



**The Influence of the cultural differences between China and UK
on consumer buying behaviour of Mobiles Phones**

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Abstract

This research study aims to investigate the impact of culture on consumers' behaviour in buying of mobile phones.

In order to do so, two culturally diametric countries: China and UK (Hofstede 1991, 2001) have been selected for the purpose of case study and main focus of this research was set to examine the area of consumers' perception and using behaviour of the mobile phones and their relations to the purchasing patterns of such product.

In order to achieve these aims stated above, on the basis of the literature review, three main objectives were developed, they are:

1. To identify the social meanings of the mobile phone for the consumers in China and in the UK.
2. To determine how these meanings have partly influenced their choice of the phone.
3. To test out the consumers' using behaviour of the mobile phones in China and in the UK.

A multi-method research approach has been employed, driven mainly by quantitative method, and incorporating with a complementary qualitative component. In the first stage of the research, quantitative data has been collected through the survey strategy, by using self-administered questionnaire. In the second stage of the research, data has been collected through semi-structured interviews in order to enhance and elaborate our understanding on the relationship between cultural dimension and consumers' decision making process in buying a mobile phone.

The findings show that culture can influence the consumers on their perceptions and understandings of the mobile phones. As a result of these influences, a different purchasing pattern has emerged between consumers in China and consumers in the UK on buying of the mobile phones. These findings have implied that a different strategy should be applied by the international mobile manufacturers and operators in designing and marketing of their products in these two countries.

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Chapter One Introduction

Since the late 1970s, we have observed a fundamental change in the modern communication technological sectors. The combination of integration of global computer networks and the full introduction of new broadband transmission technologies such as fibre optics, satellites and microwaves have brought a dramatic decrease in the cost of communications and a dynamic increase in the efficiency of data interchanges throughout the world. As a result of these changes, today, mobile telephone has become an essential part of the personal communication in almost all the developed countries and in many developing countries across the global. However, so far, the published consumer research has either failed to recognise the importance of culture influences on individual's needs and motives in which underlying the personal choice of the mobile phones or devoted very little attention to it. Actually, indeed, many academic scholars such as Keegan and Schlegelmilch (2001) argue that the cultural differences can only influence the consumers' behaviour on the environmental sensitive products. Food is a good example, where generally speaking, different nations have different tastes; as a result, there is a strong need for an international food company to respond to that difference in its products. However, mobile phones have only been considered as a low environmental sensitive product in their studies based simply on the assumption that people anywhere around the world would have a need for communicating to each other, thus only need a low cultural adaptation such as change the language settings. (Keegan & Schlegelmilch 2001) But from author of this study's personal observation and knowledge, it has suggested a different story and is hence required to an in-depth study. As a result of this study, this research could therefore to present a new perspective for the existing academic literature with possibility to fill in a gap on culture influences of consumers in their buying behaviour of mobile phones by providing the empirical evidence to it. The result of this research will thus to enhance the body of knowledge for the international mobile manufacturers and operators on their B2C marketing in relation to the cultural dimensions. In order to do so, this research will select two culturally diametric countries: China and UK (Hofstede 1991, 2001) for the purpose of case study and examine the areas of consumers' perception and using behaviour of the mobile phones and their relations to the purchasing patterns of such product.

1.1 Goals and Objectives

To do so, this study has set the following goals and objectives:

1.1.1 Goals

1. To explore the social meanings of the mobile phones for the consumers in a across cultural context
2. To advance the understanding of the uncertainty avoidance in relation to use the mobile phones

1.1.2 Objectives

1. Investigate the key social meanings of the mobile phones for the Chinese and British consumers
2. Determine how these meanings affect the consumers' buying behaviours
3. Test out the differences in the uncertainty avoidance related to the usage of the mobile phones between the above consumer groups.
4. Consider the implications of the findings for the mobile manufacturers and operators in developing and marketing of their products in China and in the UK

1.1.3 Research Justification

This research topic is justifiable from both academic and business perspectives due to the fact that previous research and literature have failed to recognise the importance of the culture influences on consumer buying behaviour of mobile phones. Many academic scholars such as Keegan and Schlegelmilch (2001) argue that the cultural differences only influence the consumer behaviour on the environmental sensitive products. Food is a good example, where generally speaking, different nations have different tastes; as a result, there is a strong need for an international food company to respond to that difference in its products. However, mobile phones have been classified as a low environmental sensitive product in their studies based simply on the assumption that people anywhere around the world have a need to communicate to each other, thus only need a low cultural adaptation such as change the

language settings. (Keegan & Schlegelmilch 2001) However the observation and knowledge of the author of this study suggests a different story. As the result, this study could fill in the existing gap in the academic literature and to provide some new insights for the mobile phone manufacturers and operators in developing and marketing their products across the cultural context.

1.1.4 The Research Outcome

This study will investigate the influence of culture on the consumers in buying of the mobile phones in China and in the UK. By exploring the effects of national culture on consumers in these two countries, this study will increase our understanding of the mobile phone market in general and provide new insights and new ways to increase economic value for the international mobile manufacturers and operators. Moreover, as today's mobile phone market is becoming increasingly competitive, thus to increase companies' market share will depend heavily on how well they are to manipulate the needs and wants of the consumers. This study will therefore provide a new tool for the mobile phone firms to better target its Chinese and British markets as well as to any markets which have a similar cultural backgrounds and to localise their offer to the real needs and wants of their customers from these markets. As a result, companies in the telecommunication industry sector will be able to better identify the cultural implications, which have involved assumingly in the decision making process of the consumers in the distinct countries and consequently will have the opportunity to improve the expectations of their customers. Finally, the result of this study could also fill in a gap in the current academic literature by presenting a new prospective of culture as a decision making determinant.

1.2 The Mobile Phone Market – an Overview

The modern cellular mobile telephone can date back to the late 1970s when the first cellular networks were launched in Japan and Scandinavia. During the following 25 years the mobile phone has undergone a transition from a technology-focused professional tool of the early adopters and wealthy businesspeople, to a mass-market, consumer product and a highly integral part of the daily life of hundreds of millions of people globally. (Kiljander, 2004) According to the Euromonitor (2008), until the end of 2007, it estimated that there were over 2 billion people who have subscribed to the mobile communication devices world widely,

this figure has grown from 215 million in 1997, in just over a decade and is still set to grow, into 3 billion by 2010.

Among them, People's Republic of China (China) accounts more than a quarter of this market share with a 529 million subscribers reached at the end of 2007, this is the biggest mobile phone market in the world on the basis of the numbers of users, it is hence one of the most important markets for any international mobile manufacturers and operators: winning this market, it means that you win the world; however in order to win over such market, first of all, mobile firms have to understand the consumers there, this study is therefore partly aimed at to increase our understanding of the Chinese mobile phone market in general through analysing the consumers' behaviour under the influence of culture; whereas in the United Kingdom (UK), today, the mobile telephone has really become pervasive with an estimated ownership of 73 million (2007), that is more than 100 percent of the penetration rate. (Euromonitor 2008) As the UK market has reached its saturation, the future revenue growth for the international mobile manufacturers and operators in this market would have to come from increase the average revenue per user rather than from a bigger customer base. This requires international mobile manufacturers and operators to understand the consumers there too, thus the other part of this study aims at to increase our understanding of the British mobile phone market through analysing the consumers' behaviour under the influence of culture.

