacker, 1991). The ideal of constant innovation and new products particularly matches the young fashion sector (Barry, 2004).



**Figure 1. Chinese Internet user age groups.** (China Internet Network information Center, 2008).



**Figure 2. Chinese Internet user occupation.** (China Internet Network information Center, 2008)

A number of researchers have studied college students. Xu and Paulins (2005) examined college students' attitudes toward shopping online for apparel products. Through a quantitative study they examined two groups of respondents: college students who lived in rural areas and college students who lived in urban areas. They found that the location of the university (rural vs. urban) did not have significant influence on students' attitudes toward online shopping for apparel products. Shim and Gehrt (1996) collected data from college students to examine their attitudes toward imported and domestic apparel. They concluded that students had a more favorable attitude toward domestic apparel than imported apparel.

Cowart and Goldsmith (2007) collected data from 357 American college students on online apparel consumption using the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI). They found that the targeted younger consumer is a realistic market segment for both clothing and online purchasing. All the studies provided useful information for apparel retailers to develop one of the most important young consumers' markets college students.

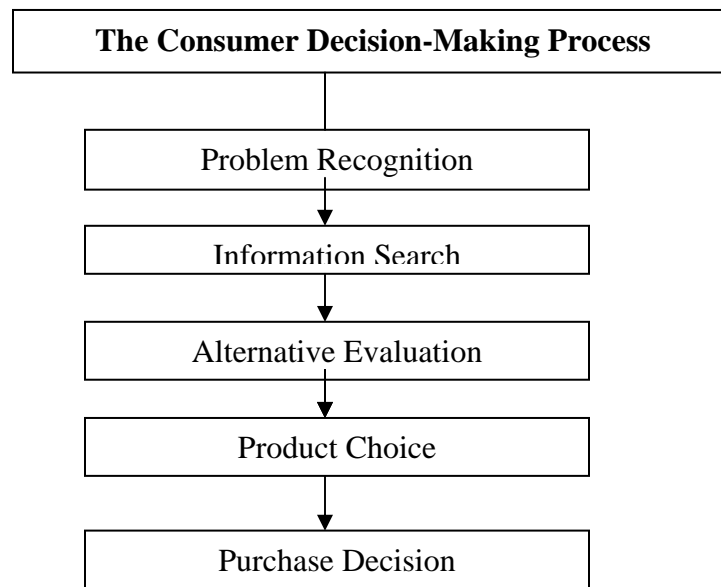
### **2.3 Conceptual Framework: Consumer Decision-Making Style**

#### **2.3.1 Consumer Decision-Making Process**

The consumer decision-making process describes a buying process that a consumer goes through to make a final decision to purchase any product. Appropriate decision-making involves logical steps: 1) determining the problem, 2) considering multiple alternatives, and 3) choosing the best alternative based on the particular situation (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1975; Goldsmith, 1996; Rice & Tucker, 1986). According to Engel et al. (1986), a consumer follows the five stages of 1) problem recognition, 2) information search, 3) alternative evaluation, 4) product choice, and 5) making a reasonable purchase decision (Figure 3).

In the first step, problem recognition (sometimes referred to as need recognition), an individual perceives a gap between the actual status and the desired or ideal status. This need can

be triggered by either internal or external situations (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001). Through variety seeking on the Internet, a consumer may replace a product that fills his or her needs completely with another. Van, Hoyer and Inman (1996) have suggested that higher purchase frequencies stimulate repeat purchasing rather than variety-seeking behavior.



**Figure 3. Five-stage consumer decision-making process model.**  
(Engel, J.F., Blackwell, R.D., & Miniard, P.W., 1986)

The next stage in the decision-making process is information search. Once the problem is recognized, he or she seeks information from internal and/or external sources. The consumer uses different channels to gather information about available products, which might fulfill the needs discussed above. Depending on the type of product that he or she considers purchasing, involvement with the product and the degree of perceived differences, either internal and/or external information searches will be processed by the consumer. In addition, there are different levels of expertise in the information searches (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Better knowledge about the desired product can reduce search time and improve search efficiency.

After this stage of the search, when alternatives are available to be evaluated, the consumer compares the alternatives based upon his or her evaluation criteria, for instance, price,

color and quality for apparel purchases. He or she selects one of the alternatives, which is consistent with his or her intentions, beliefs, or attitudes. Consumers do not make their decisions on only the information about the different brands, but also on how easy it is to process the information on the Internet.

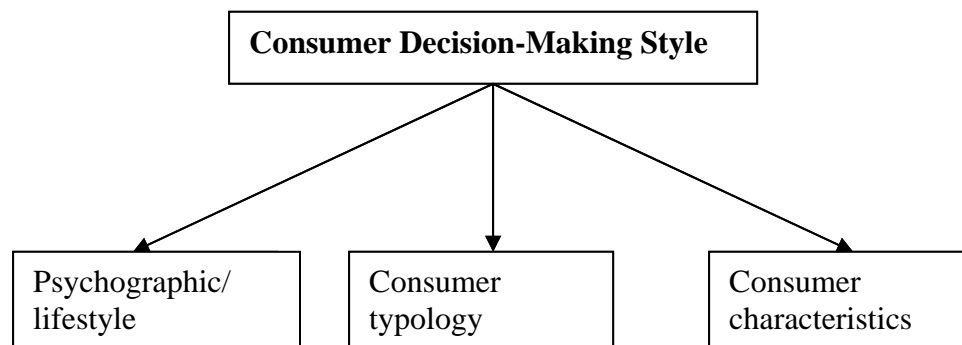
In the purchase decision stage, the consumer ranks the items in the choice list. There are two factors that influence this stage: 1) attitudes of others, where best friends or community pressure may change a consumer's preference, 2) some unexpected situational factors that affect the purchase decision, such as the price of the product or some other more urgent purchases. Since online shopping usually occurs in a more private environment, other people's influences maybe negligible (Engel et al., 1986). Even though a number of factors could affect each decision of consumers during their purchasing process (Hui et al., 2001), consumers approach the market with certain basic decision-making styles (Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

### **2.3.2 Consumer Decision-Making Style**

Consumer decision-making style is defined as “a mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making choices” (Sproles & Kendall, 1986, p.268). Sproles & Kendall's (1986) consumer decision-making style concept is analogous to the individual personality in psychology. The goal of Sproles and Kendall's study (1986) was to provide a tool for marketers to better understand consumers' purchasing style. The consumer decision-making style mode provides an important tool for marketers to use in selecting appropriate market segments.

Sproles and Kendall (1986) integrated three approaches to characterize consumer style (Figure 4). The first is a psychographic and lifestyle approach, which used consumers' different personality characteristics, attitudes, opinions, values, and choices (Wells, 1974). The second approach is that of consumer typology, which defines general consumer types, such as economic shoppers, ethnic shoppers, apathetic shoppers, store-loyal shoppers, recreational shoppers,

convenience shoppers, price-oriented shoppers, brand-loyal shoppers, problem-solving shoppers, quality shoppers, fashion shoppers, brand conscious shoppers and impulse shoppers (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980). The third is the consumer characteristics approach, which focuses on consumer cognitive and affective orientations. Sproles and Kendall (1986) confirmed consumer characteristics specifically related to consumer decision-making.

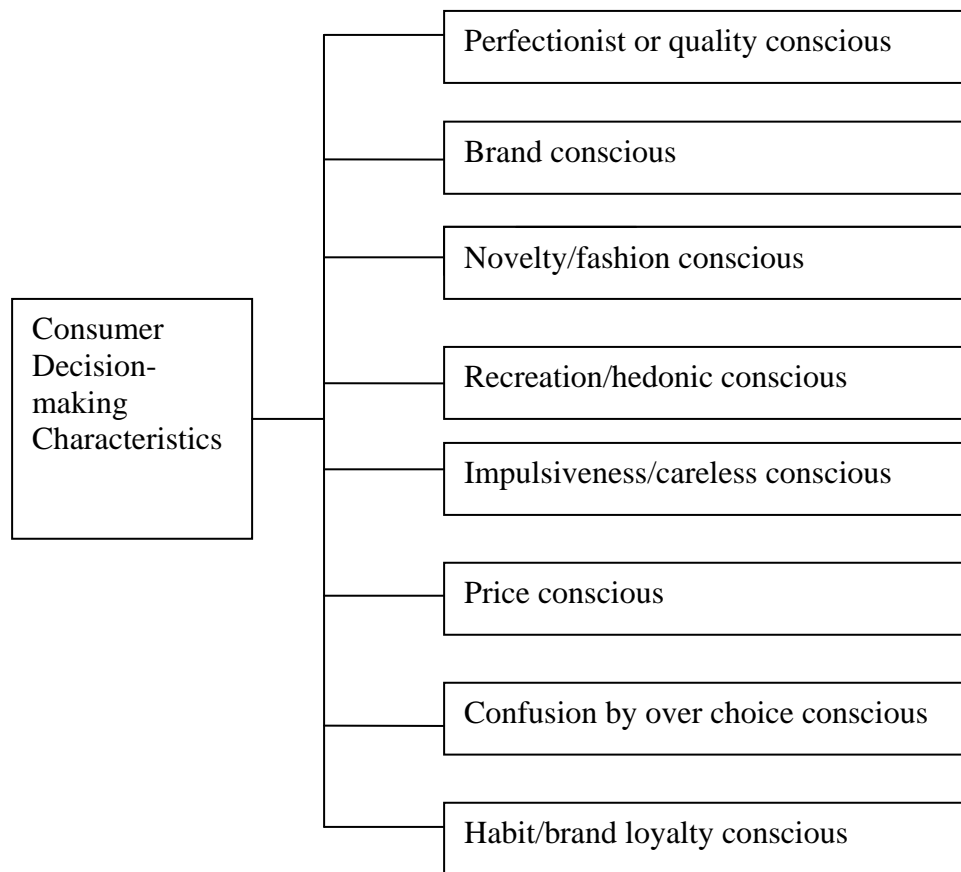


**Figure 4. Consumer decision-making style.** (Sproles & Kendall, 1986)

### 2.3.3 Consumer Style Inventory (CSI)

Sproles and Kendall (1986) developed a scale, called the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI), which identified eight mental characteristics of consumer decision-making style. The CSI provides a quantitative instrument for classifying different consumer decision-making characteristics into distinct categories of shopping orientation. Sproles' (1986) exploratory study provided the foundation and conceptual framework for the CSI. CSI is a validated measure of eight basic consumer decision-making characteristics. Sproles and Kendall (1986) defined the consumer decision-making style based on individual traits. Then, they further proposed that consumers approach the marketplace with a specific style of decision-making. Through empirical research, Sproles and Kendall (1986) defined the following eight characteristics of decision-making style shown in Figure 5:





**Figure 5. Eight characteristics of consumer decision-making style.**

Adapted from Sproles & Kendall, (1986)

#### Perfectionist/High-Quality conscious

Perfectionist or quality consciousness is defined as an awareness of high quality products, and a desire to make the perfect choice when a consumer buys the products (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). This type of consumer has specific ideas about best products and the consistent look of these products in terms of their quality. Product quality affects consumer decision-making in an appropriate manner. Kim and Shim (2002) found that around 40 percent of shoppers classified themselves as sophisticated quality shoppers. Quality is an important factor when purchasing apparel products (Kim & Shim, 2002). The results indicated that quality consciousness is significant for consumer decision-making style.

### Brand Conscious, Price Equals Quality

Sproles and Kendall (1986) define brand conscious as those with a need or desire to buy well-known brands, higher priced brands, and products. Many consumers are interested in purchasing brand name products such as BMW vehicles and Channel dresses, since well-known brand names are often associated with an individual's status (Wanke, Bohner, & Jurkowitsch, 1997). Brand conscious shoppers believe that these types of international brands result in better quality. Brand influences have been found to be an important element in consumer purchasing processes (Cleaver, 1985; Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Brand familiarity positively influences shoppers' purchase intentions (Hafstrom, et al., 1992). Park and Stoel (2006) suggested that creating and promoting brand familiarity is a strategy to increase purchase intentions of the online apparel shopper.

Consumers have different attitudes toward foreign and domestic brands (Elliott & Camoron, 1994). Chinese consumers also have different attitudes toward imported brands and domestic brands (Wang, Siu, & Hui, 2002). Wang et al. (2002) investigated the relationship between consumers' decision-making style and their choices of domestic and imported brand clothing in China. Their study revealed that consumers who preferred to buy imported brand clothing had a unique lifestyle and shopping orientation that differed from those who preferred domestic brand clothing.

