A research on Chinese consumers’ buying behaviour towards mobile phone cases – Case company: Mozo Oy

Wei Zhou

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Abstract

Degree programme in International Business

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The aim of this bachelor’s thesis was to study Chinese consumers’ buying process when buying mobile phone cases. The research was done for a case company, called Mozo Oy. Mozo is a small design company planning to enter the Chinese market with their mobile phone accessories. The research question was to find out what Chinese consumer’s buying behaviour was like when buying a mobile phone case. This research mainly focused on the Chinese consumers’ decision making process, the way in which the Chinese consumers were influenced, and Chinese consumers’ product preferences when buying a mobile phone case.

The theoretical framework was built based on the model of buyer behaviour. It gave guidance to the empirical research. The theoretical part was based on theories that explain the model of buyer behaviour, basic concepts of consumer behaviour, culture as an influence on consumer behavior, consumer decision making process, consumers’ psychological core, and consumer inferences.

The main research method was quantitative. There was a questionnaire conducted to target Chinese consumers. The research was done via a Chinese survey website, called Wenjuan.com. The design of the survey was based on the theoretical framework.

The results of the survey illustrated the Chinese consumers’ buying process, influences on their buying process, and their product preferences when purchasing mobile phone cases. As a result, the case company could obtain information on Chinese consumer’s purchasing behaviour when buying mobile phone cases. The results of the survey showed that, the majority of Chinese consumers usually used less than three phone cases for one phone. Online web shops were the most common places for them to search the product information, and purchase the products. Fashion preference was the most influential factor on Chinese consumers’ mobile phone cases buying behaviour.

Keywords

Chinese market, Consumer behaviour, Consumer buying process, Mobile phone cases
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1 Introduction

“Consumer behaviour reflects the totality of consumers’ decisions with respect to the acquisition, consumption, and disposition of goods, services, activities and ideas by (human) decision-making units over time.” (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 3.) Indeed, consumer behaviour does not only refer to how a person buys products. Furthermore, it involves more things such as products, services, activities, and ideas. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 3.)

The case company of this thesis, called Mozo is planning to enter into the Chinese market. However, in order to design the suitable products for the target consumer, the case company needs to know how the Chinese consumer’s purchasing behaviour is when buying mobile phone cases. By studying consumer behaviour, one can understand the how and why consumers buy things. It can also tell marketers what factors can be used to influence the consumer behavior.

This information is useful for a company to know in order to design the right product for the target market. Having the right product for the market is a prerequisite for any company that is planning on entering into another country.

1.1 Research goals and objectives

The aim of this research is to find out the relevant information on the Chinese consumers buying behaviour when buying a mobile phone case. By doing this research, the case company Mozo can have the information support on their product development for the Chinese market. And understanding how the target consumers are when purchasing a mobile phone case can help the case company put their first step into the Chinese market. Therefore, the research question is:

What is the Chinese consumers’ buying behaviour like when buying a mobile phone case?
In order to find out about the Chinese consumer behaviour towards the mobile phone cases, there are three investigative questions needed:

1. How is the process when the Chinese consumers buy mobile phone cases?
2. What influence the Chinese consumers when they buy mobile phone cases?
3. What are the Chinese consumers’ product preferences when buying a phone case?

The first investigative question researches on the Chinese consumer’s buying process when purchasing mobile phone cases. The second question investigates on the culture influences on the Chinese consumer. The third question intends to find out the Chinese consumers’ mobile phone case preferences. Consumer’s product preference influences directly on their purchasing decision making. Therefore, this question is also tightly connected with the second investigative question.

1.2 Demarcation

The goal of the research is to find out how the Chinese consumers purchase phone cases, and what their preferences are. There are many factors that can be related to Chinese consumer buying behaviour, such as benchmarking on the competitors, culture and social influence, and potential sales channels. Among the cultural influence, it can include aspects such as lifestyle, consumer personality, and social class influence. In other words, this research can be very broad in the area of consumer behaviour.

However, according to the goal of this research, and the fact that the case company does not have any products yet for the Chinese market, it would be unnecessary to emphasis on aspects such as, competitors, and sales channels. Phone is also not a high cost product compared to other products, such as computer, phones, and tablets. Therefore, when researching the consumer’s culture as an influence on their buying behaviour, it is more efficient to focus on researching the relevant aspects such as, consumer diversity, social aspects, consumer values, and consumer lifestyles, rather than consumer region, religion, linguistic, and ethics.
Furthermore, the key concept of the theoretical framework design is based on the model of buyer behaviour, which can be seen in the key concepts section. The needs of the company from this survey is to know mainly about the Chinese consumers’ product preferences, and purchasing behaviour. Therefore, the other elements in the category of the buyer responses in the model of buyer behaviour such as buying attitudes, brand and company, and relationship behaviour will not be targeted on when doing the research.

1.3 Key concepts

The theoretical framework is built based on Amstrong & Kolter’s consumer behaviour model called “Consumer’s black box”. This model is the source structure of the whole thesis theory, and research design. This model will be further explained in Chapter 3. Here, it mainly describes the key concepts that are related to this model. The following figure is the Model of Buyer Behaviour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Environment</th>
<th>Buyer’s black box</th>
<th>Buyer responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Marketing stimuli</td>
<td>• Buyer's characteristics</td>
<td>• Buying attitudes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Product</td>
<td>• Buying preferences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Price</td>
<td>• Purchases behavior</td>
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Figure 1. Model of Buyer Behaviour (Amstrong & Kotler 2001, 165)

Based on this model, the theoretical framework is going to analyse the elements in this model that is most beneficial for this research question. The theoretical framework is divided into four sections. The first category is the Consumer behaviour in general. It will introduce some basic concepts of consumer behaviour. In addition, it will explain the consumer behaviour model in details. The second part is going to analyse culture as an influence on the consumer behaviour. According to the consumer behaviour model,
Culture is one of the environment stimuli that can influence the buyer’s behaviour. Next, the research will describe the steps of buyer’s decision making process. In the end, the research will take a look on the consumer’s psychological field as an influence to the buying behaviour.

The goal of the survey is to find out what the Chinese consumer’s responses are when buying mobile phone cases, which is the last part of the consumer behaviour model, called “Buyer responses”. In this category, the survey will find out what the Chinese consumer’s buying preferences, and purchasing behaviour are.
2 Company introduction

This chapter describes the background information of the case company, called Mozo Oy. It includes the case company’s mission, value, and the works that they do. In addition, Chapter 2 will reveal Mozo’s current plan for the ongoing business. A short financial statement of Mozo Oy will be also given in the end of this chapter.

2.1 Company background

The case company “MOZO” is a Finnish marketing and designing agency. It was founded in 2009. The current office is located in Ruoholahti. Along the time, they have done a lot of designing work for companies, such as Nokia, Rovio, Jaffa, Fazer and Barcardi. The company specialized in creating positive brand experience in all consumer touch points, as it is mentioned in their web page. The company’s goal is to use their creative solutions of designing and branding to help their clients grow their businesses and meet their business goals. In addition, Mozo accessories department designs, manufactures and sells accessories for electronic equipment like smart phones, tablets, and computers. They have achieved great success also for their “toppa” tablet case for iPad. Mozo is currently presenting in over 20 markets, including countries, such as Sweden, Norway, Russia, France, Switzerland, South Africa, U.S.A, and Philippine.

2.2 Company’s current plan

The company also has a plan to expand their business to China by developing appealing phone accessory products for the Chinese consumers. A systematic plan has been made for 2014. As it is shown in the figure below,
Figure 2. Business plan of Mozo Oy for 2014

The above figure shows Mozo’s plan during the year 2014. It is mainly in 4 aspects. By doing these, the company is aiming at bigger sales, and more available channels with a strong Mozo brand identity. As it is indicated in the figure, Mozo will open up new markets aggressively, and expand the generic products range. One big direction Mozo is aiming at is the Chinese market. Thus, this survey result will be beneficial for the case company on the product development.

2.3 Summary of financial statement

The company’s turnover has been growing gradually since 2009. As it is shown in the following graph,

Figure 3. Mozo turnover and profit from 2009-2012
The above graph describes Mozo’s turnover and yearly profit from 2009-2012. With a steady change in their turnover, the profit changed from non-profitable to profitable in the year 2012. The company’s profit in the first year and the year 2011 was far below the break-even point (-98,000 euro, -92,000 euro). However, there was a positive change in 2012. Mozo gained 24,000 euro profit.

The financial figures in here provide general information on the company’s financial performance in the past year. However, in this research, the business analysis of the case company’s decision making process has not been evaluated in the scope of this thesis.
3 Consumer behaviour

Chapter 3 is the theoretical support for this research. It is divided into four main categories. The general consumer behaviour characteristics will be described first. It will then discuss culture as an influence on the consumer behaviour. Furthermore, the consumer decision making process, and factors that influence consumer decision making process will be analysed.

3.1 Defining consumer behaviour

“We define consumer behaviour as the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs.” (Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, 23.)

“In its broadest sense, the term consumer behaviour describes two different kinds of consuming entities: the personal consumer and the organizational consumer.” (Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, 23.)

“Consumer behaviour reflects the totlity of consumers’ decisions with respect to the acquisition, consumption, and disposition of goods, services, activities and ideas by (human) decision-making units over time.” (Hoyer & Maclnnis 2007, 3.) Indeed, consumer behaviour does not only refer to how a person buys products. Furthermore, it involves more things such as products, services, activities, and ideas. Consumer behavior means more than just how a person is buying tangible products, such as a car. It also includes a person who buys a car, also needs to check all the other car brands. (Hoyer & Maclnnis 2007, 3.)