1.3 The Research Agenda

This study is divided into four main parts. The first part will review the current academic literature on cross-cultural differences, and relates them to the main research focus of this study and as a result, the research objectives should be developed. The second part of this study will discuss the methodology, firstly, the research philosophy; secondly, the research strategy and shall end in the research design. In the third part, the data which has been collected will be presented and analysed. The findings of this study will therefore be illustrated in depth. The final part of this research will be dedicated to expose the research conclusions and recommendations based on the findings from the previous section.

Chapter Two Literature Review

It is necessary to evaluate the mainstream academic literature on and around the topic in order to identify the research focus for the later stage of this study. That is the purpose of this chapter. To do so, this chapter will start with defining the key terms: culture and consumer behaviour, then move on to review the main consumers' behaviour models; after that, we shall go and examine the core culture theories and identify and establish its relationship with the consumer behaviour. A conclusion will be addressed in the summary part of this chapter.

2.1 Defining the Key Terms

2.1.1 Culture

Culture is a vague and abstract notion. There are many definitions of it. Kluckhohn (1951 quoted in Hofstede 2001, 35) describes culture as “patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups.” Based on a such idea, Hofstede (1991, 2001) defined culture as an identity that to distinguish of one group of people from another. However, for Doney et al (1998), in the term of marketing, culture is “a system of values and norms that are shared among a group of people and that when taken together constitute a design for living.” (Doney et al 1998, 601) Further to this, Keegan and Schlegelmilch (2001) indicated that culture is formed by people within the community over the years and has a life, can pass on from one generation to another. Thus culture is made up by three essential components as defined by Doole & Lowe (2008, 73):

- Beliefs: refers to the mental and verbal processes that reflect people's knowledge and assessment of things.
- Values: used by people as guide for what is appropriate behaviour.
- Customs: overt modes of behaviour that constitute culturally approved or acceptable ways of behaving in specific situations. For example, major events of one's life: birth, marriage and death, or at the key events in the year such as Christmas or New Year.

These previous definitions by various authors have all presented culture successfully from one particular perspective, but failed to account it as a whole. Thus to be more precise for the purpose of this project, culture here is defined as following:

1. Is a tool that for creating contents and patterns of beliefs, values and norms at a particular group of people;
2. Is a communication device that can transmit these beliefs, values and norms into shaping human behaviours. It provides a guideline for the members of a such group in deciding what, why, where, how and when to do things;
3. As the result, it forms a way of thinking and living shared by these groups of human beings;
4. Is therefore an identity that to distinguish one human group from another.

Therefore in summary, this project concludes that culture is created and shared by the individuals within the society over the years, and is a guide for people to think and do things. These have formed the ways of living for its members. However, it is also worth mentioning, that culture can be infected as a result of people's personal behaviour changes, to the actions and reactions of their associates. This is because on one hand, individuals are influenced by the culture of their society and on other hand, they also contribute to that culture. Thus culture is not a static concept; it reflects the dynamic nature of the human societies, and has significant repercussions on the goods and services which are demanded by them.

2.1.2 Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour as defined by Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1978) is “those activities directly involved in obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services including the decision processes that precede and follows these actions.” Therefore consumer behaviour is to study the patterns on how, what, when and why people buy the product as they do. Thus it is about to make an attempt to understand consumers' buying decision making processes. It

usually starts with searching to understand the individual buying behaviour, and then extending it to the groups. (people who have a similar buying pattern can normally result in forming a group) These patterns are very complex, affected by many factors such as consumers' perceptions, attitudes and understandings of a given product based on their educational background, societal roles, financial situation and what is more importantly, social and cultural environment. Here, culture comes in to play an important role as a powerful influencer on the consumer consumption due to the fact that no-one in the human society can be isolated from the environment they live in. Thus there is a need to study how the culture influences the consumer behaviour and that is the purpose of this project.

2.2 Consumer Behaviour Models

A model is an abstract concept of reality which, essentially, simplifies complexity and is a rough approximation to real life. (Chisnall 1995) Thus by constructing a consumer behaviour model, it provides the framework for the later research of this project.

Over the years, academic scholars have developed many models in attempts to analyse the consumer buying behaviours. Some of them are more useful to this project than others. In summary, there are two types of the consumer behaviour model: monadic and multi-variable. (Chisnall 1995)

One of the basic principles of the Monadic model is derived from microeconomic theory, which is to assume that consumers are completely rational and all the buying activities are therefore based on the economic considerations. (Chisnall 1995)

Another type of Monadic model views consumers as irrational. An example of such is psychoanalytic theory, which theorised consumer behaviour upon individual's subjective perception of the risk inherent in particular buying propositions. As according to Cox (1967) who has developed such theory, risk has two elements during the process of consumer behaviour: uncertainty and consequences. Uncertainty is related to the buying goal, such as the choice between a luxury product and functional product for personal use. Consequences refer to the likelihood that a given product or service will satisfy expectations. As a result of the involvement of these two elements, a consumer will weight up carefully the risk involved in purchasing a product, and select one which can minimize the perceived risk.

Both theories have clearly identified some elements which affect the consumer's buying decision making, but have simplified the reality: they ignored the non-rational factors which can influence the consumers' buying behaviour. Thus these two models cannot be accounted as a whole.

Another type of the model has emerged to solve the problem. Engel-Kollat-Blackwell's (1978) model can represent this with exogenous variables included such as the societal environment and personal characteristics. The core of this model is a five-stage decision making process, which starts with problem recognition, followed by a search for information, so the problem can be dealt with satisfactorily; then an evaluation of the information against several factors will be carried out. Purchase decision is made as the result; finally, consumers will evaluate the purchasing decisions by comparing product's performance with their expectations. A greater performance than expectation will lead to a product satisfaction and may result in repeating purchases.

Engel-Kollat-Blackwell's (1978) model recognises some general factors such as personality and lifestyle that can affect consumers at the stage of searching and evaluation of the information; in addition, there are also internalised environmental influences on consumer behaviour too, namely cultural norms and social values.

This model of consumer buying behaviour is highly valuable in terms of it having provided a great insight into the factors that would affect consumers' buying decision making. But the problem with such a theory is that it over emphasized on non-rational factors.

Overall, people's needs and motivations are very complex and involve both rational and non-rational factors. Therefore there is a need to study this subject exclusively.

This project however will be limited in its analysis on how the culturally based values and beliefs influence consumers' decision making at the stage of searching and evaluation of the information during the buying process that Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (1978) has presented to us.

2.3 Core Culture Theories

There is an enormous amount of literature on Eastern Chinese culture and Western British culture, with two being particularly useful for the research purpose of this project. One is

Hall's (1960, 1981, 1990) concept of high and low context cultures, and the other one is Hofstede's (1991, 2001) theory of individualism versus collectivism and uncertainty avoidance.

Edward T Hall (1960, 1981, 1990) introduced us the concept of high and low contexts as a way to explain and understand the different cultural orientations. He divided the world of cultures into two categories: high context and low context and arguing that one of the major differences between them was the personal relationships.