### Novelty/Fashion Conscious

Novelty/Fashion consciousness is defined as an awareness of the newest, most modern, and exciting product, as well as the desire to buy trendy products (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Researchers emphasize fashion as an important factor in consumer decision-making (Gutman & Mills, 1982; Kim & Shim, 2002; Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

### Recreational Shopping/Hedonistic Shopping Conscious

Recreational/hedonistic consciousness is defined as those consumers who gain pleasure from the shopping experience, which includes spending leisure time in stores and shopping just for fun (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980; Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Bellenger and Korgaonkar (1980) found that around 70 percent of consumers enjoy shopping in their leisure time. After they examined the nature of retail recreational shopping, they also found that recreational shoppers were actively involved in information collection and participated in a greater amount of impulsive purchasing.

Attractive window displays can be a key source of decision-relevant information for the recreational shoppers. Bloch, Sherrell, & Ridgeway (1986) suggest that consumers may seek out store windows primarily as a leisure activity for fun.

### Price Conscious, Value-for-Money

Sproles and Kendall (1986) defined price consciousness as “an awareness of the best value, buying at sale prices or the lowest price choice” (p273). Although most consumers are affected by price when they purchase products, when a consumer consistently searches for sales, bargains, and lower-priced products, he or she is considered a price conscious shopper.

Price significantly influences consumer choice and purchase decision (Bucklin, Gupta, & Siddarth, 1988). During the individual decision-making process, the price conscious shopper may consider the greatest value at the lowest price. Janiszewski and Lichtenstein (1999) found that if all product options were at the same benefit level, consumers would buy the lowest priced alternative. They concluded that price consciousness is an important factor of the decision-making process. Additionally, Kim and Jin (2006) found that price conscious shoppers shop more frequently than other types of shoppers.

### Impulsive/Careless Consciousness

Impulsive/careless shopping is defined as making impulsive, unplanned and careless purchases (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Bellenger, Robertson, and Hirschman (1978) found different degrees of consumers' impulse purchasing in different age groups. They found that nearly 40 percent of consumers are impulsive and around 30-60 percent of all department store shoppers are unplanned. They also found that age groups under 35 and over 65 years old show a larger percentage of impulse purchases. There are two different aspects of impulsive shoppers: the positive and the negative psychological aspects (Watson & Tellege, 1985). Consumers with positive emotions feel like rewarding themselves when they purchase impulsively. According to Beatty and Ferrell (1998), the consumer's positive moods influence shopping enjoyment and purchasing decisions. Negative psychological aspects influence consumers' processing of persuasive messages, and persuasive messages usually produce negative moods when consumers are struggling with negative emotions (Bless & Forgas, 2000).

### Confused by Overchoice Consciousness

Consumers may be confused and overwhelmed with too much product information and/or too many product choices (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). As there are many different brand-name products in retail shops and online shopping sites, consumers have difficulty when purchasing specific products. Different sizes, prices, qualities, and colors also confuse consumers (Evans-Correia, 1992; Fletcher, 1987; Foxman, Muehling, & Berger, 1990). Variances in confusion with overchoice options exist across different groups.

### Habitual, Brand-Loyal Consciousness

A consumer usually either consistently sticks with the same brand of product or the same store (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Store attractiveness keeps many consumers coming back to the same store. How consumers view store image has long been considered an important part of

consumer decision-making (Baker, Lavy & Grewal, 1992). The psychological attributions related to the environmental characteristics evoke an emotional response from the consumers, and create in them feelings of excitement, warmth, and arousal (Martineau, 1958).

#### **2.3.4 Cross-Cultural Consumer Decision-Making Style**

The CSI has been successfully applied to the markets of various countries, including the United States, South Korea, China, New Zealand, Germany, Greece, and India (e.g., Durvasula et al., 1993; Fan & Xiao, 1998; Hasfstrom et al., 1992; Hiu et al, 2001). A study (Lyonski et al., 1996) was conducted with undergraduate business students in four countries to investigate the applicability of the Consumer Style Inventory in different countries. The countries represented in the sample were the United States, New Zealand, India, and Greece. The results of factor analysis were quite similar to those of Sproles and Kendall (1986). Their study confirmed seven of the eight Sproles and Kendall decision-making characteristics. However, they excluded Price Consciousness, and Value for Money. It was concluded that the original CSI was more applicable to New Zealand and the United States, and not as applicable to India and Greece when using verified rotation of factors (Lyonski et al., 1996). Thus, their study suggested decision-making style profiled by using CSI might be influenced by different cultures, as well as different retail environments (types of retail stores available, whether consumers use credit cards in the particular country). It was argued that there might be specific decision-making characteristics differences within cultures (Lyonski et al., 1996).

Studies have shown a variety of CSI applications in different countries. Canabal (2002) suggested that the CSI had more applicability across cultures. In a study, which used college students as the target sample, Canabal (2002) adapted the CSI framework to conduct factor analysis to determine applicability of the CSI. The CSI was administered to adult male and female non-student shoppers, ages 18 and above in Germany, and six characteristics of the

original eight included in the CSI were confirmed: brand consciousness, perfectionism, recreational/hedonistic, and confused by overchoice, impulsiveness, and novelty-fashion consciousness. However, brand loyalty and price consciousness were converted into a “variety seeking factor” “Variety seeking was novel to Germany and replaced brand loyalty and price-value consciousness factors found in previous countries” (Walsh, et al, 2001, p. 73). Hafstrom et al. (1992) also modified the CSI to include a new consumer decision-making characteristic, time-energy conserving with a U.S. sample. This characteristic included parts of the brand conscious and habitual brand-loyal characteristics from the Sproles and Kendall’s (1986) original study.

### **2.3.5 Chinese Consumer Decision-Making Style**

Researchers have conducted consumer decision-making style studies with Chinese samples. Fan and Xiao (1998) who used college students as their target sample administered the Sproles and Kendall’s (1986) CSI to determine if the CSI was suitable to Chinese consumers. As a result, a five-factor model was found: brand, time, quality, price-conscious and overwhelmed by information. They found the results are similar to American and Korean college student sample reference of those studies. Their findings suggested that the decision-making style of impulsive/careless and habitual/brand loyal were not characteristic of the Chinese sample.

Researchers have also applied the country of decision making style in studying their effect types sample on shopping environments in China. Wang et al. (2002) investigated Chinese consumer decision-making style on domestic and imported brand clothing. The author found that seven decision-making characteristics together with other consumer behavioral characteristics could be used to distinguish and profile consumers who prefer to buy domestic, imported or both types of clothing. Tai (2005) extended the ten shopping characteristics relevant to Chinese working females and four new characteristics, which are not found in the Sproles’ original CSI. These are personal style consciousness, environmental and health consciousness, reliance on

mass media, and convenience and time consciousness. Finally, Tai (2005) identified four distinct shopping characteristics among working Chinese females: active fashion chaser, rational shopper, value buyer, and opinion seeker.

The application of CSI in Chinese culture was further refined and validated by Hiu et al. (2001) who profiled the decision-making style of adult Chinese consumers by using confirmatory factor analysis and cluster analysis. Their analysis resulted in eighteen items with a seven-factor solution and confirmed that five decision-making characteristics were valid and reliable in the Chinese culture: perfectionist, novelty-fashion conscious, recreational, price conscious and confused by over-choice.

Although studies showed slight differences of items and factors, studies demonstrate the applicability of CSI to generate a typology of decision-making groups in China. In this study, based on the literature review of decision-making style around the world and in China, the relationship between consumer decision-making style (CSI) and apparel online shopping in China will be investigated.

## **2.4 Chinese College Student Online Apparel Shopping and Consumption**

The apparel section is one of the top selling categories in the online retail channel among many e-tailer categories in China (CNNIC, 2006). Apparel products are a primary purchase category in e-commerce among college students (Xu & Paulins, 2005). Online apparel consumption is one of the fastest-growing segments of e-commerce. Some research has been conducted on online demographics, motivations, personal characteristics and attitudes. However, there is little research related to segmentation of apparel online shoppers.

Chinese college students as the major online users in China (CNNIC, 2008) are worthwhile studying for their online apparel shopping behavior. Relevant information would include which website they prefer to gain apparel product information and finally make decisions to purchase

online, what purchasing processes they complete of the five purchasing stages, what kind of decision-making style they have, how much time they spend online searching apparel products, how much money they spend online for purchasing apparel products, and what kind of payment methods they use for online apparel shopping.

Chinese college students have low incomes. They are usually supported by their parents during their student period; therefore, their income level depends on their parents' income level. The low income will limit their website products choices. When Chinese college students purchase apparel products online, the price must be an important index for them to make purchase decisions. Davis (1987) indicated that, in simulated shopping tasks, college students most often seek information about style and price when making judgments of clothing quality and purchase decisions.

Chinese consumers generally strongly prefer to see and feel the products (Wong et al., 2004). Lu and Rucker (2006) compared college students from China and the US regarding apparel acquisition via single store vs. multiple non-store channels. They identified a barrier of Internet shopping as the difficulty in assessing clothing quality in person. The realistic online imagery, security, convenience and return policy were, therefore, important determinants in apparel online buying decisions by Chinese college students. Furthermore, the trustworthiness of online merchants is the biggest concern in China (Efendioglu & Yip, 2004).

Cowart and Goldsmith (2007) investigated American college students' motivations for online apparel consumption using the CSI. Among the eight CSI characteristics, they found perfectionism, high-quality consciousness; brand consciousness; novelty-apparel consciousness; and habitual, brand-loyal consciousness had statistically significant correlations with the frequency of online apparel purchases and amount spent on online apparel. Their findings



demonstrated that some of the characteristics of the CSI were related to the frequency and money spent online for apparel products.

However, the online apparel shopping process and online apparel shoppers in China may have different characteristics. Chinese college students need to be studied as a special group of online apparel shoppers. Understanding the Chinese college students' consumer groups from a decision-making perspective will help e-tailers better segment the market and consequently develop efficient retail market strategies.

Based on the preceding literature reviews, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Chinese college students use the Internet to conduct pre-purchase decision making steps more frequently than complete purchasing.

H2: Chinese College students as online apparel shoppers will show different decision-making characteristics compared with eight decision making characteristics initially identified by Sproles and Kedall (1986).

H3. There will be a relationship between decision-making characteristics and (a) the amount of money spent on online apparel purchasing and (b) the frequency of online apparel purchasing among the Chinese college students as online apparel shoppers.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

A quantitative research approach was used to fulfill the research objectives. An online survey that included the instrument of Consumer Style Inventory (CSI), online apparel shopping behavior, and demographic information, was administered to college students from five cities in China. This chapter discussed the sample and sampling, measures of research variables, procedures, and data analysis.

#### **3.1 Sampling and Sample**

The research population is Chinese college students. College students were selected because this group of consumers has been identified as the major Internet users in China (CNNIC, 2008). The sample for this study was obtained from universities located in five cities: Shanghai, Beijing, Wuhan, Foshan, and Yichang, which are considered representative of major cities in China. Beijing is the capital of China. Shanghai is the largest business center of China. Wuhan is the largest city in the central part of China. Yichang is a mid-sized city beside the Yangzi River in the central part of China. Foshan is quite open with advanced economy in southern China and is located close to Hong Kong, and in one of the earliest “economic reform experimental zones” in China.

Most major universities in China are located in large cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Wuhan, therefore, college students in each university are usually from all over the country. Chinese universities are specialized in certain areas; most universities specialize in either social sciences and humanities or applied sciences, and some universities specialize in more defined fields, such as teacher training, textile sciences, and arts. Among the five selected universities for data collection, Wuhan University of Science and Engineering specializes in textile science and apparel design with a student body of 30,000. The China Academy of Art- Shanghai School of

Design specializes in apparel design, landscape design, multimedia and web design with a student body of 1,220. China Three Gorges University-College of Arts has a student body of 1,100 in Yichang, Hubei province. Foshan University is a comprehensive university with a student body of 10, 897, and offers a variety of majors. Overall, the convenience sample is expected to be representative of educated Chinese young people.

### **3.2 Instrument**

The questionnaire was developed and refined in English. It was then translated by the researcher into Chinese. Then the questionnaire was translated back into English by a different scholar who has proficiency in Chinese and English to verify that the translation did not introduce error or bias into the study. A web-based questionnaire was used to conduct an online survey using Zoomerang.com, which is an online survey tool and allows users to create and send surveys and analyze results. It is proven to be a useful and reliable online survey website with more than 800,000 registered users (Zoomerang, 2008).