Consumers make different types of decisions every day, the decisions consumers make on purchasing is the focus point that the marketers try to study. In business life, just like many large firms put great effort on researching consumer behaviour to find out the reasons what consumers purchase, when, and where they purchase, why they purchase, how and how much they purchase, this research intends to do the research on the same purposes. (Amstrong & Kotler 2011, 165.)
One central question marketers are trying to find out is: How do consumers respond to various marketing efforts the company might use. It starts with the stimulus-response of buyer behaviour. The following figure is called “Model of Buyer Behaviour”, also referred as a consumer’s “black box”.

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<td>Promotion</td>
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<td>• Cultural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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Figure 4. Model of Buyer Behaviour (Armstrong & Kotler 2001, 165)

The above figure shows the contents of the buyer behaviour. The black box produces certain responses. What marketers need to figure out is the contents in the buyer’s black box. In the environment box, it contains marketing stimuli, and other stimuli. Marketing stimuli consists of the marketing mix, while the others include elements, such as economic, technological, political, and cultural factors. All these factors are included in the buyer’s black box, where they become a set of observable buyer responses. In the following part of the theoretical framework section, it is going analysis the cultural and social aspect in the environment section, the buyer’s decision process, and buyer’s preferences, and purchases behaviour.

3.2 Culture as an influence

Sociocultural environment can bring influences on consumer behaviour. These influences can include family, informal sources, other non-commercial sources, social class, and subculture and culture. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, 483.) Among these, culture is
major influence on consumer behaviour in many different aspects. There are four categories in the culture dimension. The aspects are shown in the following figure.

Figure 5. The consumers’ culture (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 299)

Schiffman and Kanuk (2010, 366) defined culture as “the sum total of learned beliefs, values, and customs that serve to direct the consumer behaviour of members of a particular society.” The influence of culture is so natural and automatic that this influence on behaviour is usually taken for granted. Thus, it is very important for the consumer researchers to study on this aspect. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, 367.)

3.2.1 Consumer diversity

Consumer diversity is categorized in six aspects, as it is shown in the figure below.

Figure 6. Consumer diversity dimensions (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 302)
The figure shown above shows six aspects of consumer diversity. China is not a religious country. Therefore, the religious aspect is less relevant in this research. Hence, this part is mainly going to discuss about the age, gender, sexual orientation, regional and ethical aspects.

**Age**

Age is often a sector used by marketers to segment consumers. People of the same age experience similar life experiences. Thus, they share many common needs, symbols, and memories, therefore, in turn, may lead to similar consumption patterns. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 301.)

Each major age group of the population might be thought of as a separate subculture, as people in different age listen to different music, dress differently, and watch different TV shows. There are four age subcultures to four age groups, listing from youngest to oldest: Generation Y, Generation X, Baby boomers, and seniors. (Skiffman & Kanuk 2010, 410.)

According to a study done by Yunjun Qiu, these age categories can be divided into further sub-categories. The following figure is concluded according to Qiu’s studies.

![Figure 7. Chinese consumer groups (Qiu 2011)](image)

According to Qiu (2011), among these consumer age groups, starts from the generation “Thirties”, consumers grew up in a more open environment. They started to save
less, and spend more on entertainment. These consumers often do online shopping. The value and quality are more pursued than the low prices. These consumers is going to become the most important consumers in the next decade. The generation Y includes the late teens and people in their early twenties. In China, generation Y is a lot better educated than its predecessors. The “twenties” is the first generation of the one-child policy. They have opposite shopping habits from their parent. These consumer groups save rarely, and spend most of their income on entertainment, advanced electronics, and other trendy products. The “twenties” are impulsive consumers, that do a lot of online shopping. They prefer product that can distinguish their personalities. Compared to the “twenties”, the new generation consumers under the age of 20 share very similar characteristics regarding to their consuming behaviour. They are the most Westernized and open to new products.

**Gender and Sexual orientation**

In most cultures, male and female are expected to act according to their sex-role norms they learned when they were children. Men and women have a number of differences in their consuming behaviours. Females pay more attention on detailed, thorough examination of an ad message, while men are selective information processors, driven more by overall themes and simplifying heuristics. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 309.)

**Regional**

The area of the world in which a consumer lives can affect their consuming patterns. Consumers from different countries differ largely in the way they spend their income. For example, some products are strongly associated with some nations, such as beer in Germany and sushi in Japan. However, there are also some consumptions of particular products, which are forbidden in some nations, such as drinking alcohol and smoking are not allowed in Muslim countries. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 316.)

In addition, the regional influence on consumers within a country is also very important. The United States, for example, is a big country. It includes a wide range of climatic and geographic conditions. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, 400.)
Cities in China are categorized into different level of city tiers. When talking about the tier city, it usually points to population, development of services and infrastructure, and the cosmopolitan nature of the city. (New Zealand China Trade Association, 2014.) Tier 1 includes cities such as, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chengdu. Tier 2 includes mostly secondary provincial capitals. Tier 3 consists prefecture or county level city capitals. The market buzz in China in 2009 on the opportunities was available in 2 and 3 tier cities. In general, the production is cheaper in lower tier cities. (Cole 2009.) Tier 1 cities attract more attention from foreign companies because of their income levels are a lot higher than the national average. There are larger middle class representation and increasing consumption habits. However, Tier 2 cities have got increased attention an investment from foreign firms due to their lower labour costs, less competition, lower operating costs for retailers and rapidly increasing consumer spending habits. (Gardner 2013.)

The case company is aiming at a relatively high price level of their products compared to the other mobile phone cases in the Chinese market. Therefore, this research will be focusing on the Tier 1 and 2 cities’ citizens.

**Ethical**

Ethnic factors are major factor that influences consumer consumption. Ethnic subcultures exist in many nations. It is very challenging to discuss each of the ethnic groups around the world. However, Hoyer and MacInnis (2007,324) indicated few examples to illustrate on the differences. In Canada, the French-speaking subculture has their own motivations and buying habits. They use more staples for original or “scratch” cooking. They consume less frozen vegetables, diet drinks, and hard liquor.

3.2.2 **Social class**

In most of the societies, there is social class hierarchy. These social classes include identifiable groups of persons who behave and live differently from those of members of the other classes. Most societies have three main classes, which are high, middle, and lower class. Social class structures are important as they strongly influence norms and values on an individual. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 330.)
“Social class can be thought of as a continuum which includes a range of social positions on which each member can be placed, divided into a small number of specific social classes, or stata.” (Skiffman & Kanuk 2010, 338.)

According to the consumption patterns of each social class described in the studied book, a figure can be concluded as follow,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upper class</th>
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<tr>
<td>• consumers save and invest more money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• price-conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more carefully research on the purchases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• purchase high-quality, and prestige brands in good taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• collect items that are symbols of acquired wealth and power</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• look to the upper class for guidance on certain behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• its value can determine the types of products and brands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• tend to have more of a local orientated socially, psychologically, and geographically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• spend more than save</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• save more than invest</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Figure 9. Consumption patterns of specific social classes (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 343-346)

As it is shown in the above figure, the upper class consumers tend to save and invest money more than other member in the other classes. Many of them are still price-conscious. They tend to do more research on the purchasing items, and are less likely to indicate the quality by the product price. Consumers in this class purchase more high-quality goods, and items that symbol wealth and power. Many of the middle class consumers look to the upper class for direction on certain behaviours, such as proper dining etiquette, and popular leisure activities. Their values can determine the types of products and brands that they buy. The working class tend to be more local orientated. For example, they have strong preferences for local athletic teams, and vacations. They also have strongest resistance to the foreign car invasion. In general, working class
consumers spend more than they save. And on the saving perspective, they save more than they invest.

### 3.2.3 Social influence

According to the figure called Chapter overview: Social influences (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 393), there are four perspectives of the social influences, which are Normative, informational, positive or negative, and verbal or nonverbal.

There are various sources can affect on the social influence, such as general, special, and groups. These sources exert two types of influence, which are normative informational. Normative influence is a social pressure designed to encourage conformity to the expectations of others. Normative influence implies consumers will be sanctioned or punished if they do not follow the norms. There are some examples of how normative influences are:

- They can affect brand choice congruence, conformity, compliance, or reactance.
- Affected by characteristics of the product, the consumer, and the group.

To give more explanation, normative influence can affects the brand choice congruence such as the likelihood that consumers will buy what others in their group buy. It also makes the consumers do what someone asks them to do, or do the opposite of what the individual or group wants them to do. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 409.)

Hoyer and MacInnis (2007, 414) explained, that informational influence is important, as it affects a consumer on how much time and effort they spend on information search and decision making. Eventhough informational influence can decrease information search, sometimes it is important for marketers to increase the possibility that consumers will be involved in information search. An example was given, that few consumers are possible to have the knowledge about the benefits of a new product. The company needs therefore to launch a campaign to increase the product awareness and encourage consumers to compare products.
3.3 Consumer decision making process

People make various decisions each day. However, these decisions are usually made without stopping to think about how they were made. In most cases, a decision is selected from two or more options. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, 478.)

The consumer decision making process consists of five stages. This section will describe each stage of the consumer decision making process in details. The figure below shows the five stages of consumer decision making process.

Figure 10. A Generic Model of Consumer Problem Solving (Peter & Olson 2005, 169)

The above figure show the five steps of the consumer decision making process. However, as the survey is intend to research how consumers are making their purchasing decisions before the purchasing, it is going to describe the first three steps.

Problem recognition

This is generally the first stage of the consumer decision making process, when the consumer recognizes a consumption problem that needs to be solved. Problem recognition is the observed differences between an ideal and an actual state. This is an important stage in the decision process, as it gives motivations to the consumers to action. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 195.)

Problem recognition relates to acquisition, consumption and disposition. Consumers recognize problems, such as needing to decide what to wear for dinner, and how much is the budget for the dinner. As consumers are stimulated by many different problem...
recognition, it is important to know what contributes to differences between the ideal and the actual states. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 195.)