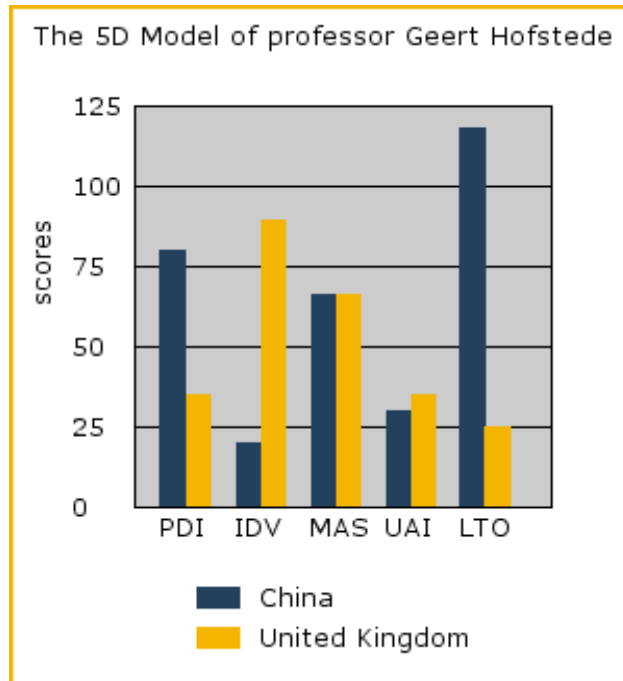
Hall (1960, 1981, 1990) stated that high context culture has a tendency to cater towards in-groups; an in-group is formed based on the close tie in personal relationships such as family friends and colleagues etc and in such groups, things, including information and knowledge are shared exclusively. As a result, people are more inter-dependent on each other, thus social networks are very important. Hall (1960, 1981, 1990) identified that high context cultures are more common in the East than West. Chinese culture, as he indicated, is a typical high context culture.

Conversely, low context culture has a tendency to cater towards out-groups. In such culture, people tend to compartmentalise their personal networks, as a result, family, friends and colleagues are all separate from each other, and things are shared less exclusively. Thus people are more independent and social networks therefore are less important. Britain is in this category.

Similarly, Hofstede (1991, 2001) has identified five aspects of cultural dimensions while he was trying to find an explanation for the motivation of IBM employees around the world. Two of these are particularly useful for the research purpose of this project: individualism VS collectivism and uncertainty avoidance.

According to Hofstede (1991, 2001), there are also two types of human society: individualistic and collectivistic. In individualistic society, people are self-centred and seek fulfilment of their own goals. UK is a country, has tendency towards on this type of society. However, in a collectivistic society, members of such society have a group mentality and seek mutual accommodation to maintain group harmony. China on the other hand, according to Hofstede's (1991, 2001) research has scored a high rating on collectivism. (please see figure 1)

Figure 1 Hofstede's Five Aspects of Cultural Dimensions: a Comparison
Between China and UK



PDI	Power Distance Index
IDV	Individualism
MAS	Masculinity
UAI	Uncertainty Avoidance
LTO	Long Term Orientation

Source: Hofstede (2008)

The second aspect of Hofstede's (1991, 2001) work on culture, which will be adopted in this research project is uncertainty avoidance. Uncertainty avoidance is concerning the degree to which people in a country prefer formal rules and fixed pattern of life, as means of enhancing their security. Thus uncertainty avoidance is about whether people like to take risk. In a high uncertainty avoidance society, people are normally associated with risk aversion. Contrast to this, in the low uncertainty avoidance societies, people are more willing to experience and

explore new things. UK in Hofstede's (1991, 2001) research has scored a higher uncertainty avoidance index than China. (please see figure 1)

2.3.1 Limitations of the Culture Theories

Hall's (1960, 1981, 1990) concept of high and low context of culture and Hofstede's (1991, 2001) theory of individualism versus collectivism and uncertainty avoidance have provided us a great insight into the cultural dimensions of human society and could be useful for the companies which are operating in an international scale. However there are some limitations too and they need to be addressed here.

1. All the theories are national territory based without corresponding to the inferior cultural groups within the country. Both UK and China are multi-ethnic dimensional with Anglo-Saxon and Han Chinese dominating the society in each country, which are the main base for this research project.
2. All the definitions of dimensions are culturally based; however, they may vary from place to place within the culture. For example, individual behaviour in London might have different connotations elsewhere in the UK, same also apply to China.

2.3.2 Theory Implications

Thus, in a high context culture, collectivistic society, according to Hall's (1960, 1981, 1990) and Hofstede's (1991, 2001) theories, when to make a purchase decision, Chinese consumers should more likely to taken into account of the public opinions from their social networks such as members of families, friends and colleagues. This was due to the nature of such culture, where people, as observed by Hall (1960, 1981, 1990), connected to each other through a multitude of overlaps and links based on the share of common substance. As a result, groups are formed; identities emerged and lie in familial and social relationships. People became very inter-dependent and inter-connected with each other. In those familial and social groups, to maintain a stable and peaceful coexistence is more important than anything-else and therefore people in the collectivistic society are always seeking mutual accommodation to maintain their group harmony. (Hofstede's 1991, 2001) This would have a

significant impact on the Chinese people's buying behaviour, as Chen (quoted in Usunier 2000, 106) noted that in the oriental society, an individual's behaviour often cannot be considered as an act reflecting his or her own will. It is often the result of a consensus or compromise of himself or herself and his or her social network. Thus when it comes to making a purchase decision, individuals will have to consider the wider implications of their actions and it has to cause consumers to identify certain role behaviour and to have less personal freedom. (Chiou quoted in Usunier 2000, 110)

Whereas, in the low context individualistic society, because individuals are self-centred and seek to fulfil their own goals, therefore when it comes to making a purchase decision, people are more willing to pursue their own personal preference and less likely to seek the public opinions on the product they are purchasing from their social network groups. Britain, based on Hall's (1960, 1981, 1990) and Hofstede's (1991, 2001) research, should be in this case.

In relation to the uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede 1991, 2001) in which Britain has a higher score than China, this implies that Chinese consumers are more willing to adopt the new things than their British counterpart; this is due to the study previously conducted by Hofstede (1991, 2001), which is showing that high uncertainty avoidance normally associates with risk aversion and resultingly, people in such a society prefer more formal rules and a fixed pattern of life than people from a low uncertainty avoidance community. Thus people who come from a high uncertainty avoidance society are less willing to experience and adopt the new things, because of the risk it associates.

2.4 Culture and Consumer Behaviour

Culture has been regarded by many scholars as being embedded in the elements of society. Things like religion, language and the role of social units (such as family) can all directly or indirectly influence consumers' behaviour at their decision making stages.

Jeannet and Hennessey (quoted in Doole & Lowe 2008, 80) have presented us with three major processes through which culture influences consumer behaviour: starting with Culture Forces which includes the religion, history, family, language, education and arts. All of these forces together, would then determine the beliefs and values for the human society and set behaviour standards for the individuals in that society. It would result to form a way of thinking and living that is shared by those individuals from that society.

Thus culture can influence consumers on their perceptions and understandings of a given product, as the result, consumers would behave accordingly. The sections below are examining these influences in a greater detail.