The questionnaire included three sections. The first section consisted of measures of consumer decision-making style (CSI) with eight decision-making characteristics included. The second section included items that assessed online apparel shopping and consumption-related behavior including 1) apparel online pre-purchase decision-making steps, 2) online apparel consumption, and 3) online apparel transaction approach. Items that measure decision-making steps for online apparel shopping assessed the frequency of individual consumer use of the Internet to conduct each decision-making step. The last section included demographic and general information on respondents, including gender, age, marital status of the respondents, and the location of the university in China. Appendix C shows the English version of the questionnaire. Appendix D shows the Chinese version of the questionnaire.

### 3.3 Measures

Sproles and Kendall's (1986) original multi-item scale was adapted to measure consumer decision-making characteristics for this study. The scale consisted of forty-items using 5-point Likert responses. Respondents indicated their agreements to each statement (item) ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability of the original scale ranged from .41 to .79, with several factors having reliability (Cronbach alpha ) lower than .60. Although the cutoff of Cronbach alpha was fairly low in this pioneer study. The cut off Cronbach alpha reliability in this study is 0.45, which is slightly higher than the original study of Sproles and Kendall (1986).

The apparel online pre-purchase decision-making steps were measured by asking how often a respondent had done the following activities online during the previous three months: (1) discover apparel products; (2) search website for information, evaluate different apparel products, and (3) make a purchase decision". The questions were adapted from the research on comparing American college students with Finland student's regarding online shopping behavior conducted by Comegys, Hannula, & Väisänen, (2006). Responses ranged from 1 (none) to 5 (more than 10 times).

The items measuring apparel consumption (i.e., online purchases) included, "In a typical month, what is the total amount you spent for online apparel purchasing?", "How much money did you spend for online apparel purchases over the past 30 days?", and "On average, how much time do you spend online each week shopping and purchasing apparel?" Respondents were asked the frequency of their apparel shopping activities.

The online apparel transaction approach was assessed by asking the following questions "What is the usual method for you to pay for online purchases" The included choices were "pay cash once the purchase product is delivered to you," "pay by debit card online," "pay by credit card online," and "send cash through the post office".

### **3.4 Procedure**

The Chinese version of the questionnaire was pre-tested with local Chinese college students to validate the instrument. Changes were made based on the pre-test results. Pre-test survey invitations were sent through E-mails to some Chinese college students living in the United States and some faculty members in Shanghai and Wuhan, China. They were asked to answer the questionnaire and provide comments. Some items measuring decision-making characteristics were modified according to the comments received from pre-test responses to make all statements clearly understood by Chinese respondents.

For the final data collection, an e-mail invitation along with the URL of the survey imbedded was sent to the professors or instructors in the five universities. Seven professors and instructors gave the survey URL to classes. The instructors informed students of the purpose of this study and explained how to complete the survey. Participation in the survey was voluntary. All complete responses were automatically shown in the database of zoomerang.com.

A total of 261 responses were complete and included into the study, resulting in a response rate of 40 percent based on total numbers of visits. The remaining questionnaires had missing values for at least one of the questions asked. After careful review of the returned completed responses, eight responses were determined unusable because of a significant number of missing numbers. Therefore, a total of 253 responses were deemed usable and were included in the analysis.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The data collected from the survey was analyzed using the Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSS 14) software. The data analysis procedures include descriptive analysis, exploratory factor analysis, correlation testing, and T-test for hypotheses testing.

Descriptive analysis was conducted to profile respondents by their online apparel shopping behavior, including the frequencies of online apparel purchases, and amount of dollars spent for purchasing apparel products to fulfill the first research objective. Paired-t-tests were conducted to test hypothesis 1 related to online apparel shopping behavior. The exploratory factor analysis was conducted to examine consumers' decision-making characteristics. Following the approach proposed by Sproles and Kendall (1986), the group of Chinese college students as online apparel shoppers was profiled by the identified consumer decision-making characteristics. This empirical analysis fulfilled the second research objective, which was to profile the decision-making style of the group of Chinese college student as online apparel shoppers.

A correlation matrix was generated to examine the relationships between online apparel shopping behaviors and emerged decision-making characteristics. This was done to fulfill the third research objective, which was to determine if there are any relationships between Chinese college students' consumer decision-making characteristics and frequency of online apparel purchasing, and the amount of money spent on purchasing apparel online.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter reports the results of data analysis and hypotheses testing. First, demographic information of respondents and background information on their online shopping behavior are presented based on descriptive analysis. Then the results of exploratory factor analysis are reported. Reliability and validity of emerged factors are tested. The hypothesized relationships between decision-making characteristics and online apparel consumption are then tested by examining generated correlation coefficients. The chapter closes with a discussion of findings.

#### **4.1 Characteristics of the Respondents**

##### **4.1.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Among the 253 respondents, female respondents made up 69 percent of the sample and male respondents were 31 percent of the sample (Table 1). The majority of the respondents, 60.5 percent were in the age range of 21 to 23. Twenty-two percent of the respondents were 17-20, while more than 14 percent were between 24 to 30, and only 6.8 percent of the respondents were over 30 years old. The geographic locations of the respondents included Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan, Yichang, and Foshan, in China. The majority of respondents (79 percent) were from the three largest cities: Beijing, Shanghai, and Wuhan. Regarding the education levels and majors of the respondents, the majority of the respondents (89.7 percent) were undergraduate students and the remaining were pursuing graduate degrees. The sample consisted of design majors (38 percent), literature majors (21 percent), art majors (14 percent), with the remaining students majoring in physics, education, engineering, business, and music. A summary of the demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1****Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Gender (n=247)	Female	171	69.2
	Male	76	30.8
Age (n=253)	17-20	56	22.1
	21-23	153	60.5
	24-26	19	7.5
	27-30	17	6.7
	31-34	7	4
	35 and Over	1	2.8
Education (n=250)	Freshman	6	2.4
	Sophomore	67	26.5
	Junior	66	26.1
	Senior	85	33.6
	Masters student	20	7.9
	PhD student	6	2.4
Majors* (n=256)	Design	96	38
	Education	14	5
	Literature	54	21
	Physics	15	6
	Engineering	9	4
	Music	5	2
	Art	35	14
	Business	17	7
	Other	11	4
Geographic Distribution (n=244)	Beijing	61	24.1
	Shanghai	62	24.5
	Wuhan	77	30.4
	Yichang	26	10.3
	Foshan	18	7.1

**Note:** N=253 (Majors\* There are more than 253 in majors because some students had double majors.)

**4.1.2 Respondents' Online Apparel Shopping Behavior**

Descriptive analysis was conducted to profile respondents by their online apparel shopping behavior, which includes frequency of online usage for each decision making style, website visited for searching products, and hours spent for online shopping for apparel products.



Online apparel consumption characteristics included types of apparel products searched or purchased online, time spent online, and amount of money spent online for apparel products in different time periods. An online apparel purchasing transaction indicated the kind of methods used to pay for online purchases.

#### Consumers' Payment Methods

The most frequently used payment methods were paying by cash or by debit card (80.7 percent). Credit cards were not as popular in China as in America. Only 13 percent of respondents indicated that they pay for apparel products online by credit card. Only a very small percentage of respondents (6.3 percent) paid for online orders through the post office (Table 2).

**Table 2:**  
**Consumers' Payment Methods**

<b>Payment Methods</b>	<b>Frequency N= 253</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Pay cash once the purchased product is delivered	92	36.4
Pay by debit card online	112	44.3
Pay by credit card online	33	13.0
Send cash through post office	16	6.3

#### Category of Apparel Products Consumer Searched or Purchased Online

Among the eight apparel product categories examined, casual style apparel was the most frequently searched and purchased category online, with a 59.3 percent searched and 41.9 percent purchased (see Table 3). Fifty-nine point three percent of the respondents indicated that casual style was the most frequently searched online. Unique dress is the second most frequently searched and purchased type in the apparel category, with 45.5 percent searched and 32.8 percent purchased of the 253 total respondents. Shoes also have almost 45 percent of respondents who searched online and 36 percent who purchased this category online. Accessories and bags were

popular apparel products too. This study also found that the lowest frequency items were evening dress and professional outfits among the college students online apparel searched and purchased items.

**Table 3:**  
**Categories of Apparel Products that Consumers Searched or Purchased Online**

Category	Frequency Of Search	Search Online ( % of 253)	Frequency of Purchase	Search Online ( % of 253)
Causal	150	59.3	106	59.3
Shoes	113	44.7	91	44.7
Accessories	94	37.2	90	37.2
Unique dress	115	45.5	83	32.8
Bags	97	38.3	83	32.8
Sportswear	67	26.5	57	22.5
Professional	26	10.3	22	8.7
Evening dress	14	5.5	10	4.0

*Note:* N=253

#### Respondents' Website Usage

Table 4 lists websites used for searching and purchasing apparel products. Five popular websites were chosen to identify which websites were the most popular websites for apparel online shopping. The most popular one was taobao.com in China, with 84.2 percent of respondents choosing taobao.com to search for and purchase apparel products. The second most popular website was dangdang.com with 38.7 percent of respondents using this website. Surprisingly, the popular US website amazon.com was specified by only 10.3 percent of the respondents. From the data, it seemed that Chinese consumers still preferred using local Chinese websites when they purchase apparel products.

**Table 4:**  
**Website Usage for Apparel Shopping**

Website Usage	Frequency	Percent
<a href="http://www.dangdang.com">www.dangdang.com</a>	98	38.7
<a href="http://www.amazon.com.cn">www.amazon.com.cn</a>	26	10.3
<a href="http://www.eachnet.com">www.eachnet.com</a>	25	9.9
<a href="http://www.tejiawang.com">www.tejiawang.com</a>	21	8.3
<a href="http://www.taobao.com">www.taobao.com</a>	213	84.2

*Note:* N=253

#### Apparel Shopping Frequency and Amount Spent Online

Tables 5 and 6 list respondents' online apparel shopping frequency and the amount of money spent online. A majority of the respondents (86.6 percent) spent at least one hour per week searching or purchasing apparel products online, and 5.9 percent spent more than 10 hours. When compared to American college students 67 percent frequency of at least one hour per week (Cowart & Goldsmith, 2007), Chinese college students spent their time online for apparel products more than Americans.

**Table 5**  
**Weekly Time Spent Online for Shopping and Purchasing Apparel Products**

Times	Frequency	Percent
None	34	13.4
1-3 hours	151	59.7
4-6 hours	41	16.2
7-10 hours	12	4.7
more than 10 hours	15	5.9
Total	253	100.0

**Table 6****Monthly Money Spent Online for Purchasing Apparel**

<b>Amount of Money Spent Online for Apparel</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
none	92	36.4
\$ 0-7	36	14.2
\$ 8-19	51	20.2
\$ 20-39	20	7.9
\$ 40-59	19	7.5
\$ 60-79	17	6.7
\$ 80-90	10	4.0
more than \$100	8	3.2
Total	253	100.0

More than 63 percent of respondents spent money to purchase apparel products online. In a typical month, 7.2 percent of the respondents spent \$80 or more for apparel products. This is compared to 21 percent of American college students who spent the same amount of money for clothing via the Internet in the same time period (Coward & Goldsmith, 2007).

**4.2 College Student Apparel Online Shopping Decision-Making Steps****Frequencies of Using the Internet for Apparel Decision-Making**

Table 7 lists the frequencies for college students to use the Internet for conducting decision-making steps while buying apparel products online. Apparel shopping decision-making process was measured with five statements on a five-point scale. For the first stage of the shopping process, most of respondents (72.3 percent) went online 1-3 times (n=127) in a typical month. About one-fifth of the respondents used the Internet for this purpose for 4-6 times (n=56). Less than 8 of the percent respondents looked online more than ten times for apparel products in a month.

**Table 7****Consumers' Apparel Online Shopping Activities in Five Stages**

<b>Apparel shopping frequency</b>	<b>Respondents N=253</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Stage 1: Discover apparel products that I am interested in		
None	40	15.8
1-3 times	127	50.2
4-6 times	56	22.1
7-10 times	11	4.3
more than 10 times	19	7.5
Stage 2: Search websites for information about apparel products I am interested in		
None	42	16.6
1-3 times	95	42.0
4-6 times	56	22.1
7-10 times	31	12.3
more than 10 times	29	11.5
Stage 3: Evaluate different apparel products, brands, prices, features and their availability		
None	75	29.6
1-3 times	80	31.6
4-6 times	63	24.9
7-10 times	21	8.3
more than 10 times	14	5.5
Stage 4: Make my final apparel product purchase decision		
None	86	34.0
1-3 times	98	38.7
4-6 times	51	20.2
7-10 times	11	4.3
more than 10 times	7	2.8
Stage 5: Order and pay for the chosen apparel product online		
None	113	44.7
1-3 times	81	32.0
4-6 times	43	17.0
7-10 times	11	4.3
more than 10 times	5	2.0

In the second and third stages, respondents generally went online more times to search websites for and evaluate information about apparel products in which they were interested in a typical month, compared to the earlier stage of the shopping process, the number of respondents gradually decreased when the apparel shopping frequency increased.