The expectations and aspiration of the ideal state are usually stimulated by consumers’ own personal motivations. For example, what do they want to be based on their self-images, and by aspects of their own culture. On the other hand, consumers perception of their actual state is influenced by a variety of factors. These factors are usually simple physical factors, such as running out of a product, or unexpectedly needing a service. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 197.)

**Search for alternative solutions**

When consumers search for the information for the alternative solutions, there are two types of channels they can search from, which are Internal search and external search. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 198-205.)

*Internal search* is usually the next step after consumers recognize their problem. Almost all decision making includes some kind of memory processing. Each individual has various information, feelings, and past experiences stored in his/her memory. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 198.)

*External search* is when information is missing or some uncertainty surrounds the recalled information, consumers tend to search information from outside sources. People use this type of search to gather more information regarding to which brands are available, also the attributes and benefits of certain brands in the consideration set. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 205.)

**Evaluation of alternatives**

After the first two stages, consumers are engaged to the judgment stage. This stage can be varied in terms of processing effort, which is from high to low (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 221).
An estimation of likelihood is consumers’ determination of the probability that something will happen. It is in a very important position of consumer information processing. Judgments of goodness/badness are consumers’ evaluation of the desirability of the offering’s features. Consumers combine their own judgments into an overall evaluation of goodness or badness, so that they can form an attitude about the product or service. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 222.)

There are judgments consumers made that are not objective, in other words, bias may influence consumer judgment in many ways:

- **Confirmation bias.** If consumer are susceptible to a confirmation bias and they acquire and process only confirming evidence, they will be more confident in their judgment than if they acquired negative information.

- **Self-positivity bias.** When consumer believe they are less vulnerable to a risk than others are, they have a self-positivity bias.

- **Negativity bias.** With a negativity bias, consumers weight negative information more heavily than positive information when forming judgments.

- **Mood and bias.** Mood can bias consumers judgment. Essentially, your mood serves as the initial anchor for you judgment.

- **Prior brand evaluations.** When consumers judge a brand to be good based on past exposure, they may subsequently fail to learn information about the brand’s attributes that are diagnostic of its actual quality.

(Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 223.)

### 3.4 Consumer’s psychological core

The psychological core is an internal consumer process. Consumer must have certain knowledge upon which to support their decisions making process, before they make their decisions. In the psychological core, it includes motivation, ability, and opportunity; exposure, attention, and perception; categorization and comprehension of information; and formation and change in attitude. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 13.)

In here, it focuses mainly on the psychological field of consumer. In the consumer’s psychological field, it includes elements such as, motivation, perception, learning, and personality. (Skiffman & Kanuk 2010, 483.)
Psychographics has the components of value, personality, and lifestyle. Marketers use psychographics to gain more detailed understanding of consumer behavior. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 361.)

As it was mentioned in the demarcation, mobile phone cases are lower priced product compared to some other products, such as computer, and tablets. In addition, mobile phone case is a rather common necessity. Therefore, the following sections in this Chapter it is mainly going to discuss about the motivation, perception, attitude, and lifestyle influence on the consumer’s decision making process.

### 3.4.1 Consumer motivation

There are two aspects of consumer motivation discussed in here. They are the dynamics of motivation, and factors that can influence the consumer motivation. These influencing factors include consumer’s values, goals, and needs.

**The dynamics of motivation**

According to Hoyer and MacInnis (2007, 49), “Motivation is defines as ‘an inner state of arousal,’ with aroused energy directed to achieving a goal.”

“Motivation is the driving force within individuals that impels them to action.”

(Schiffman & Kaunuk 2010, 106.)

Motivation influences how people process and make decisions. When consumers are highly motivated to reach a goal, they are more willing to pay careful attention to it. They might think more about it, try to understand existed information about it, evaluated that information critically, and try to make a use of it later. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 51.)

It is describe by Hoyer and MacInnis (2007, 111) that, motivation is a very dynamic construct, which changes constantly in reaction to life experiences. Needs and goals change and develop according to a person’s physical condition, environment, interactions with others, and experiences. If a person reaches the goal, he/she will develop a
new one. On the other hand, the person will continue on chasing the old goals or develop a substitute goal.

Factors influence consumers motivations
As stated by Hoyer and MacInnis (2007, 54), “Motivation is influenced by the extent to which the ad, brand, product category, or other characteristics is personally relevant to consumers. Consumers see something as personally relevant and important when it is consistent with their values, goals, and needs; risky; and/or moderately inconsistent with their prior attitudes.” According to this, factors that can influence consumer motivation are categorized into five aspects, which are value, goals, needs, risk, and inconsistency with attitudes. A figure by Jeffrey F. Durgee describes a model of the motivational process is shown below.

![Figure 11. Model of the Motivation Process (Schiffman & Kanuk 2007, 107)](image)

The above figure gives a clear idea of how a consumer’s needs shift to the goal fulfillment stage. During the process, there are factors can influence on the motivation, such as personality, perception, learning, and attitudes.

Values. Consumer’s motivation is influenced by their own values. Consumers are more motivated to develop information when the information is found more relevant to their values. This value guides what consumers view as important or good.
Therefore, if you think appearance is extremely important for a person, you are likely to be motivated to engage in behaviors that are compatible with this value, such as purchasing up to date fashion items constantly. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 55.)

Value differs across groups of consumers. Hoyer and MacInnis categorized four factors that can influence a person’s values, which can be concluded as a figure shown below.

![Figure 12. Influences on values (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 370)](image)

Hoyer and MacInnis (2007, 370) indicates people in different countries have different cultural experience, which causes cross-cultural differences in values. In the dimension of ethical identification, ethnic groups within a larger culture can have values that are different from those of others. To give an example, Chinese consumers are more likely to keep the traditional Confucian value of respect for older family members. Nestle benefits from this by advertising milk-based meal supplements to their respect and responsibility for aging parents. It is also pointed out that people who have different social status, and ages share different values. Based on the social environment they living in, and grow up with, it leads these people to have different values. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 371.)

A study of Zhang, Grigoriou and Li in 2008 has pointed out that Chinese consumers in the coastal areas have accepted more western values. They are more individualistic than inland consumers. As a result, coastal Chinese consumers care more about their own feelings and desires. They care less about the opinions of other people. (Giele 2009, 6.)
**Goals.** Another factor influences consumers’ motivation is their goals. Hoyer and Maclnnis indicated (2007, 55), “A goal is a particular end state or outcome that a person would like to achieve.” Whether the goals are concrete or abstract, consumers are willing to be motivated to engage in behaviors that are relevant to achieving their goals. Goals give consumer directions to organize product information and help with the transfer of effort and behavioral intention from one product to another, relying on the extent of which the products meet a common goal. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 55.)

However, a goal can also negative. Unlike the positive goals that toward which behavior is guided, the negative goals usually referred to as an approach object. A negative goal is directed away and is referred to as an avoidance object. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, 108.)

**Needs.** The third factor is very powerful on affecting a consumer’s relevance and motivation. A need is an internal state of tension caused by disequilibrium from an ideal or desired state. Needs can direct consumers toward a product or service, they can also keep them away. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 56.)

There are two types of needs. One is called Innate needs, also referred as primary needs. The other one is called secondary needs. The previous need describes consumers’ physiological needs, such as food, water, air, sex. The later described needs include needs for self-esteem, prestige, affection, and power. These acquired needs are those that people learn from the culture or environment, it is also called as acquired needs. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, 106.)

**3.4.2 Consumer perception**

“Perception is defined as the process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world.” (Skiffman & Kanuk 2010, 175.)
Stimuli

According to Schiffmand and Kanuk (2010, 179), each individual receives sensations from stimuli in the outside environment. There are two types of stimuli, which are physical stimuli and stimuli provided by individuals in the form of certain predispositions based on previous experience. Consumers make a lot of selections subconsciously as to which aspects of the stimuli they perceive. There are two major factors that decide on which stimuli can get selected in addition to the nature of the stimulus itself:

- Consumers’ previous experience as it affects their expectations. (what they are prepared.)
- Their motives at the time. (needs, desires, interests, and so on.)

(Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, 179.)

People in general see what they expect to see, and what they expect to see is normally based on familiarity. The familiarity refers to previous experience, or preconditioned set of expectations. People also tempt to perceive the things they need or want, which means the stronger the need, the bigger the possibility to eliminate unrelated stimuli in the environment. When consumers are selecting perception, there are some common phenomena:

- They commonly find out information that they feel peasant or with which they are sympathetic.
- They exercise a lot of selectivity in terms of the attention they provide to commercial stimuli.
- Stimuli is screened out subconsciously, if the it is found psychologically threatening, even though exposure has already happened.
- Consumers block certain stimuli from conscious awareness to protect themselves from being attacked.

(Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, 179-182.)

Consumer imagery

There are numbers of enduring perceptions, or images consumers can have (Skiffman & Kanuk 2010, 186). However, based on the survey content, it is going to discuss con-
sumers’ perceived images of products, brands, prices, product quality, and country of origin.

The image a product has in the consumer mind is the essence of successful marketing, this is positioning. It is more important to position a product in the right place that it can occupy in the mind of the consumers than its actual characteristics. Therefore, finding out what different types of consumers want from a product range helps a company to position their product in the right consumer’s mind. (Skiffman & Kanuk 2010, 186.)

The analytical technique termed perceptual mapping enables marketers to determine just how they want their products or services to appear to consumers in relation to competitive brands on one or more relevant characteristics. It allows them to see gaps in the positioning of all brands in the product or service class and identify areas in which new offerings can be developed. (Skiffman & Kanuk 2010, 190.)

Consumers receive the value from the purchase through the perceived price. The way consumers perceive a price affect strongly on purchase intentions and satisfactions. Products that are “on sale” tend to create enhanced consumer perceptions of savings and value. The various formats used in sales advertisements have different influences, based on consumer reference prices. (Skiffman & Kanuk 2010, 193-194.)