2.4.1 Consumer Behaviour I: Independent Purchasing Pattern versus Interdependent Purchasing Pattern

Culture influences consumers' perceptions of a given product. This is because consumers buy objects for the value they provided. (Usunier 2000) In valuing things, consumers attribute public or private meanings to it. (Richins quoted in Usunier 2000)

Public meanings of a product as defined by Richins (quoted in Usunier 2000, 108) are the subjective meaning of a product assigned to an object by non-owners of the object, that is by the members of the society. Public meanings of a product emerged through socialising and participating in shared activities between owners and non-owners of the object and they are reinforced in social interchanges. Thus in the business terms, consumers buying the product for their symbolic value and those products are therefore expressing the social status and personality of its owners. A good example can be found in the Rolex watches, which are widely considered to be the symbol of wealth; thus by using such product, it can reflect the social status of its owner.

Conversely, private meanings are the sum of the subjective meanings that an object holds for a particular individual. (Usunier 2000, 108) A custom decoration of a newly purchased house can reflect its owner's personality and preference for the things they like. Therefore this decorated house has a private meaning that its owner assigns to. Some of the private meanings may derive from socially shared interpretations; however others are unique to the consumer because they are associated with private and even intimate experiences. (Usunier 2000) For instance, the cloth that people choose to wear.

Usunier (2000, 108) argues that the main difference between Asians and Westerners are the subjective meanings of the product that consumers assigned to. According to her theory that Consumers from both continents are seeing the self as divided into an inner private self and an outer public self based on the social subjective meanings of the product. Thus when they are dealing a product that associates with private meanings, consumers from both continents,

tend to rely on the personal judgement to decide whether to make a purchase decision. However, when it comes to a product that attributes the public meanings, Chinese consumers would comply with the public opinion from their social reference groups; whereas for the British, this seems more or less not a case. The result of these differences has led to a different purchasing pattern.

In a high context collectivistic society, such as China which this project is studying, theories (Markus and Kitayama 1991, Chiou 1995, Usunier 2000 and Doole & Lowe 2008) have assumed that, when to come to make a decision on buying a product, consumers tend to attribute more of the public meanings on it than their Western counterpart. Thus the Chinese consumers rely on a great deal of the information provided by their reference group, in this case, their family members, friends and colleagues since the traditional Chinese culture value heavily on the social harmony and smoothness of the relationships. As a result, an interdependent purchasing pattern is emerged.

Whereas, in a low context individualistic society, people are seen as inherently separate and distinct. Thus private self expression is encouraged, personal preferences are supposed to reflect a person's tastes and convictions. Therefore the private meanings of a product play a dominant role and an independent purchasing pattern has been widely seen.

Therefore the core issue here is how the consumers in China and UK define the concept of meaning for product in which distinguishes the Westerners and Orientals

For this reason and to meet the first and second objective of this project, the following questions need to be answered:

- 1. What are the social meanings of the mobile phones for the consumer groups in China and in UK? (public or private meanings)**
- 2. How are these meanings affecting the consumer behaviours from these two countries in choosing a phone? (interdependent or independent purchasing patterns)**
- 3. What are the similarities and differences between them?**
- 4. What are the implications for marketing of the mobile phones in above countries?**

2.4.2 Consumer Behaviour II: Uncertainty Avoidance and Adoption of New Mobile Phone Technologies

Culture can also influence on the consumers' understandings of a given product. This related to the consumers buying behaviour of mobile phones, it has a significant impact on, what type of the phone that a consumer is likely to buy. Thus, culture influences on consumers' understandings of a given product requires an extensive study.

Nowadays, new phone features such as wireless Internet accessing, multi-media servicing and global positioning system are at the centre stage of the development of the mobile technologies and are leading the market to an era, where the basic need of the phones: communication, is actually broadened to a new mean of interaction between users and users, and users and their service providers.

This has created new business opportunities for almost all the mobile operators around the globe. However, as we observed that today's world is not equally developed. Some countries such as Japan and South Korea are already started to upgrading its mobile technologies from third generation (3G) to the fourth (4G) while others are still in the process of shifting from the second to the third. Thus in terms of the diffusion of the new technologies, some nations are seemed always lagging behind others.

Rogers (1962) has studied this phenomenon closely and summarised six different categories of adopters based on his study:

1. Innovator- venturesome
2. Early adopters- respect
3. Early majority – deliberate
4. Late majority – sceptical
5. Laggards- tradition
6. Non-adopters

The causes for these different diffusing rates (or may even end up in rejection) of the technologies are very complex and are due to several important factors such as the nature of the technology, the method of communication that is used for diffusing the technology, the environment in which adoption takes place and the time dimension. (Rogers 1962)

In addition, McDonald and Christopher (2003) have also identified five factors that could influence the rate of diffusion of the technologies. They are:

- Economic factors
- Relative advantage (over the existing ones)
- Compatibility (with lifestyle, cultural values and beliefs)
- Communicability
- Complexity

Among all of these factors, culture influences on consumers' understanding, accepting and adopting of new technologies are certainly one of the most important ones.

Hofstede's (1991, 2001) concept of uncertainty avoidance has clearly revealed a broad picture, showing that people from some countries are more willing to take risk that is associated with adopting new technologies than people who are from others.

Rogers (1962) has made a similar conclusion. In his six categories of adopters that we have mentioned earlier, he noticed that one of the characters of the Innovators were risk tolerates whereas for the Laggards, are the ones who least likely to take risk for anything.

In the previous section of this chapter, we have already seen that Britain has secured a higher score than China in Hofstede's (1991, 2001) study of uncertainty avoidance, this suggests that Chinese consumers maybe more willing to buy a product that is equipped with the new technologies than the British.

Thus based on this theory, this project has hypothesised that:

Chinese consumers prefer a phone that has the latest mobile technologies built in and is able to offer them new advanced services and functions than their British counterpart.

2.5. Summary

This project intends to provide a new insight and useful knowledge for mobile manufacturers and operators in developing and marketing of their products in an across cultural context.

In order to do so, this project is divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with the impact of culture on consumers' purchasing patterns. This is based on Usunier's (2000) argument that consumers in different countries tend to assign a different subjective meaning of the product that they are buying. This resulted in a different purchasing pattern. Therefore, to understand what purchasing pattern the Chinese and British consumers are following in buying a mobile phone, the following questions need to be answered:

- 1. What are the social meanings of the mobile phones for the consumer groups in China and in UK? (public or private meanings)**
- 2. How are these meanings affecting the consumer behaviours from these two countries in choosing a phone? (interdependent or independent purchasing pattern)**
- 3. What are the similarities and differences between them?**
- 4. What are the implications for marketing of the mobile phones in above countries?**

The second part of this project is to study how culture influences the consumers' preference for the mobile phone. This is an important subject too due to the fact that it partly determines the market demand for the mobile phones. To address this aim, the following hypothesis has been made:

Chinese consumers prefer a phone that has the latest mobile technologies built in and is able to offer them new advanced services and functions than their British counterpart.

By answering, verifying and measuring the above questions and hypothesis, we will have a clear understanding on the culture influences of consumers' behaviour in buying a mobile phone in China and in the UK. To do so, the further research is required. In the following chapter, the methodology of this research is addressed, firstly, research philosophy; secondly, research strategy and finally ended in the research design.