In the last stage of actual ordering products online, frequency of the “none” category was almost 45 percent, which shows a critical decrease of using the Internet for purchasing compared to using the Internet for searching interesting products.

### Testing Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 proposed that Chinese college students more frequently use the Internet to conduct pre-purchase decision making steps than to complete purchases. To test this hypothesis, paired T-test was conducted (see Table 8). First, the scores for the first four stage of decision making were averaged to create an indicator measuring the frequency of using the Internet for pre-purchase decision making. Then a paired T-test was conducted using the created indicator scores and the scores for the last stage of decision-making, ordering and paying for the chosen apparel product.

**Table 8:**  
**Result of Paired T Test for Decision-Making Steps for Chinese College Consumers**

Paired Samples	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-purchase	253	2.3340	.89260	9.437	.000
purchase	253	1.8696	.97731		

Results showed that there were statistically significant differences between the frequency usage of online pre-purchase decision making steps (mean= 2.334) and the frequency of usage of online final step of completing transactions (mean=1.8) online ( $T = 9.44$ ,  $p < .000$ ) at the level of 0.01 (Table 8). Therefore hypothesis 1 was supported. Namely, Chinese college students more

frequently use the Internet to conduct pre-purchase decision making steps, such as searching product information, comparing alternative, or making a choice, than to complete transactions online.

### **4.3 Consumer Decision-Making Characteristics and Style Profile**

#### **4.3.1 Factor Analysis**

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to examine the dimensionality of the research construct—Consumer Style Inventory. The scale to measure the consumer decision making style was derived from the original study of Sproles and Kendall (1986), an exploratory factor analysis was necessary to establish the factor structure of Consumer Style Inventory in the context of Chinese college student apparel online shopping. The initial forty items for measuring consumer decision-making characteristics presented eight dimensions: perfectionist or quality conscious, brand conscious, novelty/fashion conscious, recreational/hedonistic conscious, price conscious, impulsive/careless, confused by overchoice, and habitual, brand-loyal (Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

Factor analysis was performed using the Statistic Package for the Social Science (SPSS14.0) software. Principle components factor analysis with varimax rotation (Thomas & Nelson, 1996) was applied to convert the individual items to manageable factors related to consumer decision-making style. The first iteration of exploratory factor analysis extracted twelve factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, but two items did not contribute to defining the factors. The remaining thirty-three items were once again analyzed. Another three items were dropped due to cross loadings. After checking fact validity on the remaining items, three items were not consistent with the factors, and were dropped respectively in the fourth, fifth, and sixth rounds. A total of seventeen items were dropped. The sixth iteration yielded seven easily interpretable factors whose loadings exhibited a clear factor structure. The final factor solution

from the sixth iteration accounted for approximately 62.4 percent of the total variance. The pattern matrix showing the items and their factor loadings appear in Table 9. These factors reflect seven characteristics of the consumer style inventory of online apparel shoppers among Chinese college students: recreational, hedonistic conscious, perfectionists, high-quality conscious, brand conscious, price conscious, confused by overchoice, habitual, brand-loyal, and impulsive, careless conscious consumer.

**Table 9:**  
**Factor Loading and Reliability of Each Factor**

Number of Items	Factor Loading	Reliability
<i>Recreational, Hedonistic</i>		.81
Shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life	.81	
Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me	-.73	
I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it	.71	
It's fun to buy something new and exciting	.67	
Shopping the stores wastes my time	-.64	
<i>Perfectionist, high-quality conscious</i>		.76
In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality	.83	
Getting very good quality is very important to me	.81	
Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me	.67	
<i>Brand conscious</i>		.62
The more expensive brands are usually my choices	.74	
I make special effort to choose the very best quality		
The well-known national brands are best for me	.60	
The most advertised brands are usually very good	.58	
<i>Price conscious</i>		.63
I take the time to shop carefully for best buys	.75	
I carefully watch how much I spend	.69	
I look carefully to find the best value for the money	.65	
I buy as much as possible at sale prices	.57	
<i>Confused by overchoice</i>		.58
There are too many brands to choose from so that		
All the information I get on different products	.72	
Sometimes it's hard to choose which stores to shop	.67	
<i>Habitual, brand-loyal</i>		.60
Nice department and specialty stores offer me the	.73	
I have favorite brands I buy over and over	.69	
<i>Impulsive, careless</i>		.45
I am impulsive when purchasing	.80	
Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not	.75	



The measure of reliability of each factor was examined. The Cronbach alpha coefficients are presented in Table 9. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for factor 1 to factor 6 were between .58 and .81, indicating satisfactory reliability. The Cronbach alpha of one out of the seven factors is lower than 0.5. Even though the factor of impulsive, careless resulted in a low reliability, it was decided that this factor could be used in the test of shopping characteristics, because impulsive characteristics reflect the psychological nature of impulsiveness and youth of the subjects (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Items loading .58 or higher on a designated factor are reported. The seven characteristics of decision-making style that emerged in this analysis are described below:

1. Recreational, hedonistic consciousness. This factor represented recreational and hedonistic shopping consciousness. Respondents scoring high on this factor found shopping pleasant, and those consumers shop mainly for fun and entertainment.

2. Perfectionist, high-quality consciousness. This factor represented a quality concern of the consumer. Consumers who scored high on this factor would perceive the quality of a product as the very best quality and fashionable, attractive style.

3. Brand consciousness. This factor represented intentions to buy more expensive, well-known brands. Consumers who scored high on this factor were likely to believe that a higher price, well-known and highly advertised product means better quality.

4. Price consciousness. This factor represented the degree to which consumers carefully watch how much money they spend, looked for sale prices, and appear conscious of lower prices in general.

5. Confused by overchoice. This factor represented confusion and information overload by many stores and brands, and suggested that consumers have difficulty in making choices.

6. Habitual, brand-loyal. High scores on this factor would represent the tendency of having favorite brands and stores and developing habits of choosing these.

7. Impulsive, careless. High scores in this factor would represent a tendency for unplanned shopping and regrets from purchases.

#### **4.3.2 Profile of Consumer Style**

Descriptive analysis profiling consumer decision-making style for young Chinese was carried out. The same approach used by Sproles and Kendall (1986) and Fan and Xiao (1998) was followed. The approach was to use subjects' raw scores on each characteristic to establish scale standard norms. For computation of the profile of consumer style, raw scores on the two top-loading items for each characteristic was added up (items worded negatively were reversely scored). Although Sproles and Kendall (1986, p275) used three items to establish the standard norms, however, they also claimed: "the two items scale may be appropriate for many applications....." In this study, some factors only had two items remaining from factor analysis. So, with a modest sacrifice of reliability and validity, the two items scale was adopted. This addition yielded scores of 2 to 10 for each subject on each characteristic. Table 10 presents the means of the two-item scales, the percentages of subjects scoring high to low on each scale, and quartile score ranges. These statistics can be used to calculate profiles of consumer style of individual consumers, as Sproles and Kendall (1986) and Fan and Xiao (1998) did.

Table 10 shows that a high percentage (51.5 percent) of the respondents scored in the high range for the recreational characteristic, indicating that they were very recreational conscious. A very low percentage (8.3 percent) scored for the price characteristic and a very low percentage (5.5 percent) scored in quality consciousness, indicating that most of the Chinese college students in the sample were quite price conscious and quality conscious. The median score for all characteristic was in the medium range (5-7). The quartiles were approximate to keep ranges in whole number terms and provide a guide for comparing a subject's rating to

others. For example, a subject scoring 9-10 on the quality subscale was in the upper fourth of these respondents and appears very quality conscious in consumer style.

This table showed Chinese college students were recreational conscious, price conscious and quality conscious when they shopped apparel online. However, It seems that most of the students in this study were neither very interested in brand shopping nor habitual, brand loyal conscious.

**Table 10:**  
**Consumer Decision-Making Style Inventory for Chinese College Consumers**

Dimensions	Mean	SD	Median	Percentage			Quartile Score Ranges			
				High (8-10)	Medium (5-7)	Low (2-4)	Upper	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lower
Recreational consciousness	6.32	1.72	7.00	51.5	41.9	6.7	8-10	7	5-6	2-4
Quality consciousness	7.29	1.62	7.00	49.1	45.4	5.5	9-10	8	7	2-6
Brand consciousness	5.58	1.48	6.00	9.5	67.2	23.3	7-10	6	5	2-4
Price consciousness	6.54	1.51	6.00	30	61.7	8.3	8-10	7	6	2-5
Confusion consciousness	6.00	1.57	6.00	18.6	64	17.4	7-10	6	5	2-4
Habitual consciousness	6.36	1.56	6.00	12.7	60.1	27.3	8-10	7	6	2-5
Impulsive consciousness	5.83	1.62	6.00	15.9	60.4	23.7	7-10	6	5	2-4

Notes: Raw scores on the two top-loading items on each factor were added up to yield scores of 2 to 10 for each subject on each characteristic in this table.

### Testing Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 proposed that online Chinese college student consumers will show different decision-making characteristics from the specified eight decision making characteristics. Factor analysis shows that the emerged factors of decision-making style and the loaded items to each factor are not exactly same as the results presented by Sproles and Kendall (1986). There are

only seven characteristics of the decision-making style that showed for the Chinese college student online shoppers, the proposed Hypothesis 2 is supported. Namely, Chinese college online apparel shoppers show specific decision-making characteristics, which are different from other groups of shoppers.

#### 4.4 Relationships between Decision-Making Style and Online Consumption

A correlation matrix was generated to examine the relationships between decision-making style and apparel consumption (Table 11). Among the seven CSI dimensions, recreation consciousness ( $r=0.185$ ,  $p=0.003$ ); brand consciousness ( $r=0.125$ ,  $p=0.046$ ); and habitual, brand-loyalty consciousness ( $r=0.196$ ,  $p=0.002$ ) had statistically significant correlation ( $p<0.05$ ) with the frequency of online apparel purchases. In addition, only brand consciousness and habitual, brand loyalty were significantly correlated ( $p<0.05$ ) with the amount of money spent for online apparel.

**Table 11:**

**Correlation among Seven Decision-Making Characteristics and Shopping Frequency and Amount Spent Online**

Decision-Making Characteristics	Purchasing frequency	Amount spent
Recreational	.185**	.020
Quality	.056	-.020
Brand	.125*	.138*
Price	-.020	-.074
Confusion	.044	.076
Habitual	.196**	.158*
Impulsive	-.007	.048

*Note.* \*Significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed). \*\* Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### Testing Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 proposed that there will be a relationship between consumer decision-making characteristics and online shopping behavior; H3-a: amount of money spent on online apparel purchasing and H3-b: frequencies of online apparel purchasing among Chinese college students.

Correlation results indicated that recreational, hedonistic consumers, brand consciousness consumers, and habitual, brand-loyalty consciousness consumers had significant correlation with the frequency of online apparel purchase. However, only brand consciousness and habitual, brand-loyalty consumers were significantly correlated with the amount of money spent online for purchasing. The significant values were low in the correlation test. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was only marginally supported. There are some relationships between consumer decision-making characteristics and the amount of money spent on online apparel purchasing and frequencies of online apparel purchasing among Chinese colleges students.

#### **4.5 Discussion**

This study found that Chinese college students frequently use the Internet during the early stages of decision-making process. Most of the respondents spend more time on finding apparel product information and evaluating different apparel product alternatives online than ordering them. As Efendioglu and Yip (2004) have reported, Chinese consumers' face-to-face transactions preference might have a negative impact on online apparel purchasing. The other deterrent to online transactions in China is consumers' lack of trust in online vendors and legal concerns (Ou et.al. 2007). Chinese apparel e-vendors need to build online trust to attract consumers to make the final decision to order apparel products online.