Consumers have a variety of informational cues associate with the product, these informational cues is the base of the consumers’ perceived quality of a product. The intrinsic refers to physical characteristics, such as size, colour, or flavour. Consumers prefer to think that they base their product quality evaluation on the intrinsic cues, as that enables them to justify their product decisions as being rational and objective. However, consumers use extrinsic characteristics to judge quality more often. (Skiffman & Kanuk 2010, 195-196.)

Consumers’ knowledge about a product’s country of origin can influence how he/she perceives about the product. Research indicates that consumers in developing countries infer the brands would be better quality if they are perceived as foreign. This
kind of inference can create either advantage or disadvantage some a company. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 115-116.)

3.4.3 Lifestyle

Lifestyles have a close relationship with consumers’ personality and values. Values and personality represent internal states or characteristics, while lifestyles are actual patterns of behaviour. More specifically, lifestyles are represented by consumers’ activities, interests, and opinions (AIOs). Consumers who involve in different activities and have different opinions and interests may represent a particular lifestyle segments for marketers. For example, a study showed that two lifestyles categories that were most likely to drink and drive: Good timers, frequent partygoers who are macho and high on sensation seeking. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 383.)

Hoyer and MacInnis (2007, 383) stated that lifestyle research can help marketers better understand how a product fits into consumers’ general behavior patterns. Also, consumers with different nationalities may have characteristic lifestyles. One study was based on lifestyle differences between Japanese and U.S. women. The result was Japanese women have more focus on home. They are less likely to visit restaurants, and less price sensitive. The result also stated that Japanese women are less likely to drive according to their lifestyles.

3.4.4 Personality

Personality reflects individual differences. The inner characteristics that make a person’s personality are a unique mix of factors, no two persons are alike. Eventhough, an individual’s personality is usually both consistent, and enduring. Under certain situations, personalities can change. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, 136.)

Marketers study how personality can affect consumer behaviour in order to enable them to better understand consumers, categorize them, and target those consumers who are likely to respond positively to their product communications. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, 141.)
“Trait theorists propose that personality is composed of characteristics that describe and differentiate individuals. For example, people might be described as aggressive, easygoing, quiet, moody or shy.” (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 377.)

It was pointed out by Hoyer and MacInnis (2007, 379) that, personality is not a good predictor of consumer behaviour. One major problem is that researchers developed many of the trait measurement instruments for clarifying personality disorders in clinical settings. However, these instruments may not be suitable for clarifying traits related to consumption behaviors. Although personality was believed to have a strong connection to consumer behaviour. Some researchers think that if they use more reliable trait affects the choice of higher-price alternatives. The connection between personality and consumer behaviour could be stronger. For example, marketers may find personality more useful for aiming at some product categories than others. The offering of the products such as looks, style, and aesthetics might be more related to personality. This research intends to find out the Chinese consumer’s product preferences on mobile phone cases. These preferences include the appearance of the mobile phone cases. Therefore, in the case of this research, personality has a strong connection to consumer behaviour.

3.5 Consumer inferences

When consumer evaluating the products, they can make inferences based on many factors of the products. There are many elements can connect with consumers’ prior knowledge to influence the right or wrong inferences they can make about an offering. Here, it is going to explain elements, such as brand names and symbols, price, distribution, and promotion can affect the consumers’ inferences about products. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 114.)

Brand names and brand symbols

Brand name can create subjective comprehension and inferences. Moreover, consumers tend to make inferences when they evaluate a brand extension by linking
certain features to the parent brand. Furthermore, foreign brand names could create infereces based on cultural category and stereotype. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 114.)

**Inferences Based on Product Attributes**

Two knowledge of attribute tend to be interacted in one product category could result in consumers to infer that the existance of one attribute in a brand implies the other. An example would be, consumers may use their prior knowledge about the correlation between price and package size to infer that the large-sized brand is a good buy. On the other hand, when differences between products are small, consumers may also infer that a brand has disadvantages in some unobservable attributes when they perceive the dominant brand’s advantages in observable attributes. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 115.)

**Inferences Based on Country of Origin**

It is said by Hoyer and MacInnis (2007, 115) that, consumer’s knowledge about a product’s country of origin can influence how he/she thinks about the product. Research indicates that consumers in developing countries infer the brands would be better quality if they are perceived as foreign. This kind of inference can create either advantage or disadvantage some a company. However, consumers are less possible to make inferences about a brand based on its country of origin when consumers are greatly motivated to process information about that brand or when consumers processing goal leads attention away from the “country of origin informaiton”. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 115-116.)

**Price**

Along times, consumers make inferences according to a product’s price. People commonly have a prior category-based knowledge that price and quality have correlation. Therefore, a consumer could assume the a high-priced product has a better quality. For those consumers do not have much previous knowledge on a brand, and believe brands differ in quality, they tend to use price to make their inferences. (Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, 117.)
4 Research Methodology

There are two parts of the research methodology. One is the secondary research. It collects the secondary data for the theoretical framework based on books and online articles. The primary research is a quantitative research done in the form of a market survey.

“Secondary data have previously been gathered by someone other than the researcher and/or for some other purpose than the research project at hand.” (Burns & Bush 2014, 122.)

In this chapter, it is going to describe the method of the empirical research, the survey design, data collection and analysis, and the validity and reliability of the research.

4.1 Empirical research methodology

The empirical research is done through a quantitative research. A quantitative research is described as a research that includes the administration of a series of structured questions with predetermined answering options to a big amount of candidates to response to the research (Burns & Bush 2014, 146).

When using a quantitative research method, the purpose of the research needs to be specific (Burns & Bush 2014, 146). This research has a clear goal, which is to find out about the Chinese consumers’ behaviour when buying mobile phone cases. It requires a large number of respondents in order to find out the up to date information on this. Therefore, a quantitative research method is chosen.

The quantitative research collects the primary data by using a survey. Primary data indicates the information that is collected by the researcher his/herself for the project at the time (Burns & Bush 2014, 122).
4.2 Survey design and data collection

“Questionnaire design is a systematic process in which the researchercontemplates various question formats, considers a number of factors characterizing the survey at hand, ultimately words the various questions carefully, and organizes the questionnaire’s layout.” (Burns & Bush 2014, 214.)

The goal of the survey is to find out the answers of the three investigative questions. Each of the questions in the survey is designed in accordance with the theoretical framework. The survey begins with a short description that describes the purpose of the survey, and the researcher’s background information. The first question is a filter question, by asking the respondents whether if they use mobile phone cases.

The questionnaire is segmented into four parts. The first part aims to find out about the consumer’s background information, which includes their geographical and demographical information, and personality. Second part researches on the Chinese consumer’s buying process on the mobile phone cases. Thirdly, it tries to find out the elements that can influence the Chinese consumers when buying a mobile phone case. The last segment aims at finding the information on the Chinese consumers’ products preferences on the mobile phone cases. The questionnaire ends with an open-ended question by asking the respondents’ comments and suggestions. Each of the questions in the survey is designed based on the theoretical framework. The questionnaire is written in both English and Chinese versions. They are attached in the Appendix named as Appendix 1, and Appendix 2.

The questionnaire was published on a survey website, called Wenjuan. It the biggest free platform for researchers to publish their surveys in China. This website automatically collects all the results. The survey was input to the website on 25th August 2014. It was firstly tested by three others and myself. After this, the survey was published on the date of 29th August 2014. It took two days to collect 300 valid responses. The time cost was very efficient. The reason was that the survey was firstly sent to my close friends, and parents. Therefore, through their connections, the answers were collected very efficiently. However, this creates a bias in the results. Most of my connections are
currently living in Qingdao, therefore, the collected answers were mostly from Qingdao.

The link of the survey was sent to the researcher’s personal contacts in China via a Chinese social platform called Wechat. Wechat is a phone application, which has 338.2 million Chinese users. It can be seen as a Chinese version of WhtsApp. It has become one of the largest social networks in China used by all age groups. People can simply share anything in their friend cycles. In order to get a Wechat account, people needs to use their personal phone number. Therefore, each Wechat user can have quite many contacts. Therefore, it is the best platform for me to share the survey. The link of the survey was shared through my friends and family in their friend cycles. As a result, it reached 300 respondents efficiently.

Another advantage of collecting the data through a mobile phone application is that it can help to reach the target group most efficiently. Mobile phone case is such a product that requires a consumer to have a mobile phone device first, in order to have needs of mobile phone cases. The case company’s products are made for smart phones. Therefore, sending the survey via the phone application ensure that each of the respondents have a phone device. Furthermore, it can be inferred that these interviewees use their mobile phones frequently on social networking. This can also indicate the mobile phone devices they own have the function of downloading phone applications. Thus, these phone devices do not belong to the bottom of the price level.

4.3 Data analysis

The final results of the quantitative survey were automatically collected and analysed by the Wenjuan website. The cost of the data analysis is free of charge.

The website started the data analysis when it collected 300 results. The results came with tables, graphs, and also as a rough data form. There are three forms of the results, which are called CSV form, XLS form, and DOC form.
The CSV form contains the raw and original results in the Excel. In here, I was able to check each respondent’s answer towards each question. The second one is the XLS form. It is an Excel file that has all the results shown as charts, graphs or table. In this file, user can do direct editing of the language and spelling of each questions. I could also edit the graphic model of each result. The third one is the DOC form. Similar like the second file, this one only has the result charts and table as a Word document.

4.4 Validity and reliability

Marketing researcher should use reliable and valid measurement. “With a reliable measure, a respondent responds in the same or very similar manner to an identical or near-identical question.” (Burns & Bush 2014, 214.)

On the other hand, validity indicates the accuracy of the measurement. It exams the exactness of the measurement related to what actually exists. A valid measure is truthful. A respondent can give a reliable answer that is invalid. (Burns & Bush 2014, 214.)