Chapter Three Research Methodology

This chapter guides you through on how the research for this study was carried out. It will start with the research philosophy; as a result, an approach and strategy shall develop; then move on and ended in presenting the general research design.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy explains the rule of game for the research; in other words, it describes the logic of inquiry which is governing the research approach. (Maylor & Blackmon 2005) In the research philosophy, there are two alternative approaches: positivism and interpretivism (phenomenology). Although they are different in terms of guiding researchers to a different directions in collecting and analysing the data; but they are same essentially with only one goal, which is to help the researchers to answer their research questions. (Johnson & Duberley 2000)

Positivism adopts the philosophical stance of the natural science, gives evidences and analyses phenomena in terms of its variables. It is about to study of the experience from the perspective of the individuals and analyses them in terms of its issues, and discovering the result through a period of detailed familiarisation. Thus positivism is about distinguishing what is true from what is untrue. (Saunders et al 2007) Its goal is therefore to find general patterns of the social phenomena through quantitative research (mainly) and drawing the conclusions from the samples that researchers have collected. Moreover, these findings need to be statistically significant, which means that findings are unlikely to have occurred simply by chance. (Maylor & Blackmon 2005) Thus what is important for positivistic researchers is the data that have been collected for the research purpose must be relevant, valid and reliable.

On the other hand, interpretivist researchers take a different view. They argue that social world of business and management is far too complex and unique to lend itself for theorising in the same way as the physical sciences, they thus required to be studied specifically rather than generalise. Therefore for interpretivist researchers, interpretivism (phenomenology) is based on the idea that reality is socially constructed and constantly changing. (Saunders et al 2007) As a result, for this type of researchers, there is a need to participate in construction of the world in order to gain sufficient knowledge and understanding for some aspects of the

reality. interpretivism (phenomenology) requires researchers to see through other people's eyes and build their theories based on the interpret events from their point of view. (Maylor & Blackmon 2005) Thus different from positivism, the goal of interpretivism (phenomenology) is not to find the general patterns of the social phenomena; rather it is an attempt to understand the meanings for one particular situation. Dependability is therefore crucial for this type of research.

Finally it is also worth mentioning that neither of the philosophies above is better than other. They are better at doing different things and for different research tasks. Thus it is really depending on the research questions that researcher is seeking to answer and the way in which the researcher interprets such question. (Saunders et al 2007)

This research study shall adopt a positivistic research philosophy. This is due to the nature of this research project which is to test an observable social reality. (Saunders et al 2007) In this case, it is about exploration of the relationships between subjective meanings and usage of the mobile phone for the consumers and their buying behaviours of it. This will involve an adoption of the existing theories, testing it based on the social realities and conclusion is drawing from the result of the test and it may either confirm the theory or reject it.

3.2 Research Approach and Strategy

A deep understanding of the research approach is essential for the development of the research.

Same as research philosophy we have discussed in the previous section, there are also two types of the research approaches in the literature: inductive and deductive.

Inductive approach guides researchers to build theory based on the analysis of the data that researchers have collected through the interviews. It usually starts with observations of specific instances, and then to seek to establish generalisations about the phenomenon via investigations. (Saunders et al 2007)

Deductive approach on the other hand aims to test an established theory and seeks to see if the theory applies to the specific instances. (Saunders et al 2007) Robson (quoted in Saunders et al 2007, 87) listed five sequential stages through which deductive research progresses:

1. Deducing a hypothesis from the theory
2. Expressing the hypothesis in operational terms, thus it is to propose a relationship between two specific variables
3. Testing this operational hypothesis through an experiment or some other form of empirical inquiry
4. Examining the specific outcome of the inquiry: either confirm the theory or indicate the need for its modification
5. If necessary, modifying the theory in the light of the findings.

A deductive approach will be used in underpinning the research philosophy due to two reasons:

1. The nature of this research project, which is search to generalise the causal relationships between two variables. In this case, are the relationships between culture and consumers' buying behaviour of mobile phones.
2. To be consistent with the research philosophy that we have decided to adopt in the previous section of this chapter.

As this study is based on a deductive approach, theoretical positions have been developed prior to the collection of the data. (Please see the Chapter Two)

A positivistic philosophy with a deductive approach has determined a quantitative method, which will be used mainly in collecting the primary data that is needed for in completion of this research project. (Saunders et al 2007) This will be done through a 'value free manner' and analysed objectively.

Furthermore, in order to enhance the interpretability of the research and cross check the results, qualitative data will also be collected and analysed. This multi-method approach has therefore been employed to enable triangulation to take place, thus to safeguard usability, credibility, reliability and validity of the research findings.

3.3 Research Design

The purpose of this research is to provide some valuable insights and useful knowledge for mobile manufacturers and operators in developing and marketing of their products in an across cultural context. For this reason, an exploratory study has been undertaken in order to explore and establish the causal relationships between culture and buying behaviour of the mobile phones. The emphasis has been on studying the purchasing patterns of mobile phones in China and in the UK, two countries that characterised by relevant cultural differences.

In order to explain the relationship between culture and buying behaviour of mobile phones, a positivistic research will be taken with a cross sectional approach snapshot aims at obtaining quantitative as well as qualitative data.

The primary means of this study in collecting data has been through the survey strategy, by using the questionnaires. The questionnaire have enabled the Author of this project to examine and explain the cause effect relationships between the research variables and identify the influence of the dimensions of Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism (Hofstede 1991, 2001) and the concept of High and Low Context (Hall 1960, 1981, 1990) on consumers' buying behaviour of mobile phone.

The survey strategy has been selected based on three criteria (Saunders et al 2007):

1. It should allows collecting numerous amounts of data from a sizeable population in an economical manner
2. It should enables easy comparison
3. It should guarantees considerable control over the research process

As a result, self-administered questionnaires have been employed. They delivered and returned personally through the mobile phone shops in Beijing China and Bournemouth UK. The questions were designed to be easy to understand and standardised in order to be interpreted in the same way by all respondents. (Bryman and Bell 2003)

The questionnaire was pilot tested before final data have been collected in order to establish the validity of the questionnaire and to improve the questions, its format and scales. (Bryman and Bell 2003)

In the second stage of the research, qualitative data will be collected through semi-structured interviews in order to enhance and elaborate further the understanding of the relationship

between culture and the consumer buying behaviour of mobile phones. The information collected through the interviews have helped to strengthen the findings from the questionnaires and to prove in detail various aspects of the influence of culture on consumers at the decision making stage of purchasing a phone. Finally, it also provides a great opportunity for Author to explore in depth the influence of the cross-cultural variables on consumers' behaviour.

For collection of qualitative data, the order of the questions has varied in relation to the flow of the conversation and additional questions have been either added or omitted when necessary. The open-ended questioning strategy has been employed with the purpose of encouraging respondents to answer in their own words. Interviews were taken place on a one to one basis either face to face or through the telephones.

3.3.1 Sampling

Sampling is probably one of the crucial steps in this research project due to the fact that it would influence the results of the research; consequently, affect the validity and reliability of the study. (Saunders et al 2007) Thus to identify and use the correct sampling method is very important. Over the years, scholars have summarised two alternative ways of sampling: Probability and Non-Probability.