Factor analysis revealed that seven out of eight characteristics reflecting consumer decision-making styles identified by Sproles and Kendall (1986) among American consumers were applicable to the studied Chinese consumer group. The emerged seven characteristics were recreational consciousness, hedonistic consciousness, perfectionists, and high-quality conscious, brand, price consciousness, confused by over-choice, habitual, brand-loyal, and impulsive, careless (Table 12). The emerged factors were quite similar with the results from previous research on Chinese consumer decision-making style conducted by Hiu et.al. (2001). This study

shows only one factor different from Hui et al (2001) in Table 12. Online apparel shoppers show impulsive characteristics instead of fashion consciousness in this research.

**Table 12:**  
**Comparison of Emerged Factors across Several Studies**

Sproles & Kendalls (1986)	Fan & Xiao (1998)	Hui et al (2001)	Current study
Quality	Time	Recreational, hedonistic	Recreational, hedonistic
Brand	Brand	Quality	Quality
Fashion	Quality	Fashion	Brand
Recreational, hedonistic	Price	Confused by overchoice	Price
Price conscious	Information	Price	Confused by overchoice
Impulsive, careless		Habitual, brand loyal	Habitual, brand loyal
Confused by overchoice		Brand	Impulsive, careless
Habitual, brand loyal			

The factors are slightly different from findings from other research Fan and Xiao (1998) conducted a similar study on Chinese consumer decision-making style. Fan and Xiao (1998) modified Sproles and Kendalls (1986) eight consumer decision making characteristics to seven decision making characteristics: brand, fashion, quality, price, time, impulsiveness, and information utilization. After factor analysis, they dropped hedonic, brand, and impulsive consciousness factors in their study and found five decision-making characteristics to be valid and reliable in the Chinese culture: time consciousness, brand consciousness, quality consciousness, price conscious, and information consciousness. The findings of the present study indicate that the original measurement instrument (CSI) was applicable to Chinese college student online shoppers. Even though seventeen items had to be dropped from the forty original

items during the factor refined process, items loaded on emerged characteristics were pretty consistent with the original scales.

Using the seven factors of the Consumer Style Inventory in this study, a profile of Chinese college online shoppers' CSI was developed. Results revealed that this group of online shoppers is generally recreational, hedonistic, quality conscious and price conscious when they shop for apparel products online. Previous research on Chinese consumers also concluded that Chinese college students are quite price conscious (e.g., Fan & Xiao, 1998). However, some findings of our research were not consistent with findings of previous research. The difference is not just because their study was conducted 10 years ago, but also because the new generation of Chinese college students may be quite different in their shopping style. The other important factor influencing the change of the new generation is Western culture's influence. Thus, Chinese college students have become more hedonic and quality conscious consumers. This finding is consistent with a study on American consumers conducted by Cowart and Goldsmith (2007). Their studies focused on college student apparel shopping behavior. Cowart and Goldsmith (2007) found that college students with higher hedonistic, recreational and impulsive orientation were more likely to buy clothes online than others.

The empirical results showed that decision-making characteristics of recreational, hedonistic consciousness, brand consciousness, and habitual, brand-loyalty consciousness had significant correlations with the frequency of online apparel purchase. However, only the characteristics of brand consciousness and habitual, brand-loyalty were significantly correlated with the amount of money spent online for apparel purchasing among Chinese college students.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to investigate Chinese college online apparel shoppers' decision-making style and their online apparel shopping behaviors. The research problem and research objectives were identified based on a review of literature and hypotheses were developed to guide the empirical study. An online survey was conducted to collect data for an empirical study to test the proposed hypotheses. All proposed hypotheses were supported.

The research fulfilled the identified research objectives. The following conclusions are drawn from this study:

1. Chinese college students more frequently use the Internet to conduct pre-purchase decision making steps than to complete transactions when they shop for apparel products online.

2. Chinese online college student consumers show different decision-making characteristics from the specified eight decision making characteristics by Sproles and Kendall (1986). Chinese college students showed seven out of eight characteristics of the consumer style inventory. The seven characteristics are recreational, hedonistic consumer, perfectionists, and high-quality conscious consumer, brand conscious consumer, price consciousness, confused by overchoice, habitual, brand-loyal consumer, and impulsive, careless consumer.

3. Chinese college student online shoppers are recreational, hedonistic consciousness, quality consciousness, and price consciousness oriented when they shop for apparel products online. Chinese college student online shoppers' decision-making style is associated with their online apparel consumption in terms of the frequency of purchasing online and the amount of money spent online for purchasing apparel products.



## 5.2 Implications

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. With updated testing of the conceptual framework of the Consumer Decision Inventory in newly-emerging young Chinese consumer groups, this research contributes to the existing decision-making literature by providing evidence of the validity and robustness of this framework. This study shows that seven characteristics of the CSI are applicable to Chinese college students online apparel shoppers. It also provides suggestions for adaptation of this framework to understand consumer groups across different cultures. The results show that more CSI items need to be developed to describe Chinese online apparel shoppers' decision making styles in future studies. Especially, it will be helpful to add more items to improve the validity of two dimensions of decision-making characteristics: habitual/ brand consciousness, and impulsive/careless. This research provides practical implications to Internet retailers by providing knowledge on understanding consumer decision making style so that Internet retailers can better influence their decision-making process toward more online purchases.

According to the empirical findings, Chinese college consumers tend to be recreational, price, and quality conscious when they shop online for buying apparel products. Namely, this group of online shoppers are, recreational consciousness shoppers and enjoy the shopping process, but they are also sensitive to price and attempt to find the lowest price with the best value. Therefore, Internet retailers who target college consumers should make their web stores fun to shop, selling more product at competitive prices. The research results also provide directions for Internet apparel retailers to overcome some barriers to get into China's online market. For example, the results show that Chinese consumers prefer paying at delivery or using debit card. The findings indicate that foreign Internet retailers need to accommodate these preferences by adopting the above mentioned payment methods. Simply assuming that Chinese

consumers will use credit cards may result in loss sales. In addition, we found that Chinese college student online consumers more frequently use the Internet to browse the apparel products than to buy products online. Foreign retailers may input more sources on branding at the initial stage of establishing market share in China.

### **5.3 Limitations and Recommendations**

There are several limitations in this study. First, this study used a convenience sample from universities in five Chinese cities, Shanghai, Wuhan, Beijing, FoShan, Guangdong and Yichang, Hubei, China. The data were collected from students with limited diversities on majors. More than 38 percent of respondents were in design majors, 21 percent of respondents were literature majors, and 14 percent of respondents were art majors. In addition, the sample included 69.2 percent female students, and 30.8 percent male students. However, the overall majority Chinese universities have more female students enrolled than male students. The study should be replicated in other cities and universities with varying majors and local economic conditions. Future research also can be replicated using non-college student samples in China to investigate general Chinese online apparel shopping decision making style.

Second, this study only investigated consumer decision making style for apparel shopping in China. Future research could also investigate consumer decision-making style for a variety of product categories in China.

Third, reliability scores of some factors were relatively low. This suggests that further study is needed to refine and develop new items in order to apply the CSI instrument to China.

Fourth, the profile approach of consumer style from Sproles and Kendall (1986) using percentage and quartile scores were weak to identify different consumers' decision making style. Future study should explore more advanced methods to classify and profile consumer style.

The study found that Chinese consumers prefer using Chinese domestic websites more than using foreign websites when they purchase apparel products. In addition, Chinese college students prefer buying casual clothes and sportswear over buying professional outfits and evening dresses online. We also found that Chinese college consumers purchase accessories more than clothing online. The findings showed that almost one third of the total respondents have purchased accessories, shoes and bags online. When they finally purchase apparel products from the Internet, they usually pay debit card or pay cash upon the delivery. Future research may explore the underlining reasons for these online shopping behaviors.

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# APPENDIX A

## HUMAN SUBJECT EXEMPTION FORM

### Application for Exemption from Institutional Oversight

Unless qualified as meeting the specific criteria for exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight, ALL LSU research/projects using living humans as subjects, or samples or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, with or without their consent, must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU IRB. This Form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.



Institutional Review Board  
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair  
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
P: 225.578.8692  
F: 225.578.6792  
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

- Applicant, Please fill out the application in its entirety and include the completed application as well as parts A-E, listed below, when submitting to the IRB. Once the application is completed, please submit two copies of the completed application to the IRB Office or to a member of the Human Subjects Screening Committee. Members of this committee can be found at [http://appl003.lsu.edu/osp/osp.nsf/\\$Content/Humans+Subject+Committee?OpenDocument](http://appl003.lsu.edu/osp/osp.nsf/$Content/Humans+Subject+Committee?OpenDocument)
- A Complete Application Includes All of the Following:
- (A) Two copies of this completed form and two copies of parts B thru E.
  - (B) A brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts 1 & 2)
  - (C) Copies of all instruments to be used.
    - If this proposal is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
  - (D) The consent form that you will use in the study (see part 3 for more information.)
  - (E) Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project, including students who are involved with testing or handling data, unless already on file with the IRB.  
Training link: (<http://cme.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/humanparticipant-protections.asp>.)

1) Principal Investigator: Yao Zeng Rank: Graduate Student Student? Y/N Y

Dept.: Human Ecology Ph: 578-1723 E-mail: yzeng@lsu.edu

2) Co Investigator(s): please include department, rank and e-mail for each

If student, please identify and name supervising professor in this space  
Chuanlan Liu, Assistant Professor, School of Human Ecology, cliu@lsu.edu

3) Project Title: Consumer Online Shopping Behavior

4) LSU Proposal? (yes or no) X If Yes, LSU Proposal Number \_\_\_\_\_

Also, if YES, either ☐ This application completely matches the scope of work in the grant  
**OR**

☐ More IRB Applications will be filed later

5) Subject pool (e.g. Psychology Students) Normal Adults elder than 18 yrs old

• Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children <18; the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the aged, other). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.

6) PI Signature Yao Zeng \*\* Date 9/7/2007 (no per signatures)

"I certify my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changed I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU institutions in which the study is conducted. I also understand that it is my responsibility to maintain copies of all consent forms at LSU for three years after completion of the study. If I leave LSU before that time the consent forms should be preserved in the Departmental Office.

\*\*\*Effective August 1, 2007, all Exemptions will expire three years from date of approval, unless a continuation report, found on our website, is filed prior to expiration date\*\*\*

Screening Committee Action: Exempted ☒ Not Exempted \_\_\_\_\_ Category/Paragraph \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer Michael Keenan Signature Michael Keenan Date 9-27-07

Study Exempted By:  
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman  
Institutional Review Board  
Louisiana State University  
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
225-578-8692 | www.lsu.edu/irb  
Exemption Expires: 09-27-2010

IRB# E3718 LSU Proposal# \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Complete Application  
☐ Human Subjects Training

## APPENDIX B

### SAMPLE LETTER

#### Consent Letter

I am a graduate student in Textile, Apparel and Merchandising in the School of Human Ecology, Louisiana State University. I am conducting a research study to investigate consumer apparel online shopping behavior. This study will collect data from college students.

Your participation will involve the completion of the survey to look at your online shopping experience. It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete including time to fill out the paper survey. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty and it will not affect your grade. The results of the research study will assist in the compilation of an accurate and detailed description of consumer attitudes of online shopping. All information you provide will be anonymous and will be used for research purposes only. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation is the expansion of our knowledge by examining the effects of consumer attitudes influencing online shopping.

If you have any questions concerning this research study, please call me at (225) 769-5052 or e-mail me at [yzengl@lsu.edu](mailto:yzengl@lsu.edu).

If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692.

Sincerely,



Yao Zeng

**Study Exempted By:**  
**Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman**  
**Institutional Review Board**  
**Louisiana State University**  
**203 B-1 David Boyd Hall**  
**225-578-8692 | [www.lsu.edu/irb](http://www.lsu.edu/irb)**  
**Exemption Expires: 09-26-2010**

## APPENDIX C

### ENGLISH VERSION QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Section 1: Measures for Decision-Making Style:

1. The following statements are about people's decision-making style. Using a scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree", indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements based on your general Internet experience.