The research design is coherent with the theoretical framework. Each of the questions has its theory support. The questions are also designed to answer the investigative questions. Therefore, they are valid for the purpose of the research. The survey was originally made in English. However, as it was going to be conducted by people from China, the survey was translated into Chinese to ease the respondents’ understanding of each question. In addition, native Chinese speakers to ensure there was not any ambiguous in the questions tested the questionnaire.

Each answer of the questions in the survey is minimized by using the most relevant answering options. For example, one of the questions in the questionnaire is: What are the two most used functions for the phone that you have? The choices of the answers are: pick-up phone calls, sending message, webpage browsing, watching videos, note taking, calendar, GPS, and others. By asking this question, I intended to get the information that can help on the phone case style design. Therefore, even though taking pictures is one of the most common functions of the phone. It is not included in the
answering options, because this factor is usually not considered when the case company designs the phone case style.

The questionnaire is filter by a filtering question in the beginning, by asking the candidate whether if they use phone cases. Therefore, people who never use phone cases will not participate in the survey. This ensures all the respondents who answer the questionnaire have purchased mobile phone cases. It was agreed with the case company, that the target size of the respondent sample is 300. This is enough answer to ensure the objectiveness of the results. The survey was sent to my contacts that live in the coastal area. Therefore, most of the respondents are from the coastal areas, which also belongs to the Tier1, and Tier2 cities. Each person’s geographical background was looked into individually to ensure they are geographically qualified. Those respondents, which did not belong to the tier 1 and 2 cities were taken out. To fulfill the goal of getting 300 respondents, more surveys were conducted. Furthermore, this is a voluntary survey. This ensures to the biggest extent that people will not repeat doing the survey.
5 Findings

This chapter provides the results of the survey. It will display the background in formation of the respondents, regarding to their geographical and demographical background. Furthermore, Chapter 5 will analyze the respondents’ answers to each question in details. The findings are going to answer the investigative questions, with the theoretical support. The currency used in here is Chinese Yuan, written for short as RMB. Currently, one euro is approximately 8 Chinese RMB.

5.1 Respondents profile

There are in total 300 respondents. This section is going to describe the profile of the respondents. The geographical background will explain the geographic location of the respondents. The demographical background gives information on the respondents’ sex, age, occupation, and income level.

5.1.1 Geographical background

According to a study by Zhang, Grigoriou and Li in 2008. It pointed out that Chinese consumers in the coastal areas have accepted more western values. They are more individualistic than inland consumers. As a result, coastal Chinese consumers care more about their own feelings and desires. They care less about the opinions of other people. (Giele 2009, 6.)

It was explained in Chapter 3.2.1, that China is divided into five tiers. Tier 1 consumers indicates advertisements are a good way to learn about new products and services, and take fashion into their consideration, also spend money on expensive items. Tier 2 consumers are consumers, who are into brands and use money as a quality measurement. Tier 3, and 4 consumers care more on the product attributes, and do more careful purchasing, while tier 5 consumers a typical rural consumers, who pay more attention on the price of a product. (China Travel Trends 2010.)
Therefore, the target candidates of this survey would be people live in the coastal areas, which belong to the Tier 1, and 2 cities. The following figure shows the geographical allocation of the respondents. In appendix 3, you could find the Chinese city map to have a clear view on the Chinese cities’ geographic location.

![Figure 13. Respondents’ geographical background](image)

There are in total 15 cities, 6 of them are coastal cities. Among these respondents, 31% of the interviewees are from Tier1 cities, while 59% are from Tier 2 cities. It was explained in the data collection part that most of the respondents are my connections from Qingdao. Therefore, the majority of the respondents (34%) were from Qingdao. There were 13% of the interviewees from Chongqing. 12% of them were citizens in Shanghai, while another 8% of them lived in Shanghai.

According to a study by Shinkawa, and Chuo-ku in 2012 on China’s top 25 Tier 2 cities, there are three main clusters with the mega-markets in China, which are Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Beijing plus Tianjin cluster. In addition, there are other possible clusters, which are Hangzhou, Qingdao, and Dalian ore Shenyang. Chengdu and Chongqing are
also the huge potential markets. All these clusters and potential markets’ residents are included in this survey.

5.1.2 Demographical background

The respondent’s gender, age, occupation, and current monthly income were asked in the survey. Here, it is going to show the results of each of them.

**Gender and Age**

Among the 300 respondents, 97 of them were male. The rest of the 68% were female. A filter question was used in the beginning asking whether if a participant ever used a phone case. Therefore, the people who never use phone cases will not be counted into the results. Thus, it can be inferred that among the people who use phone cases, there are more female using mobile phone cases than male.

The respondent’s age was also asked in the survey. The survey did not target on a certain age group. Instead, it is aiming to find out the age range of Chinese consumers who use mobile phone cases. Five age groups were divided when creating the survey, which are 19-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, and over 60. The following table shows the age of the respondents.

Table 1. Age of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19–30</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>39.00 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–40</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>27.00 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41–50</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>30.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51–60</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.67 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the result, there are three main age groups having the needs of the phone cases. The biggest age group that uses mobile phone case is people at the age of 19 to 30 years old. From the age 41 to 50 year old, people also have a quite strong need for
he phone cases. It shows that 30.67% respondents, which is 92 respondents among the total 300 interviewees are the phone case users. With 3% less compared to the age group 41-50, people from 31 to 40 year old also consume mobile phone cases. As it can be seen from the table, consumers who are older than 50 years old have less strong need from the phone case.

The above result indicates that people from 19 to 50 have the strongest needs for the mobile phone case. Yujun Qiu’s article form China business review in 2011 gives support on this point of view. It says in the article, that consumers in their twenties barely save and spend most of their salary on entertainment, advanced electronics, and other trendy products. Consumers in their thirties save also less, and spend more on entertainment. They care more about the value and quality than low prices. Both consumers in twenties and thirties do a lot online shopping, and seeking for product that distinguish their own personalities. The forties are the wealthy age group. These consumers will increase spending on entertainment, groceries, travel, and high-quality and healthcare products. (Qiu 2011.)

**Occupation and Monthly income**

Respondents’ current occupation, and their monthly income were investigated in the survey as the participants’ background information. The results is shown in the following table and figures.

Table 2. What is your current occupation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales person</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office worker</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23.33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government worker</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>22.00 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>24.67 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A question on consumer’s current occupation was asked in the survey. Office worker and Government worker share nearly 25% each of the respondents. 28 interviewees said they were students, while another 22 of them responded as sales person. 5% of the respondents were teacher, and nearly 4% were business owners. Among the 300 respondents, no one responded as a chef or athletes. There are 5 respondents who are currently unemployed, and another 5 who are artists. The rest of 2 people said they are engineer, while another 2 said they were designers.

Nearly 25% of the respondents chose the option as others. The variety of the answers is not big. However, they are representative. These different characteristics can help on the design process of the mobile phone case product development. For example, Student and office worker, government worker and sales person would want rather different appearance and functions from the phone cases, because of their different lifestyles, and personalities.

The figure under shows the monthly income level of the sample respondents.

Figure 14. What is the monthly income level of the respondents?

Most of the respondents’ monthly income level is between 2000RMB to 6000RMB. Together, they count for 63% of the respondents. There are nearly 11% respondents, whose monthly income is under 2000RMB. Among these, it includes those 5 respondents, who said they were unemployed. Consumers who earn more than 6000RMB
monthly count for approximately 27% of all the interviewees. Nearly 12% of them have monthly income from 6000RMB to 8000RMB. The other 10% earn monthly over 100000RMB. 13 respondents said their income level is between 8000RMB to 10000RMB.

Income level usually is an indicator of consumer’s purchasing power. It can also help the researcher to divide the social classes of the consumers. However, in this case, the income level, and social class of the respondents will not have a big influence on their needs of mobile phone cases. For example, a person who earns under 2000RMB can still be a powerful buyer, because there are phone cases in China that cost below 5RMB. However, the income level in this research can help the case company on their product pricing strategy, and product positioning by knowing how much the Chinese consumers earn.

5.2  Chinese consumer’s currently owned products

In the survey, Chinese consumers’ currently owned mobile phones, and phone cases were also investigated. This information can help the case company to know what are the popular phone models currently in the Chinese market. Furthermore, the case company can also know what are the price range of the respondents’ current phone cases, and the number of the phone case they own.
Figure 15. Which mobile phone brands does the respondents own?

The result shows that Apple and Samsung are the two most popular phone brands in the Chinese market. Nearly half of the respondents (47.49%) said their current mobile phone brand is Apple. The other 33% respondents were using Samsung. There were 10 people said they were using HTC, and 13 respondents said they were using Xiaomi. There were no respondents choose LG, TCL, Yulong, and Blackberry. However, few people were using Huawei, Zhongxing, Nokia, Sony, Motorola, and Meizu.

According to the information provided by the case company, the price of the phone case usually should not exceed 10% of the mobile phone device that it is made for. Otherwise, consumers are not willing to pay for it. Therefore, knowing the price of the respondents’ current using mobile phone is important for the company to have an idea on the potential price level of their products.

Figure 16. What is the price level for the respondents’ current mobile phone?

It shows in this figure that 50% of the respondents’ phone price level is above 4000RMB. According to the Apple official Chinese online website, the current price of the iPhone 5s is from 4488RMB to 4888RMB. However, the price of iPhone was high when it was just put into the market. Based on the previous result, that around 47% of the respondents are using iPhone. Therefore, the result in here also proved the previous results. There were also around 33% respondents said they were using Samsung. It is a bit more difficult to tell from this figure that the amount of respondents who were
using Samsung, as the price of the Samsung can vary from 1000RMB to 6000RMB. In general, the majority of the respondents are using mobile phone brands that are more than 3000RMB.

The case company is aiming at a high-end market in China. According to this result, it can be predicted that a phone case with a price between 300RMB to 600RMB can have a potential market in the target market. Therefore, the case company can have a big potential buying group.