Probability sampling involves the sample being represented and each unit in the population has a equal chance to be selected; whereas for Non-Probability, a sample which has not been selected using the random selection method, instead, some of the units of the population are more likely to be selected than others. (Bryman and Bell 2003)

The advantages and disadvantages of each method are obvious: while probability method have been suggested offering a better assurance against sampling bias, but non-probability samples are probably more relevant to the exploratory study like what this project is doing. (Bryman and Bell 2003) Furthermore, given the fact that the population for this research study has been defined as Chinese and British mobile phone users (or subscribers), thus the population is huge (with 529 millions in China and 73 millions in the UK until the end of 2007, quoted from Euromonitor 2008) and geographically diverted. Therefore the costs and time requirements for obtaining a fully represented and unbiased probably sample would be enormous. (Saunders et al 2007) For this reason, the Author has decided to adopt a convenience sampling technique from the Non-probability method. (Saunders et al 2007)

Every effort has been made to minimise the bias of sample and limitations of the generalisation on this study: the sample for the quantitative survey in this project comprises an equal number of respondents from China and UK (a 100 Chinese and a 100 British), all of them were mobile phone users and have a similar age, gender, social and educational backgrounds. Among them, twenty were picked for the interview. A detailed of population is showing at the table 1 (Appendix 4). The sample selection process of this research project was continued until it reached the required sample size and fulfilled all the conditions pre-set in this project.

For the collection of qualitative data, a purposive sampling technique (Saunders et al 2007) was used in order to select members from the targeted group who are best able to answer the research questions. All the respondents were chosen have an experience of at least one year in using the mobile phones.

3.3.2 Questionnaires and Pilot Test

In this project, the primary data has been collected through questionnaires for the purpose of answering the research questions; thus to achieve the research aims and objectives. As a result, questionnaires have been developed and employed. In the questionnaires, questions were developed based on the literature previously examined. Thus it was designed for the purpose of testing the influence of the cultural influence on consumers' buying behaviours of the mobile phones. Two slightly different questionnaires have been employed: one was for collecting the quantitative data and the other was for qualitative data. Both questionnaires contains a similar content and layout with differences in format- for the collection of quantitative data, a self completion, open ended and five point verbal scale questionnaire has been employed (Please see Appendix 1- for the quantitative); however, for the qualitative data collections, an interviewer administered was obtained. (Please see Appendix 2- for the qualitative data) The questionnaires were developed in two languages: Chinese and English due to the different languages were used in China and in the UK

Before implementing the questionnaires, this project had done a pilot test to ensure the simplicity, understandability and effectiveness of the questions it set. The target group for this test would be family members and friends. Some feedbacks were received and improvements have been made accordingly. (Please see Appendix 3)

3.3.3 Data Analysis

The next stage of this research study will be the data analysis, in this stage, the first thing this project had done is to convert the quantitative data it collected into a Microsoft Excel based numeric scale for analysis. It will display findings in enhanced visual charts and diagrams in order to be able to reflect clear and comparable statistical information about how and to what extent cultural differences have influenced the consumer behaviour on purchasing and using a mobile phone. The qualitative data collected have been analysed by using the content analysis technique, which is main the main technique associated with the semi-structured interviews. (Saunders et al 2007)

3.3.4 Data Quality Issues

The author of this research study is aware the importance of the data quality, getting the correct and high quality of data from the right sources will ensure the usability, credibility, reliability and validity of the research findings. A good quality of data can be defined as whether they are correctly representing the real world to which they are constructing to. (Ghuri & Gronhaug 2005) In this research project, the quality of data will be ensured by using the correct and relevant data collection methods and techniques, for example: prior to the semi-structured interviews, the interviewer has already developed a deep knowledge of the research topic and the related issues in order to demonstrate her credibility and consequently encourage the interviewee to offer more detailed account of the topic under discussion. Furthermore, in order to establish the trustworthiness of the interviewer and increase the interviewee's confidence, a list of the interview themes has been supplied to the participants before the interview took place and the interviewer has adopted a similar style of dress of those to be interviewed. The questions during the interviews has been phrased clearly and in a neutral tone of voice in order to reduce the scope for bias and increase the reliability of the information obtained. Moreover, comments or non verbal behaviour such as gestures which indicated any bias in the interviewer thinking have been avoided. Attentive listening skills have been developed by the interviewer in order to understand the participant's explanations and comments that were significant to the research topic and consequently increase the reliability of this study. Furthermore, a full record of the interview taken has been creased after the events on order to control bias and to produce reliable data. This has been supported by the notes made during the interviews and by the use of a tape recorder. In

order to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, tests have been undertaken. In particular, the test re-test has been undertaken at the pilot stage when the test has been administered twice to some respondents. By this way, the data obtained from the first administration of the questionnaire have been correlated with those from the same questionnaire collected under as near equivalent conditions. These techniques combined with in-depth exploration of the research issue, should therefore guarantee quality results.

3.3.5 Generalisability

Due to the time and cost restrictions, this study is centred on using a small sample size and adopted a convenience sampling technique. This has inevitably limited its generalisability. However every effort was made to reduce the such limitation. For example, there is a little variation in the sample population. As a result, this project still provides important and useful new insights into the influences of cultural differences between China and UK on consumers' buying behaviour of the mobile phones for the mobile manufacturers and operators in developing and marketing of their products at these two countries.

Any further study could therefore apply the contextual framework of this project and determine their findings by extend to a larger sample size with the correspondence to the ethnic minorities in each country as well. As a result, it would further enhance the findings which have already obtained from this study.

Chapter Four – Data Analysis & Findings

This chapter outlines the general findings from the primary research. It starts with identifying, extracting and analysing the key information and trends from the data collected for this research study, firstly quantitative ones and secondly, qualitative ones. As the result of these analyses, a conclusion will be presented in the following chapter.

4.1 Analysing Quantitative Data

4.1.1 Profile of the Respondents

A total of more than three hundred mobile phone users have filed and returned the questionnaire. Among them, two hundred (a 100 Chinese and a 100 British) were selected on the basis of sex, age and occupations. As a result, they have been equally divided into two categories: male and fe-male (a 50 Chinese male, a 50 Chinese fe-male; a 50 British male, and a 50 British fe-male) and four groups (Appendix 4): the first group comprised secondary and further education college students at the age between 16 and 18. The second group was mainly university students aged 19-23. Blue and white collar workers were formed the third group, their age varied between 24 and 65 (65 is the legal retirement age for both of China and UK). The last group was made up by the pensioners who were age over 65. Among the student population, majority was single with 20 percent of Chinese and 5 percent of British were married, but none of them have children; however there was a big increase in the engagement (including those of them who are currently living with their partners) or marriage rate among working and retired population in both countries (Appendix 5); a typical couple in China has only one child, whereas in Britain, this number has increased to two. Most of the blue collar workers and retired population in the survey were either school leavers or have studied at the job training college before entering the labour market; whereas for the white collar class, in both countries, the majority of them have obtained a degree from a higher educational institution. (Appendix 6) A typical monthly disposal income for a student in China was at the around of £80 (at the exchange rate of 1 Pound= 12 Chinese Yuan), in the UK, this figure was much higher; this difference is also apply to the blue collar workers and retired population; however, for the white collar class, the difference between their level of income was much smaller. This largely reflects the actual economic situation in China and in the UK. (Appendix 7)