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Getting very good quality is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality.	1	2	3	4	5
When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best.	1	2	3	4	5
I make special effort to choose the very best quality products.	1	2	3	4	5
I really don't give my purchases much thought or care.	1	2	3	4	5
My standards and expectations for products I buy are very high.	1	2	3	4	5
I shop quickly, buying the first product or brand I find that seems good enough.	1	2	3	4	5
A product doesn't have to be perfect, or the best, to satisfy me.	1	2	3	4	5
The well-known national brands are best for me.	1	2	3	4	5
The more expensive brands are usually my choices.	1	2	3	4	5

The higher the price of a product, the better its quality.	1	2	3	4	5
Nice department and specialty stores offer me the best products.	1	2	3	4	5
The most advertised brands are usually very good choices.	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer buying the best-selling brands.	1	2	3	4	5
I usually have one or more outfits of the very latest style.	1	2	3	4	5
I keep my wardrobe up-to-date with the changing fashions.	1	2	3	4	5
Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
To get variety, I shop different stores and choose different brands.	1	2	3	4	5
It's fun to buy something new and exciting.	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me.	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life.	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping the stores wastes my time.	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it.	1	2	3	4	5
I make my shopping trips fast.	1	2	3	4	5
I buy as much as possible at sale prices.	1	2	3	4	5
The lower price products are usually my choices.	1	2	3	4	5
I look carefully to find the best value for the money.	1	2	3	4	5
I should plan my shopping more carefully than I do.	1	2	3	4	5
I am impulsive when purchasing.	1	2	3	4	5

Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not.	1	2	3	4	5
I take the time to shop carefully for best buys.	1	2	3	4	5
I carefully watch how much I spend.	1	2	3	4	5
There are too many brands to choose from so that often I feel confused.	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes it's hard to choose which stores to shop.	1	2	3	4	5
The more I learn about products, the harder it seems to choose the best.	1	2	3	4	5
All the information I get on different products confuse me.	1	2	3	4	5
I have favorite brands I buy over and over	1	2	3	4	5
Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it.	1	2	3	4	5
I go to the same stores each time I shop.	1	2	3	4	5
I change brands I buy regularly.	1	2	3	4	5

## Section 2: Online apparel shopping experiences:

2. In a typical month, how often do you complete each of the following apparel shopping activities?

Statements	None	1-3 times	4-6 times	7-10 times	More than 10 times
Discover apparel products that I am interested in.	1	2	3	4	5
Search websites for information about apparel products I am interested in.	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluate different apparel products, brands, prices, features and their availability.	1	2	3	4	5
Make my final apparel product purchase decision.	1	2	3	4	5
Order and pay for the chosen apparel product online.	1	2	3	4	5

3. In three months, how often do you complete each of the following apparel shopping activities?

Statements	None	1-3 times	4-6 times	7-10 times	More than 10 times
Discover apparel products that I am interested in.	1	2	3	4	5
Search websites for information about apparel products I am interested in.	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluate different apparel products, brands, prices, features and their availability.	1	2	3	4	5
Make my final apparel product purchase decision.	1	2	3	4	5
Order and pay for the chosen apparel product online.	1	2	3	4	5

4. In three months, how often do you do the following apparel shopping activities using both online stores and physical stores?

Search the same or similar style found online in stores and buy from stores.	1	2	3	4	5
Find a style in a store but search online and buy it online.	1	2	3	4	5

5. What is your usual method of paying for your purchasing online?

- Pay cash once the purchased product is delivered to you
- Pay by debit card online
- Pay by credit card online
- Send cash through post office

6. What kind of apparel products do you usually search for online?

- Professional outfit
- Casual
- Sports wear
- Evening dress
- Unique dress
- Accessories
- Shoes
- Bag
- Others

7. What kind of apparel products that you usually purchase online?

- Professional outfit
- Casual
- Sports wear
- Evening dress
- Unique dress
- Accessories
- Shoes
- Bag
- Others

8. Please tell us which following websites you usually use to search or purchase apparel products?

- [www.dangdang.com](http://www.dangdang.com)
- [www.amazon.com.cn](http://www.amazon.com.cn)
- [www.eachnet.com](http://www.eachnet.com)
- [www.tejiawang.com](http://www.tejiawang.com)
- [www.taobao.com](http://www.taobao.com)
- Others

9. Please tell us which following websites you search or purchase apparel products the last three months.

- [www.dangdang.com](http://www.dangdang.com)
- [www.amazon.com.cn](http://www.amazon.com.cn)
- [www.eachnet.com](http://www.eachnet.com)
- [www.tejiawang.com](http://www.tejiawang.com)
- [www.taobao.com](http://www.taobao.com)
- others

10. On average, how much time do you spend online each week shopping and purchasing apparel?

- None
- 1-3 hours
- 4-6 hours
- 7-10 hours
- More than 10 hours

11. How much money did you spend for online apparel purchases over the past 30 days?

- ¥ 0
- ¥ 1 - ¥49
- ¥50 - ¥149
- ¥150 - ¥249
- ¥250 - ¥399
- ¥300 - ¥549
- ¥550 - ¥699

12. In three month, what is the total amount you spent for online apparel purchasing?

- ¥0
- ¥1- ¥49
- ¥50- ¥149
- ¥150 - ¥249
- ¥250 - ¥499
- ¥750 - ¥999
- ¥1000 - ¥2000
- More than ¥2000

**Section 3: Tell me about yourself. (Please choose one answer that best describe you.)**

13. Genders:

- Male
- Female

14. Age

- 17-20
- 21-23
- 24-26
- 27-30
- Over 35

15. Marital Status:

- Single
- Cohabiting
- Separated
- Married
- Divorced

16. Education:

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Master student
- Ph.D. student

17. Major:

- Design
- Education
- Literature
- Physics
- Engineering
- Music



- Art
- Business
- Others

18. Location:

- Beijing
- Wuhan
- Guangdong
- Yichang, Hubei

## APPENDIX D

### CHINESE VERSION QUESTIONNAIRE

#### 中国年轻顾客网上服装购物问卷调查

#### 一. 测量购物决策风格

1. 以下问题是关于人们上网购物得情况调查. 在下面可能的原因中, 请您回答您对网上购物服装好处的同意程度. 其中, 1= “强烈反对”, 2= “反对” 3= “没意见” 4= “同意” 5= “强烈同意”.

	强烈反对	反对	没意见	同意	强烈同意
我非常注重质量	1	2	3	4	5
我总是挑最好的买	1	2	3	4	5
我会尽力去找质量最好的产品	1	2	3	4	5
总的来说, 我通常买质量最好的	1	2	3	4	5
我买东西不太挑	1	2	3	4	5
我对商品的标准和期望值都很高	1	2	3	4	5
我只要看到合适的就立刻买	1	2	3	4	5
不一定非要完美无缺或最好的产品才能让我满意.	1	2	3	4	5
知名的国际品牌是我的最爱	1	2	3	4	5
我总是选最贵的品牌	1	2	3	4	5
昂贵的牌子质量好	1	2	3	4	5
一流的商场或专卖店总是能够提供最好的产品.	1	2	3	4	5
广告频繁的产品质量通常非常好	1	2	3	4	5
我比较偏爱畅销的品牌.	1	2	3	4	5

我总是会有一两套时髦的款式.	1	2	3	4	5
我的衣橱里挂的都是最时髦的衣服	1	2	3	4	5
时尚及有魅力的款式对我很重要.	1	2	3	4	5
我去不同的商场及挑选不同的品牌以追求多样性.	1	2	3	4	5
买最新商品真的很有趣味.	1	2	3	4	5
购物很没意思.	1	2	3	4	5
对我而言,买东西是件有趣的事情.	1	2	3	4	5
逛商场是浪费我的时间	1	2	3	4	5
购物真有趣.	1	2	3	4	5
我购物求快.	1	2	3	4	5
我尽量买打折的商品.	1	2	3	4	5
价格越低越好.	1	2	3	4	5
我仔细挑选性价比最好的商品.	1	2	3	4	5
我购物是有些粗心大意.	1	2	3	4	5
我买东西通常都是一时性起	1	2	3	4	5
下次希望再不这么粗心买东西了	1	2	3	4	5
我处心积虑地去买最合算的商品.	1	2	3	4	5
我会很小心地作预算	1	2	3	4	5
那么多地牌子要我怎么去选啊.	1	2	3	4	5
有时候,真不知道进哪家店去买	1	2	3	4	5
越了解一样产品,越容易挑花眼.	1	2	3	4	5
那些商品信息把我脑子都搞乱了	1	2	3	4	5

我会不断买我喜欢的牌子.	1	2	3	4	5
我只要看中喜欢的产品或品牌, 我就不会变.	1	2	3	4	5
我会每次去相同的商场.	1	2	3	4	5
我会尝试不同的品牌.	1	2	3	4	5

## 二. 以下问题是有关您上网购物经验的调查

### 2. 一个月里, 您通常会有以下哪些网上购买衣物的活动

	无	1-3 次	4-6 次	7-10 次	10次以 上
找到我感兴趣的服装商品	1	2	3	4	5
上网搜我感兴趣的服装信息	1	2	3	4	5
比较不同服装产品, 牌子, 价格, 特点, 及有无存 货	1	2	3	4	5
作出购买的最终决定	1	2	3	4	5
上网订货并付帐	1	2	3	4	5

### 3. 三个月里, 您通常会有以下哪些购买衣物的活动.

	无	1-3 次	4-6 次	7-10 次	10次 以上
找到我感兴趣的服装商品	1	2	3	4	5
上网搜我感兴趣的服装信息	1	2	3	4	5
比较不同服装产品, 牌子, 价格, 特点, 及有无存 货	1	2	3	4	5
作出购买的最终决定	1	2	3	4	5
上网订货并付帐	1	2	3	4	5

### 4. 三个月里, 您通常会有以下哪些网上或者去商场购买衣物的活动.

网上找到同样的或者类似的产品, 然后到商场去购买	1	2	3	4	5
到产品, 去网上搜同样的产品购买	1	2	3	4	5

### 5. 您通常如何在网上付帐?

- a. 货到付现金
- b. 网上银行支付

- c. 网上信用卡支付
- d. 通过邮局寄现款

6. 您会上网搜索哪类服装。

- 职业装
- 休闲
- 运动
- 晚礼服
- 独特类
- 装饰
- 鞋
- 包
- 其他

7. 您会上网购买哪类服装。

- 职业装
- 休闲
- 运动
- 晚礼服
- 独特类
- 装饰
- 鞋
- 包
- 其他

8. 您通常会上哪个网站搜索或购买。

- [www.dangdang.com](http://www.dangdang.com)
- [www.amazon.com.cn](http://www.amazon.com.cn)
- [www.eachnet.com](http://www.eachnet.com)
- [www.tejiawang.com](http://www.tejiawang.com)
- [www.taobao.com](http://www.taobao.com)
- 其他

9. 在过去的三个月您在哪个网站搜索或购买。

- [www.dangdang.com](http://www.dangdang.com)

- [www.amazon.com.cn](http://www.amazon.com.cn)
- [www.eachnet.com](http://www.eachnet.com)
- [www.tejiawang.com](http://www.tejiawang.com)
- [www.taobao.com](http://www.taobao.com)
- 其他

10. 通常说来, 您一周在网上花多少时间买衣服

无    1-2小时    3-4小时    5-6小时    7-8小时    8小时以上

11. 在过去的30天以内, 您在网上买衣服上花了多少钱?

无   1-49元   50-99元   100-149元   150-199元   200-249元   250-299元  
300以上

12. 在三个月以内, 您在网上买衣服上花了多少钱?

无   1-49元   50-99元   100-149元   150-199元   200-249元   250-299元   300以上

**三. 介绍一下您自己. (请在最能反应您情况的答案画圈.)**

13. 性别:            1) 男            2) 女

14. 年龄:            1) 18-20            2) 21-25            3) 26-30  
                         4) 31-40            5) 41-50            6) 50 以上

15. 年级:  
                 1) 大一            2) 大二            3) 大三  
                 4) 大四            5) 硕士研究生    6) 博士研究生

16. 婚姻状况:  
                 1) 独身            2) 已婚            3) 孀居  
                 5) 离婚            6) 同居

17. 您的专业:  
                 1) 教育   2) [音乐](#)   3) 设计   4) 文学   5) 理学   6) 工学   7) 经济管理   8) 艺术

18. 您的学校在哪里?  
                 1) 北京    2) 武汉            3) 上海            4) 广东            5) 宜昌

# APPENDIX E

## CHINESE VERSION ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Zoomerang - Survey Preview - Windows Internet Explorer

http://app.zoomerang.com/Create/preview/preview.zgi?ID=L239ARXGHQBS&bp=sm&p=WEB227ASAQ53PH

Google

Go | Bookmarks | 24 blocked | Check | AutoLink | AutoFill | Send to | Settings

Zoomerang - Survey Preview

### Survey Preview

[BACK](#)

Below is what your respondents will see when they take the survey. To exit Preview mode, click the "Back" button.