When design a phone case, a designer needs to consider what are the mostly used functions of a phone model. For example, if a phone has a big screen, and people are mostly using the phone to watch videos, then the phone case could be very helpful if it has a kickstand and protects the screen. Thus, the designer can assume when doing the phone case design, that a flip cover that has a kickstand function would be popular. Therefore, a question about the most used phone functions was asked in the survey. The answering options are limited, however, it gives enough information to verify the style and function design of the phone case. The following figure shows the result of this question.

![Bar chart showing the most used phone functions.](Figure 17)

**Figure 17. What are the two most commonly used functions of your phone?**

In the survey, interviewees were asked to choose the two mostly used functions of their phones. Therefore, the sum of the answering frequency inhere in is 600. It shows
that the most common used function of a phone is picking up the phone calls. The second commonly used function is to sending messages, which is chosen by nearly 24% of the participants. The respondents who mostly use their phones for browsing webpage are around 21%. Only 4% of the interviewees use the phone to watch videos. Among the 4% of the others, people said they use the phone for reading, and social networking.

Table 3. How many phone cases do the respondent have for their current phone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of phone cases</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>79,00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12,33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2,67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't have one</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3,33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result tells that most of the respondents (79%) have 1 to 3 phone case for their current mobile phone. There were 37 participants said they own 4 to 6 phone cases for one phone model. Only 8 interviewees had 7-9 phone cases. Less than 3% respondents had over 10 phone cases for a phone. There are also 10 people said they do not have a phone case for their current mobile phone.

![Figure 18](image.png)

Figure 18. What is the price level for you current phone case?

In general, there were a bit less than a half respondents’ (41%) phone case price over 50RMB. The rest of the respondents (57%) had a phone case that was priced below
50RMB. 20% of the participants said their phone cases are over 90RMB or even more. There are 19 of the interviewees had phone cases below 10RMB.

5.3 Chinese consumers’ decision making process when buying phone cases

In this part, it is going to provide the findings on how the Chinese consumers make their purchasing decisions on buying mobile phone cases. It will focus on the first three stages of the consumer decision making process, which are:
- Problem recognition
- Information search
- Product evaluation

Firstly, the survey asked the consumers the reasons for them when purchase new phone cases. The result is shown in the below figure.

![Figure 19. What is the main reason for consumers to buy new phone cases?](image)

The answers were given as 5 options. The participants chose the answers rather evenly. There are 3 main reasons for consumers to purchase new phone cases, which are old ones worn out, fashion trends, and no reasons. Around 38% respondents buy new phone case because their old ones were worn out. Nearly 28% of the participants bought new phone cases to follow the fashion trends. There are a rather large group of consumers said they purchase new phone cases randomly, when they see something
they like, they will buy. New functions of the phone case only draw 8.70% attention from the participants. There was barely anyone (1%) of the interviewees bought phone cases just because they were on discount.

By knowing the main reason for consumers to buy new phone cases, we can know the importance of each Chinese consumer’s buying motivations. Furthermore, it would be also useful and interesting to know the frequency of the Chinese consumers to have the need to purchase new phone cases. Therefore, a question called “How often do you buy new phone cases?” was asked in the questionnaire.

Figure 20. How often do consumers have the need to buy new phone cases?

It shows here that around half of the participants in China said they mostly purchase new phone case randomly. When they saw some attractive products, they would purchase the product. 28% of the respondents only use one phone case for one mobile phone. There is barely anyone buying phone case every month. However, there were 33 people said they purchase every half a year, and 29 of the interviewees said they buy new phone cases every once a year.

As a conclusion, except those 3 respondents said they purchase new phone cases every month, most of the participants purchase phone cases in a rather low frequency. And nearly half of the participants said they buy phone cases when they see something they like. It is hard to know this group of consumers’ buying frequency. However, in most
of the cases, the appearance of a product is the main factor that draws attention from the consumers. Therefore, with this result, the case company could consider fashion trends as a big factor when doing the phone case design.

After consumer recognizing their problem, they need search for information to solve the problem. In the survey, I intended to find out where do the consumers search information from, by asking the question: Where do you normally get information of the phone cases?

![Chart showing where consumers search information of the phone case]

Figure 21. Where do consumers search information of the phone case?

The above figure shows most of the participants (49.33%) usually get information of the phone case from the online web shops. Around 16% interviewees got information from their friends' recommendations. Noticed that there was 68 people chose the answer “Others”. This is an open-ended question, which means participants can write down their answers if they want. After checking these answers, it showed that people also got information of the product through the phone case retail stands in the shopping center.

After the information search, it comes to the stage that consumers need to compare the products they have their minds. This is the product evaluation stage. To find out the main factors the Chinese consumers compare between different phone cases, a question of “What are the two main factors you consider when you purchase phone case?” was asked in the questionnaire.
The result shows that, the appearance, and the protection for the phone device are the two main factors Chinese consumers use to compare the products. Nearly 36% of the respondents considered the look of the phone case when they were choosing the product, while another 36% respondents compare the protection function of the products. Among the rest of the factors, Material and price are also taken into consumers’ considerations. Almost 13% interviewees considered the material when comparing the products. 48 of the respondents said price was also an important factor. However, the result indicates that the function, and brand of the phone case are less relevant to the consumers when comparing the products. Only 3 people said they would consider if there would be any free gifts to make their purchasing decisions.

It was mentioned in chapter 5.1.2, that the consumers at the age from 20 to 30 are more likely to seek products that are trendy, and products that are able to distinguish themselves. In this survey, around 39% respondents are from the age 20 to 30. According to Qiu’s study, we could assume that around 39% of the respondents would say appearance of the product would be the most important factor they consider when comparing the products. In this result, it says nearly 36.00% of the respondents care more about the appearance of the phone case. Thus, Qiu’s study result was proven to be true in this survey.

After consumers deciding on which phone case they would like to buy, they need to decide where to buy it. Therefore, the survey wanted to research on the most popular
buying channels among the Chinese consumers. Therefore, the participants were asked, that where they usually buy their phone cases?

![Pie chart showing the distribution of where Chinese consumers buy their phone cases.](image)

Figure 23. Where do Chinese consumers buy their mobile phone cases?

According to the answers, around half of the respondents usually buy phone cases from online web shop. Phone cases retail stand in shopping centre, and mobile phone retail store are the next two popular buying channels. 22 of the interviewed Chinese consumers bought their phone cases from electronic shopping centres. There were only 4 respondents said they purchase phone cases from clothing stores.

5.4 Influencing factors on Chinese consumers when buying phone cases

The previous section describes how the Chinese consumers make their purchasing decisions. In this part, it is going to discuss the factors that can influence the consumers’ decision making process. The survey mostly focuses on the influences that affect on the consumers’ product evaluation stage. Based on these factors, the researcher could infer the Chinese consumers’ product preferences when evaluating the mobile phone cases. The following factors are going to be discussed in this section:

- Price of the phone case
- Function of the phone case
- Phone case model and material
- Phone case’s production of origin
- Promotion of the phone case sales
Firstly, the survey questioned the Chinese consumers how much they could pay for a phone case. To know this, a question called “What is the maximum price you would pay for a phone case?” was asked in the questionnaire.

![Figure 24](image-url)

**Figure 24. How much the Chinese consumers willing to pay for a phone case?**

Around 66% of the respondents would be able to pay more than 50RMB for a phone case. About 35% participates could pay more than 90RMB for a phone case. 27% of the respondents were from 30 to 40 years old. They are the group of people in China who has the savings, and also pay more attention on the good quality products than the low price products. Nearly 19% respondents would pay a phone case for 30 to 49RMB. The rest of 15% interviewees would pay less than 30RMB for a phone case.

The previous result showed that function of the phone is a rather small factor Chinese consumers consider when comparing the products. However, it is still important for the case company to know what are the preferred phone case functions for the Chinese consumers to help with the product design.
Figure 25. What are the two preferred functions of a phone case for the Chinese consumers?

Nowadays, most of the smart phones are quite slim. Therefore, it carries a high possibility to be dropped from the pocket. The result shows that most of the Chinese consumers (37%) want their phone case to be anti-shock, which means that it can protect the phone device when it drops. The second most important function of phone case is that it can give the protection to the phone device from the scratch. This option was chosen by 31% respondents. Thirdly, the Chinese consumers (17%) wanted the phone case to protect their phone screens. The last two important functions were voted to be waterproof, and dustproof. In the open-ended option “Others”, few consumers written the look is the most important function. These answers were considered as invalid, as appearance is not considered as a function in here.

The model, and material of the phone case are important factors while designing the phone cases. They also influences on the consumers when they are comparing different phone case products. Therefore, in the survey, it asked the Chinese consumers their favourite phone case model, and material.

Figure 26. Chinese consumers’ preferred phone case model.

For the Chinese consumers, the back cover seems to be their first choice. 34.44% respondents said they prefer back cover. The flip cover and the frame case share a quite similar popularity among the interviewees. 25.00% of the participants chose flip cover, while 24.00% of them chose fame case. The transparent phone case is a bit less preferred, with 16.33% respondents choosing it. There is only one person said pouch is
his/her favourite phone case model. The example of each phone case model can be seen in Appendix called appendix 2.

Figure 27. Chinese consumers’ preferred phone case material.

Among the given material options, the real leather and silicone were the two most preferred materials among the respondents. Around 33% respondents prefer leather, while 32% prefer silicone. Almost 14% respondents liked their phone case to be plastic. The respondents preferred less fake leather and fabric. Among the people who answered “Others”, they suggested the material to be metal.

Country of origin can sometimes effect consumers’ decision making. To know if this has a large influence on the Chinese consumers can help the case company to know if they have an advantage of being “made in Finland”. Therefore, candidates were asked whether if it is important for them to have imported phone cases.

Figure 28. Do Chinese consumers prefer imported phone cases?
According to the result, the “country of origin” is not a big influence on the Chinese consumers’ buying behavior, with around half of the interviewees said their purchasing decisions were not affected by the country of origin of the phone case. Only 14.05% respondents said they only buy imported phone cases. Nearly 36% of the respondents prefer “made in China” phone cases.

Sometimes, when a proper promotion tool is used in the sales process, it could potentially increase the sales largely. According to the observation from some popular Chinese online web shops (Taobao, Tianmao, Jingdong), there are usually two promotion methods when selling phone cases, which are direct discount, and additional gift bags. These gift bags usually include items such as, screen protectors, screen cleansing fabric, small kickstand, and touch screen pen. In this survey, I tended to find out the preferred promotion tool by the Chinese consumers when they are purchasing phone cases. The following figure shows the result of this question.

Figure 29. Which promotion methods do Chinese consumers prefer when purchasing phone cases?

Even though the additional gift bag includes quite many items. The majority of the Chinese consumers (67.00%) prefer the direct discount on the products, rather than having a free gift bag. There is 33.00% participates would prefer an additional gift bag.

However, gift bag is still a powerful promotion tool that is commonly used in the Chinese online web shops. Therefore, it would still be interesting to know if any Chinese consumers have purchased a phone case just because of the gift bag. In addition,
knowing this can also check if the previous result is accurate. The following figure show the result the amount of respondents who have purchased a phone case just for getting a free gift bag.

Figure 30. Have any of the respondents purchased a phone case for the free gift bag?

The answer of the previous question shows that 33,00% respondents prefer gift bag as a promotion. In this result, it says nearly 30,00% respondents have bought phone cases just for the free gift bags. Therefore, the previous answer is relatively accurate. It also gives us the answer that the gift bag is not having a big influence on majority of the Chinese consumers.
6 Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter gives discussion of the survey results. The structure of the discussion part is designed based on the previously mentioned three investigative questions. Each discussion is supported by the theoretical framework from Chapter 3.

In addition, this chapter also will present the researcher’s own learning from this research. Some of personal suggestions will be given based on the research results.

6.1 How is the process when the Chinese consumers buy mobile phone cases?

As it was mentioned in Chapter 3, there are five stages in the consumer purchasing behaviour. This survey researched on the first four stages, which are problem recognition, search for alternative solutions, evaluation of alternatives, and purchase.

Problem recognition
The reasons for Chinese consumers to purchase a new phone case refer to the first stage of the consumer purchasing process, which is called problem recognition. The majority of the consumers in China buy new phone cases because of their old ones were worn out. Fashion trend is one of the other major reasons. The result shows that lots of Chinese consumers buy new phone cases to keep up with the fashion trends. However, it should be noticed that, compared to the amount of respondents who said they purchase new phone cases for the fashion trends, there were nearly the same amount respondents told they buy new phone cases for no reasons. As there were only small amount of respondents purchased new phone cases for its new function. Therefore, the function of the phone case is clearly not the attracting point. These “random buyers” are mostly likely attracted by the appearance of the mobile phone cases. Hence, it is very important for the case company to find out what can be the plus point for their product to draw this group of consumers’ attention.

The frequency of purchasing new phone cases was also researched. It was shown that, around half of the respondents buy phone cases randomly. This mean they usually purchase when they see something items they like. Among the rest of the consumers,
most of them only use one phone case for one phone. Fewer consumers purchase phone cases every once a year or every half-year. Nearly no one purchase new phone cases every month. According to this result, it tells again the importance of the phone case appearance for consumers in China when buying phone cases. The purchasing frequency of this “random group” is quite unpredictable. It could be inferred that, whenever there are some attractive looking products, this group of consumers might decide to purchase them.

**Search for alternative solutions**

In this research, it was aimed at finding out the information searching platform among the consumers in China. In other words, where the Chinese consumers usually search the information when comparing the phone cases. According to the findings, the online web shop is the most powerful information platform for the Chinese consumers. Most of them search their product information from here. The other less popular information platform is the “friend’s recommendation”.

According to this, the case company could find out the popular Chinese online web shops. And use these web shops to find out:
- where they could put their product
- the best platform for them to do the benchmarking
- the consumer feedback on different type of products

**Evaluation of alternatives**

This survey researched on the factors the Chinese consumers use to compare the mobile phone cases. The finding shows that both consumers in their twenties and thirties seeking for product that distinguish their own personalities. 66% of the consumers are in this age category. This means, these consumers prefer to purchase product that looks more suitable for their personality. The previous discussion described the importance of the phone case appearance. Thus, the look of the mobile phone cases is clearly an important factor when Chinese consumers compare the products.
One of the basic functions of the phone case is to protect the phone devices. It is proven by this survey that, the protection for the mobile phone device is the other important evaluation factor. Chinese consumers also compare the protection function of the mobile phone case when they compare the products. The other factors with less influence include material, price, and function. Brand and promotion are less considered factors when Chinese consumers compare the mobile phone cases.

**Purchase**

Both consumers in twenties and thirties do a lot online shopping. 66% of the consumers are in this age category. The result in here shows most of the Chinese consumers (50%) buy their mobile phone case through online web shop. Therefore, it is useful for the case company to know which the popular Chinese online web stores are nowadays. According to the Chinadaily, currently, the top 10 most popular online web shops in China are shown in the below table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>TMall</td>
<td>#6</td>
<td>Yihaodian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>JD (Jingdong)</td>
<td>#7</td>
<td>Vancl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>Amazon China</td>
<td>#8</td>
<td>Suning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Dangdang</td>
<td>#9</td>
<td>Vipstore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>51buy (Yixun)</td>
<td>#10</td>
<td>KMALL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows TMall is the most popular web shop in China. The second most popular one is Jingdong, followed by Amazon China, Dangdang, and 51buy. The rest five popular online web shops are Yihaodian, Vancl, Suning, Vipstore, and KMALL.

Among the other purchasing platforms, phone case retail stand in shopping centre, and mobile phone retail stores were the popular ones. It should be pointed out in here that, the phone case retail stand in shopping centre refers to those retail stands of phone accessories in the shopping mall. They usually sells phone cases, and other phone ac-
cessories. Among all the given platforms in the survey, electronic shopping centre and clothing store are less popular among the Chinese consumers.

6.2 What influence the Chinese consumers when they buy mobile phone cases?

The survey researched from two aspects of the influence that can effect the Chinese consumer’s buying behaviour. The first aspect is how Chinese consumer’s culture can influence them when they buy phone case. The other aspect is the affect of Chinese consumer’s product preferences on buying phone cases.

6.2.1 Consumer culture influence on Chinese consumers

The survey is conducted by Chinese citizens. It researched on how Chinese consumer diversity, social class, and Chinese society can influence on the Chinese consumers when they buy phone cases.

There was a filter question in the beginning asking whether if a participants ever used a phone case or not. Among the people who use phone cases, there are more female using mobile phone cases than male. There was 35% more female than male responded that they have used phone cases. Thus, we could infer that gender has a strong influence on the Chinese consumers. In general, the Chinese consumers who are currently using mobile phone case are from the age 19 to 50. It share rather even amount of consumers in different age groups who are using phone cases. From the result, it cannot be seen which age group has a really strong buying power. Therefore, age does not have a strong influence on the Chinese consumers’ needs of using mobile phone cases.

Social class is usually divided by the consumer’s income level. In this survey, people from all income level are using mobile phone cases. In other words, the needs of mobile phone case can be in every income level. Even though social class does not have a major influence on Chinese consumer’s needs on mobile phone cases, it can effect on consumer’s brand choice. In the survey, Chinese consumers were asked what they consider when they comparing the products. Only 15 people said they would think about
the brands. Thus, social class does not have a significant influence on Chinese consumers’ mobile phone case brand choice either. However, it might effect on the choice of different types, and price levels of phone cases.

As a conclusion, mobile phone case can be seen as a living necessity. Hence, the needs of it are strong, and it is needed by all kinds of people. When thinking about culture as an influence to the Chinese consumers buying behaviour towards mobile phone cases, gender is the most important factor that needs to be considered when doing the product design. Social class does no have a big influence on the needs, and choice of brands by Chinese consumers. However, it might influence on the consumers from different social classes when they choose the look, and price level of the phone cases.

6.2.2 Chinese consumers’ psychological core as an influence

The Chinese consumers’ needs towards mobile phone cases were discussed in section 6.2. According to that, there are two main factors that can influence the Chinese consumers’ needs on new phone cases, which are fashion trends, and their old phone cases worn out. As the second factor is not controllable, the case company’s focus can be on the fashion trends.

A big majority of the respondents are currently using Samsung, and iPhone. Therefore, the phone cases they are using must be made for those phone models. The result also indicates that the majority of the Chinese consumer’s phone prices are between 3000RMB to 6000RMB. According to the information provided by the case company, that usually the price of a phone case should not exceed 10% of its phone model’s price, this result can influence on the price of level of the phone case.

Among the respondents, the majority of them are office worker and government worker. Some of them are teachers, entrepreneur, or engineer. In general, the lifestyle of these groups of people can be rather official. Therefore, it can influence on their choices of the phone case style. They might want to choose those items that are more suitable for their working, and social environment.
For certain products, Chinese consumers can make inference that the imported ones are better. However, in this case, the country of origin does not influence on Chinese consumers’ choices of the mobile phone cases.

6.3 What are the Chinese consumer’s product preferences when buying mobile phone cases?

The survey researched on five influencing factors that can effect the Chinese consumers’ purchasing behaviour, which are the mobile phone case’s price, function, model and material, production of origin, and sales promotion.