**NOTE: If you click on any non-Zoomerang URL links below, you may leave preview mode and be redirected to that site.**

### 中国消费者网上服装类商品购物问卷调查

Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) are mandatory.

1 以下是对消费者搜索或购买服装类商品(包含服饰配件、包、鞋等商品)的陈述, 请根据您的个人情况选择最能反映您的同意程度数字。其中, 1= "强烈反对", 2= "反对" 3= "没意见" 4= "同意" 5= "强烈同意"

1	2	3	4	5	
强烈反对	反对	没意见	同意	强烈同意	
时尚及有魅力的款式对我很重要	1	2	3	4	5
总的来说, 我通常尽量买质量最好的	1	2	3	4	5
我总是挑最好的买	1	2	3	4	5
好质量对我很重要	1	2	3	4	5
我喜欢购物是因为它本身是件有趣的事情	1	2	3	4	5
我会特别费心去找质量最好的商品	1	2	3	4	5
我购物求快	1	2	3	4	5

Done

Internet | Protected Mode: On | 100%

Windows Live Me... | March 25 Dr.K's c... | appC[1].docx - M... | Document1 - Mic... | Gmail - march 25 ... | Zoomerang - Sur... | EN | 12:19 AM

Zoomerang - Survey Preview - Windows Internet Explorer

http://app.zoomerang.com/Create/preview/preview.cgi?ID=L239ARXGHQB5&bp=sm&p=WEB227ASAQ53PH

Zoomerang - Survey Preview

## Survey Preview

Below is what your respondents will see when they take the survey. To exit Preview mode, click the "Back" button.

**NOTE: If you click on any non-Zoomerang URL links below, you may leave preview mode and be redirected to that site.**

1 2 3 4 5

对我而言,买东西是件愉快的事情

1 2 3 4 5

不一定非要完美无缺或最好的商品才能让我满意

1 2 3 4 5

我只要看中喜欢的商品或品牌,我就会总买它

1 2 3 4 5

我处心积虑地去买最合算的商品

1 2 3 4 5

有时候,真不知道进哪家店去买

1 2 3 4 5

我经常选择价格低的商品

1 2 3 4 5

对我而言,购物不是件愉快的活动

1 2 3 4 5

我通常粗心买了东西事后又后悔

1 2 3 4 5

价格越高的商品质量越好

1 2 3 4 5

Submit

Done

Windows Live Me... March 25 Dr.K's c... appC[1].docx - M... Document1 - Mic... Gmail - march 25 ... Zoomerang - Sur... EN < 12:22 AM

Zoomerang - Survey Preview - Windows Internet Explorer

http://app.zoomerang.com/Create/preview/preview.cgi?ID=L239ARXGHQB5&bp=sm&p=WEB227ASAQ53PH

Zoomerang - Survey Preview

## Survey Preview

Below is what your respondents will see when they take the survey. To exit Preview mode, click the "Back" button.

**NOTE: If you click on any non-Zoomerang URL links below, you may leave preview mode and be redirected to that site.**

Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) are mandatory.

2 \*以下所列是典型或常见的网上搜索或购买行为,请告诉我们您通常状况下的一个月内对服装类产品的网上搜索购买情况

1 2 3 4 5

无 1-3次 4-6次 7-10次 10次以上

找到我感兴趣的服装类商品

1 2 3 4 5

上网搜我感兴趣的服装类商品信息

1 2 3 4 5

比较不同服装类商品,品牌,价格,特点,及有无存货

1 2 3 4 5

作出购买的最终决定

1 2 3 4 5

上网订货并付帐

1 2 3 4 5

3 \*以下所列是典型或常见的网上搜索或购买行为,请告诉我们您通常状况下的三个月内对服装类产品的网上搜索购买情况

1 2 3 4 5

无 1-2次 3-5次 10-15次 20次以上

找到我感兴趣的服装类商品

Internet | Protected Mode: On 100%

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Zoomerang - Survey Preview - Windows Internet Explorer

http://app.zoomerang.com/Create/preview/preview.zgi?ID=L239ARXGHQ85&bp=sm&p=WEB227ASAQ33PH

Google

Zoomerang - Survey Preview

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无 1-5次 6-9次 10-19次 20次以上

找到我感兴趣的服装类商品

1 2 3 4 5

上网搜我感兴趣的服装类商品信息

1 2 3 4 5

比较不同服装类商品, 品牌, 价格, 特点, 及有无存货

1 2 3 4 5

作出购买的最终决定

1 2 3 4 5

上网订货并付帐

1 2 3 4 5

4 \*以下所列是典型或常见的网上网下结合型购买行为, 请告诉我们您通常状况下的三个月内对服装类商品的网上网下结合型购买情况

1 2 3 4 5

无 1-5次 6-9次 10-19次 20次以上

在网上找到同样的或者类似的产品, 然后到商场去购买

1 2 3 4 5

在商场看到产品, 去网上搜同样的产品购买

1 2 3 4 5

5 \*您通常如何对网上选购的服装商品付帐?

货到付现金

网上银行卡支付

网上信用卡支付

通过邮局寄现款

6 \*您通常会在网上搜索哪些类服装商品?

职业装

休闲装

运动装

晚装

设计独特的服装

服饰配件

鞋

包

其它类别:

Zoomerang - Survey Preview - Windows Internet Explorer

http://app.zoomerang.com/Create/preview/preview.zgi?ID=L239ARXGHQ85&bp=sm&p=WEB227ASAQ33PH

Google

Zoomerang - Survey Preview

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5 \*您通常如何对网上选购的服装商品付帐?

货到付现金

网上银行卡支付

网上信用卡支付

通过邮局寄现款

6 \*您通常会在网上搜索哪些类服装商品?

职业装

休闲装

运动装

晚装

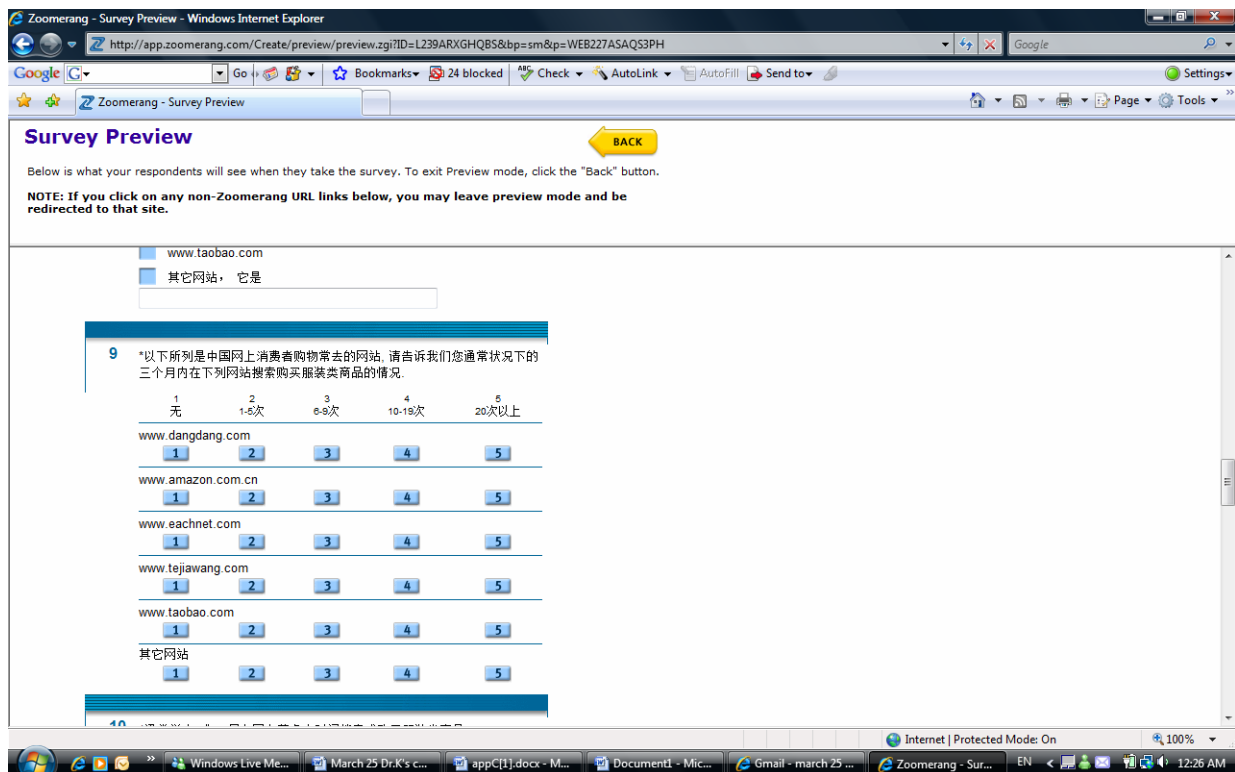
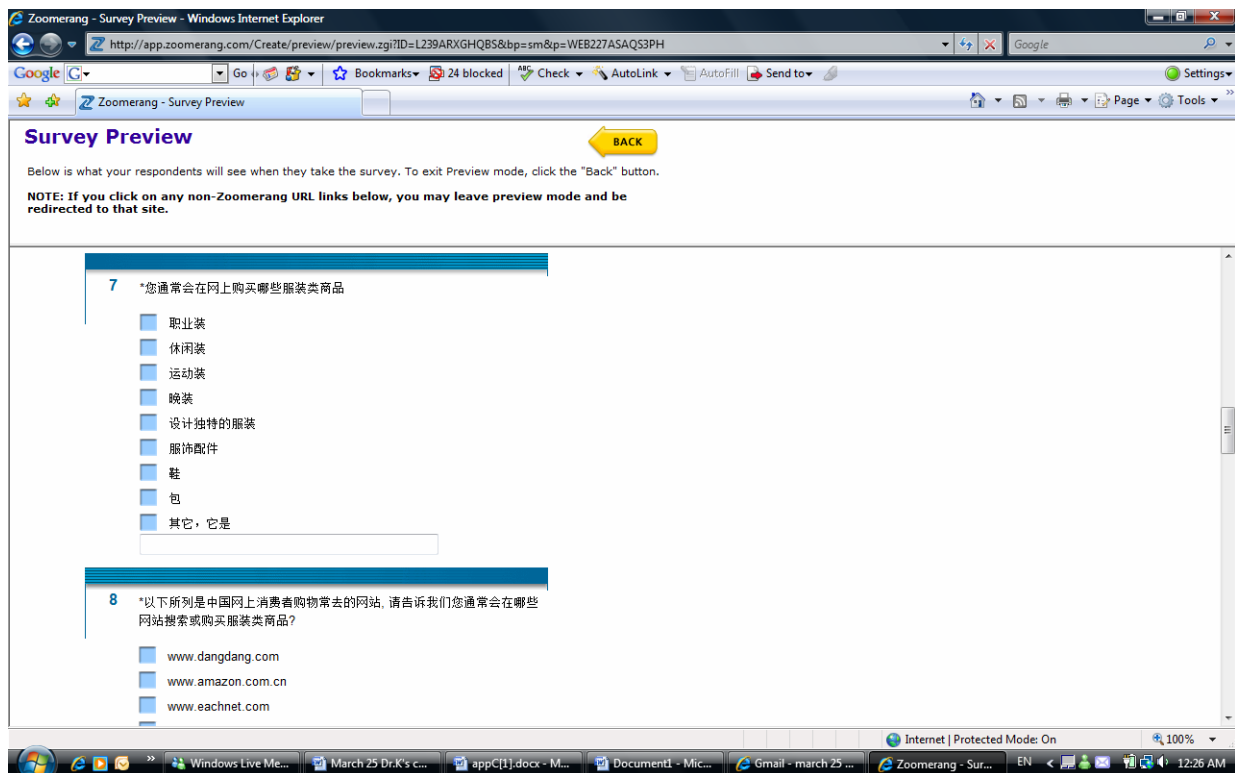
设计独特的服装

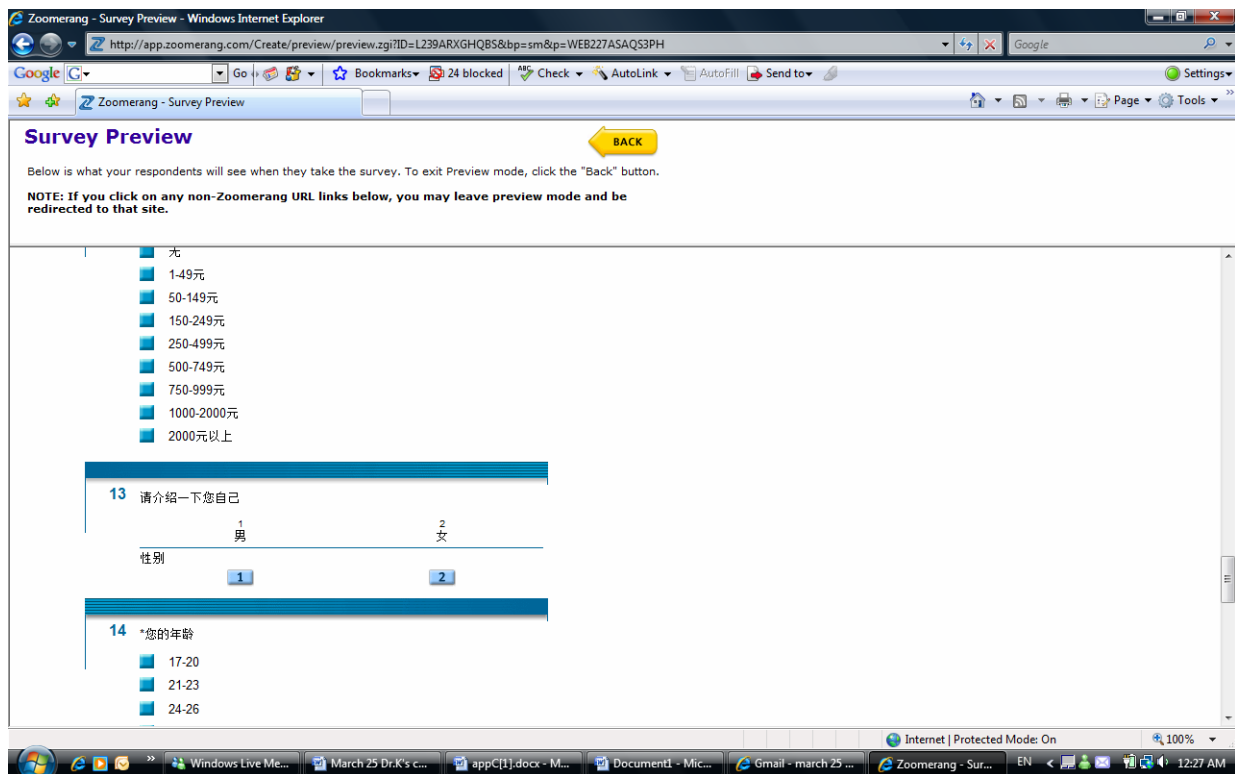
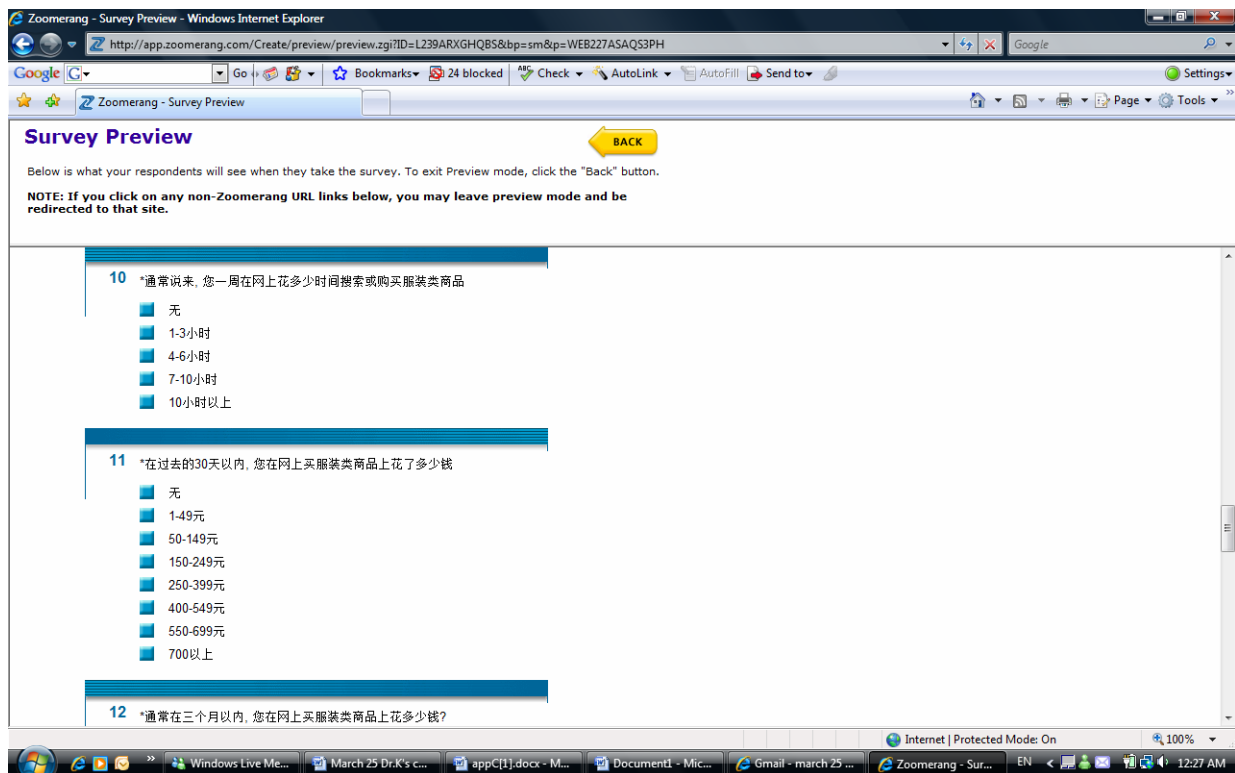
服饰配件

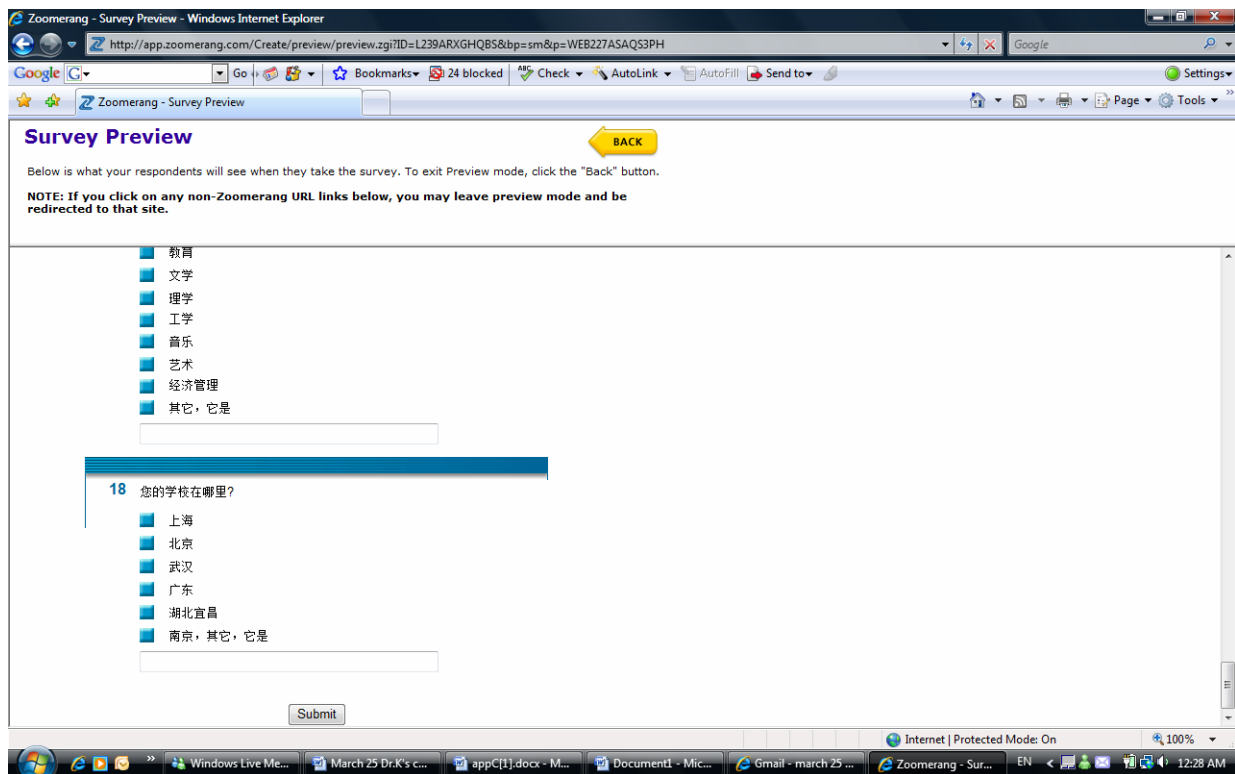
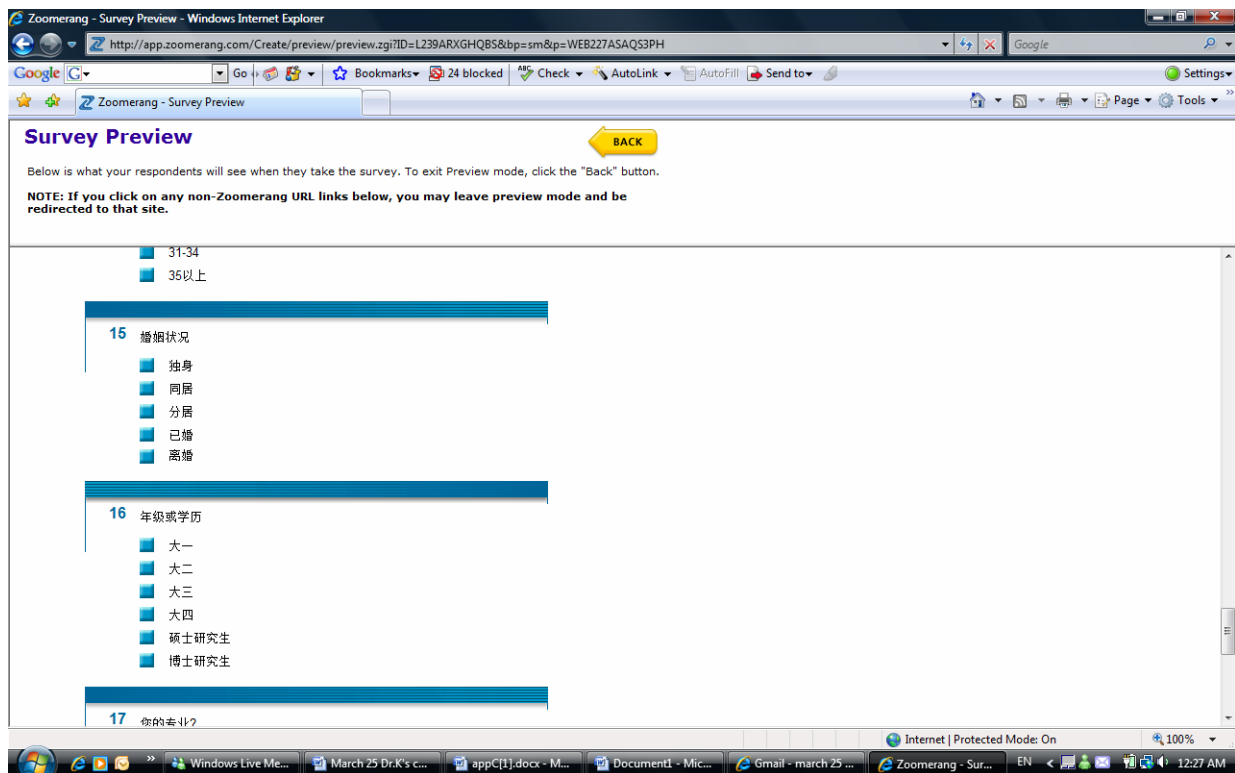
鞋

包

其它类别:







## **VITA**

Yao Zeng is currently a graduate student at the Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. She received a Bachelor of Art in apparel design from the Wuhan University of Science and Engineering in China.

She won the Jim Liles Student Awards twice from the Costume Society of America in 2007 and 2008, the Edith Spring Arnold Scholarship from School of Human Ecology, Louisiana State University in 2006, and she has been awarded the Harvey Lewis Travel Fund three times in 2006, 2007, and 2008. She also received travel award from Graduate School of Louisiana State University twice in 2007 and 2008.

Her current research interests include apparel online marketing, fast fashion, and impact of oriental apparel on Western fashion. She will continue to pursue the completion of her doctoral degree after obtaining the Master of Science degree.