In general, Chinese consumers are willing to pay a relatively higher price on the mobile phone cases. Even though, there are dozens of cheap phone cases sold in the web shops. Consumers are still willing to pay more for a better quality mobile phone case. The other two preferred price range is 30-49RMB, and 50-69RMB. It counts in total more than half of the respondents who are willing to pay between 30 to 70RMB for a phone case. It can be seen in here, the price of the phone case dose not have a major influence on the Chinese consumers. To be noticed, nearly half of the people are willing to pay 90RMB or more. This means that, the case company has a large potential buying group in China.

Among all the given phone case functions in the survey, Chinese consumers think anti-shock, and protecting for the phone device are the two most important functions a phone case should have. In the other options, there are quite many people would like their phone case to have a protection for the phone screen. According to this, it can be inferred, that the flip cover and back cover would be the most popular phone case models. Indeed, the result shows that most of the respondents prefer back cover, there are rather even amount of consumers like flip cover, and frame case. Among the materials, the popular ones are real leather and silicone. The production of origin does not have an influence for the majority of the Chinese consumers. There is 14% consumers do prefer imported phone cases. Most of Chinese consumers prefer direct discount compared to receiving free gift bags.
6.4 Suggestions

By doing the study and research, some of my own suggestions regarding to the case company product development are given in here.

The survey researched the Chinese consumers’ current owned mobile phones and phone cases. The most owned phone brands are Samsung, and Apple. Among the Chinese phone, the most owned one is Xiaomi. Therefore, case company could have a general idea which phone cases models they could consider to develop. The most commonly used functions of a mobile phone are picking up phone calls, sending messages, and webpage browsing. Therefore, enhancing these functions could be considered.

From the research, it tells from many points of view that the appearance of the phone case is the most important factor for the Chinese consumers. Therefore, focusing on developing attractive looking phone cases can be vital for the case company. It should be also noticed that, even though flip cover is in common seen in the shops nowadays, Chinese consumers have large need for the basic and trendy back covers. Thus, a simple back cover with trendy patterns could be a hit in China.

For the further research and study, the focus can be on the online sales channels, and Chinese consumers’ fashion preferences on the mobile phone devices. The case company could use the popular online web shops as a benchmarking platform. Also, it is a very effective platform to check on the Chinese end consumers’ feedbacks on each type of phone cases.

6.5 Own learnings

Doing thesis requires me to use both my skills and knowledge learned from school, and skills that need to study from zero. In the school I mostly leant the basic concepts and tools to support doing the thesis. But while doing it, I need to develop more professional and detailed competences in order to achieve my goal.
There are many things I have learnt from doing the thesis, for example,
- Time management
- Critical thinking
- Research skills
- Communication skills
- Multi-tasking

To be mentioned, it was very good experience for me to communicate with the respondents while doing the survey. The communication skill in a multi-cultural situation was developed. The thesis was done by many personal critical thinking. During writing the contents, there have been times that the contents do not seem to be logical when I read them afterwards. To overcome this, it was very useful method to always read my own thesis as a third person.

There are challenges as well during the research. There are not many accessible studies related to this research area. Therefore, finding a right source became a bit challenging. However, when this difficulty appears, it is helpful to find other related information to make inference, instead of the direct information.

As a conclusion, writing a thesis takes time. It also develops a person’s skills in many different ways. It is a valuable experience. One should use this chance well, and use it wise.
Bibliography


Appendix

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

中国消费者手机壳购买行为问卷调查

A survey on Chinese consumer buying behaviour towards mobile phone covers

您好，我是一名芬兰的中国留学生。此份问卷调查为本人的毕业论文课题。目的是为了解中国消费者在选购手机壳时的消费行为。感谢您的积极参与和配合，由衷感谢您的珍贵时间和意见。

Hi! I am a Chinese student studies in Finland. This survey is my thesis topic. The goal of this survey is to find out about the Chinese consumer’s buying behavior when purchasing mobile phone cases. Thanks for your participation and cooperation. Your valuable time and suggestions are deeply appreciated.

1、您是否使用手机壳？(单选题 *必答)

Do you use mobile phone case?

○ 是 Yes
○ 否 No

2、您的性别：(单选题 *必答)

Your gender:

○ 男 male
○ 女 female

3、您的年龄：(填空题 *必答)

Your age: ______________

4、您的所在城市：(填空题 *必答)

Your current city: ______________

5、您目前的职业：(单选题 *必答)

Your current occupation:

○ 教师 Teacher
○ 工程师 Engineer
6. Your monthly income level: (Single choice * Must answer)

- Under 2000RMB
- 2000-4000RMB
- 4001-6000RMB
- 6001-8000RMB
- 8001-10000RMB
- 10000RMB or more

7. Which phone brand do you currently own: (Single choice * Must answer)

- Samsung
- Apple
- Nokia
- LG
- Zhongxing
- Huawei
- TCL
- Lenovo
- Sony
- Yulong
- Blackberry
- HTC
- Motorola
- Xiaomi
- Meizu
- Others

8. The price level of your current using phone: (Single choice * Must answer)

- Under 1000RMB
9. 您最常使用的手机功能为以下哪两项？（多选题 *必答）

What are the two most commonly used functions of your phone?

- 接听电话 Picking up phone calls
- 发送信息 Sending messages
- 网页浏览 Webpage browsing
- 观看视频 Watching videos
- 记事 Note taking
- 日程表 Calendar
- 导航 GPS
- 其他 Others

10. 针对您所使用的手机，您目前拥有的手机壳数目为：（单选题 *必答）

For the phone that you are using currently, the number of the phone covers are:

- 1-3
- 4-6
- 7-9
- 10-12
- 12以上 over 12
- 我不使用手机壳 I don’t have a phone case for it.

11. 您购买手机壳的频率是：（单选题 *必答）

How often do you purchase phone cases?

- 每月1次 every 1 month
- 半年一次 every half year
- 一年一次 every 1 year
- 随性，见到中意的便购买 random, I buy when I see something I like
- 只使用一个手机壳 I only use 1 phone case

12. 您目前使用的手机壳价格在以下哪个范畴？（单选题 *必答）

What is the price level for the phone case that you are currently using?

- 10元以下 under 10RMB
- 10-29元 10-29RMB
- 30-49元 30-49RMB
- 50-69元 50-69RMB
- 70-89元 70-89RMB
13. 您所能承受的手机壳最高手机壳价格范畴是：（单选题 *必答）

What is the maximum price you would pay for a phone cover?

- ○ 90 元或更多 90RMB or more
- ○ 10 元以下 under 10RMB
- ○ 10-29 元 10-29RMB
- ○ 30-49 元 30-49RMB
- ○ 50-69 元 50-69RMB
- ○ 70-89 元 70-89RMB
- ○ 90 元或更多 90RMB or more

14. 以下哪些因素为您购买新手机壳的主要原因？（单选题 *必答）

Which one of these is the main reason for you to purchase a new phone case?

- ○ 时尚潮流 Fashion trend
- ○ 现有手机壳太旧 / 破损 Old one is worn out
- ○ 手机壳的新功能 New functions
- ○ 折扣 Discount
- ○ 没有什么原因 No reasons

15. 以下哪两个因素您购买手机壳时考虑的最主要因素？（多选题 *必答）

Which one of these two factors are the main factors you consider when you purchase phone case?

- □ 外观 Appearance
- □ 对手机的保护作用 Protection for the phone device
- □ 功能 Functions
- □ 品牌 Brand
- □ 价格 Price
- □ 材质 Material
- □ 赠送礼品 Additional gift

16. 在选购手机壳时，以下哪两项功能对您来说最重要？（多选题 *必答）

When purchasing a phone case, which one of these two functions are most important to you?

- □ 防水 waterproof
- □ 防尘 dustproof
- □ 防摔 anti-shock
- □ 保护机身 protection for the device
- □ 保护屏幕 protection for the screen
- □ 其他 others

17. 您最喜欢的手机壳类型是以下哪种？（单选题 *必答）
Which type of these phone case models is your favorite?
○ 翻盖手机壳 flip cover
○ 手机后壳 back cover
○ 手机保护框 frame cover
○ 透明手机壳 transparent cover
○ 手机袋 pouch

18. 在选购手机壳时，以下哪种材质最受您喜爱？(单选题 *必答)
When buying a phone case, which one of these materials is your favorite?
○ 真皮 Real leather
○ 仿皮 Fake leather
○ 硅胶 Silicone
○ 塑料 Plastic
○ 布面 Fabric
○ 其他 Others

19. 您是否更偏爱购买进口手机壳？(单选题 *必答)
Do you have a preference to buy imported phone cases?
○ 是 Yes
○ 否 No
○ 没有影响 It doesn’t matter.

20. 您通常从以下哪个渠道获取手机壳的信息？(单选题 *必答)
Where do you normally get information of the phone case?
○ 时尚杂志 Fashion magazine
○ 微博 Weibo
○ 微信 Wechat
○ 网店 Online shops
○ 服装品牌 Fashion brands
○ 电视节目 TV shows
○ 朋友推荐 Friend’s recommendation
○ 其他 Others

21. 您通常从哪里购买手机壳？(单选题 *必答)
Where do you usually buy phone covers?
○ 网上商城 Online shopping center
○ 手机专卖店 Mobile phone retail store
○ 电子商城 Electronic shopping center
○ 品牌服装店 Fashion store
○ 商场专柜 Phone cover sales stands in the shopping center
○ 其他 Others
22. 针对购买手机壳，以下哪种促销方式是您最易接受的？（单选题 * 必答）

When buying a phone cover, which one of these promotions do you prefer?

○ 免费礼包 additional gift bag
○ 折扣 discount

23. 您是否会因附赠的礼品包而购买手机壳？（单选题 * 必答）

Would you ever purchase a phone case because it includes a gift bag?

○ 是 Yes
○ 否 No

24. 其他意见与建议（填空题 * 必答）

Other comments and suggestions
Appendix 2. Phone case model

Flip cover

Back case

Frame case
Transparent case
Pouch
Appendix 3. Chinese city map