The survey has also revealed the most popular mobile phone brand in both countries on the basis of the number of users. Sony-Ericsson has been seen on the top lead in China as well as in the UK with amazingly 43 percent of Chinese respondents are currently possessing one of its made phones, this figure is however 6 percent higher than the one in the UK. The second in place in China as according to the survey is Nokia, followed by Jinpeng (a Chinese local brand), Samsung, LG and Motorola. By contrasting, the UK table is quite different from the Chinese one. Samsung has been ranked as the number two the most popular mobile phone brand after Sony-Ericsson, followed by Nokia, LG, Motorola and iPhone. (Appendix 8)

4.1.2 Data Analysis & Findings

The purpose of this study is to examine how cultural differences between China and UK have influenced the consumers' buying behaviour of mobile phones within these two countries. To do so, this research has divided into two parts: firstly, to explore the social meanings of mobile phones for the Chinese consumers and British consumers. This is because consumers buy objects for the value they provided. (Usunier 2000) In valuing things, consumers attribute public or private meanings to it. (Richins quoted in Usunier 2000) These meanings in turn as according to the literature have resulted in a different purchasing pattern to emerge between Chinese consumers and British consumers. (Usunier 2000) However, the purchasing pattern of a mobile phone should not only be determined by its social meanings that customers have attributed to it, but it also should be determined, to a large extent, by how people use it. Thus in the second part, this research is going to explore the influence of the cultural dimensions of Uncertainty Avoidance (Hofstede 1991, 2001) on using behaviour of mobile phones. This related to the buying pattern of mobile phones, it should has a significant impact on, what type of the phone that a consumer is likely to buy. This study is using diagrams and tables to explore and to understand the data. Firstly, the data has been summarised for individual variables with table presenting the number of cases in each category. Measures of central tendency like the mean and the median have been calculated. Furthermore, the distribution of the variables containing quantifiable data has been established prior to the use of the statistical tests. The dispersion has been calculated by evaluating the extent to which the values differ from the mean (standard deviation). This has helped to assess how widely the data were spread around the central point. The Chi square test have been employed in order to enable the Author to find out how likely it was that the independent (national cultures) and the dependent variables (such as using behaviour of

mobile phones) were associated and determine their influence on buying behaviour of mobile phones. The Chi square test, in fact, is based on a comparison of the observed values in the table with what might be expected if the two distributions were entirely independent; that is the probability that the data in the table could occur by chance alone. Consequently, it allows establishing with how much confidence a relationship between two variables in the population can be stated. (Bryman and Bell 2003, Saunders et al 2007) In order to employ the Correlation Analysis and Chi square test some rows and columns have been combined. Moreover, Cross tables have been employed in order to support the data analysis by displaying the relationship between each independent variable and its associates.

4.1.2.1 The Social Meanings of the Mobile Phones and its Implications

According to the literature which the Author of this research study has reviewed in the Chapter Two, a social meaning of a product in the marketing terms can be defined as the meaning of that product in which consumers have attributed to it on the basis of the value it provides to the consumers. (Usunier 2000) Richins (quoted in Usunier 2000) has identified two types of meaning that is normally associated with a given product: public meanings and private meanings.

For the public meanings of a product, Richins (quoted in Usunier 2000) defined it as the subjective meaning in which consumers have assigned to it. Thus in the business terms, consumers are buying the product for the symbolic value it provided and this product is therefore expressing the social status and personality of its owners.

Conversely, private meanings are the sum of the subjective meanings that an object holds for a particular individual. (Usunier 2000, 108) A custom decoration of a newly purchased house can reflect its owner's personality and preference for the things they like. Therefore this decorated house has a private meaning that its owner assigns to.

Based on such literature review, this section therefore aims to explore the social meanings of a mobile phone for the Chinese consumers as well as for the British consumers and also to determine how these meanings partly affect their buying behaviours.

The questions in the Part C and D of the survey were designed for the above purposes.

Question 11 and 12 from Part C of the survey asked respondents in both China and UK about how they see the mobile phone themselves, two opposite views have been presented to the

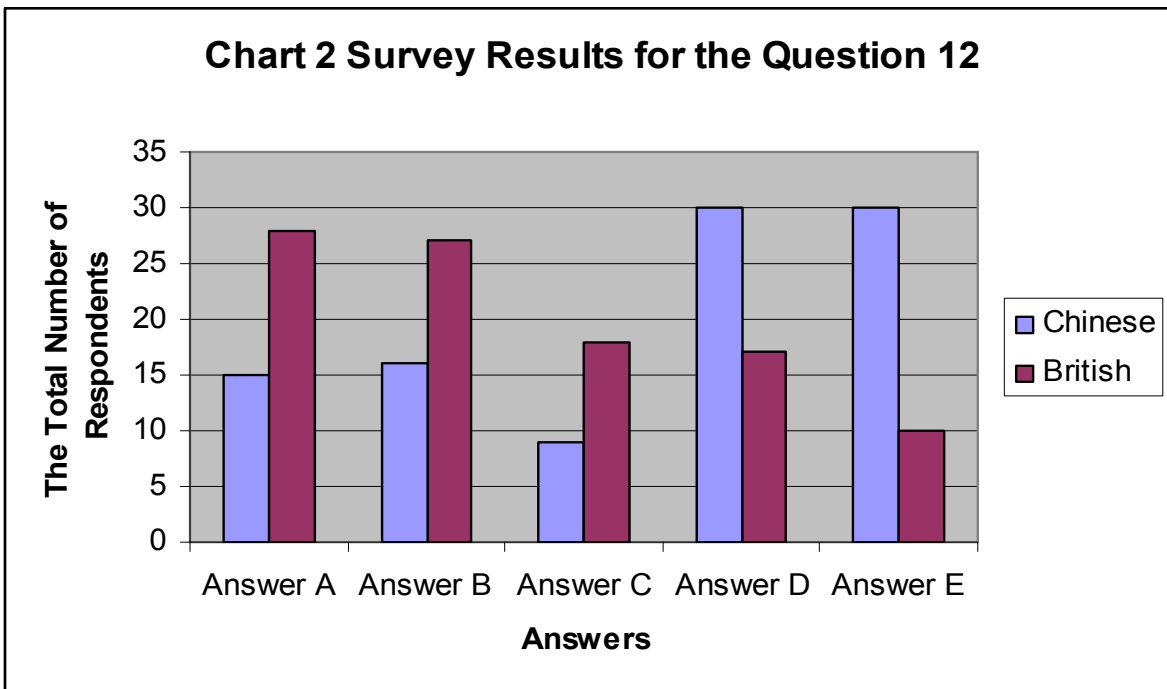
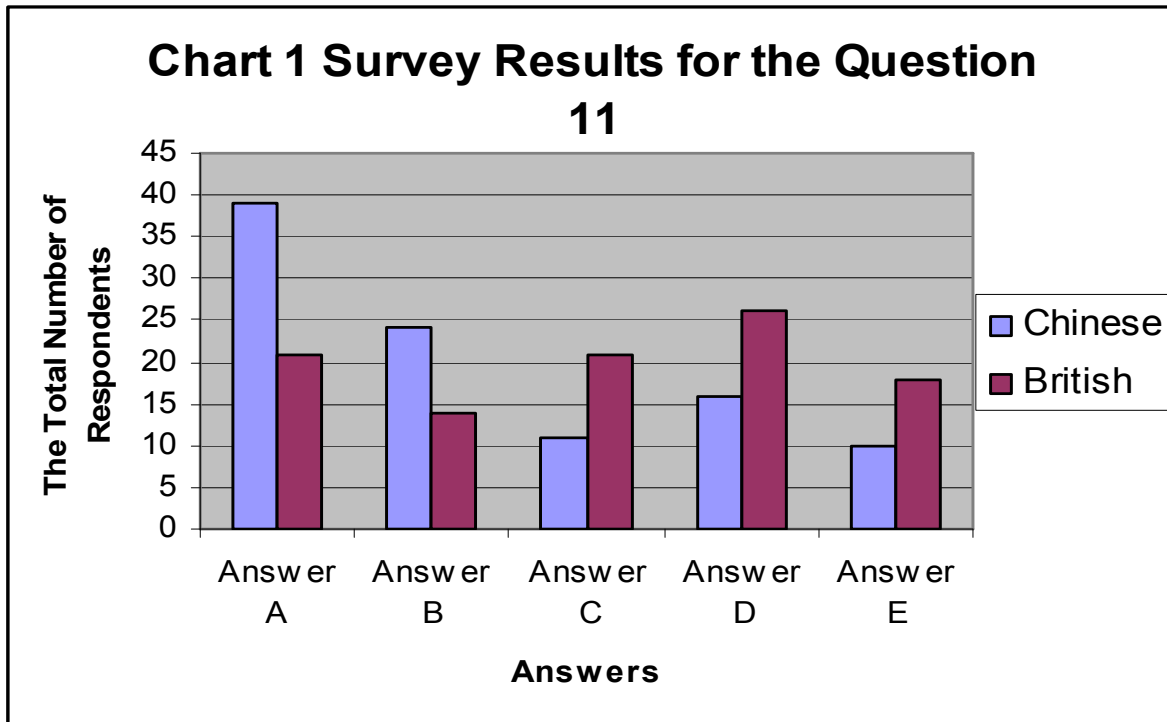
respondents: question 11 asked respondents whether they agree with the statement that the mobile phone has only been seen as a communication device, for making or receiving phone calls and to send or receive text messages and question 12 asked respondents whether they see mobile phone as a fashion item instead of a communication device. Five different answers were provided and each respondent was only asked to choose one of them:

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Disagree nor Agree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

The actual findings for the question 11 has been published in the table 6 (Appendix 9), and for the question 12, in the table 7 (Appendix 10). They have also been converted into enhanced visual charts and displayed below (Chart 1 and 2). All together, the crosstabs analysis has revealed a clear tendency that Chinese consumers associate mobile phones with public meanings whereas British see it more as a private item, not to show off.

Indeed, as the Chart 1 illustrates, in total, a 63 percent of Chinese respondents from the survey have chosen the Option A and B in the question 11, this means that they were either strongly disagree or disagree with the statement that was presented the mobile phone as only a communication device while there were only 35 percent of their British counterpart shared with the same opinion.

At the same time, through the data analysis, this research has also identified, a high proportion (60 out of 63 in numbers, that is 95.24 percent) of the Chinese people from the respondent group which have previously rejected statement that was presented the mobile phone as only a communication device have in turn choose to agree or strongly agree with the view that mobile phone can be seen as a fashion item when to answer the question 12, whereas there were only total of a 27 percent of British consumers chose to agree with it.



Such tendency has also been verified via Chi Square test, which is a test to test the probability of a relationship between two variables having occurred by chance. (Saunders et al 2007) In this case, it is a test to test the probability of the relationship between national culture and its influence on the formation of the social meanings of the mobile phone, which would have occurred by chance. If the probability of the test statistic having occurred by chance is lower

than 0.05, then there is a significant relationship between two such variables. (Saunders et al 2007, 358)

The test result for the Question 11 shows a probability of 0.038 (Appendix 12); 12, a probability of 0.035 (Appendix 13), these mean that there is 96.8 percent chance for the question 11 and 96.5 percent chance for the question 12 between two variables in each question could not have occurred by chance factors alone. Since the probability in both questions are lower than 0.05, it therefore can conclude that the variables of national culture and its influence on the formation of the social meanings of the mobile phones are significantly associated. Thus the findings of the Chinese consumers which are normally associate the mobile phone with the public meanings, whereas British more likely to see it as a private item are reliable and as a result, can be trusted.

Such findings have been further examined and validated in the Question 13 Part C and Question 14 and 15 from the Part D.

In the Question 13 Part C, respondents in both countries were asked whether they care about how other people see what phone they are using when they go out. If the majority of the respondents say yes they do, then this mean that people from this particular group are representing a view that mobile phone has a public meanings for their nation, otherwise we could conclude that people are more likely to see mobile phone as a private item with personal meanings and not to shared with the rest of the public. A choice of answers was provided in the question on the basis of the literature reviewed previously. They were:

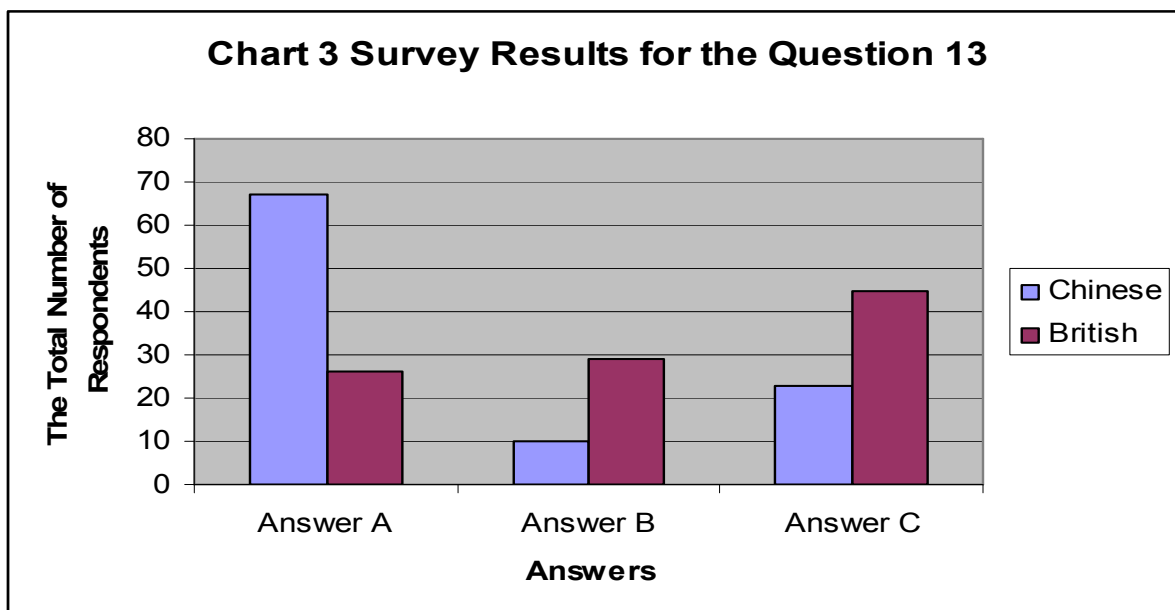
- a) I care, my phone is like my clothes, a good looking phone makes me feel good too and helps me to build up my confidence when I go out
- b) No idea
- c) I don't care, it's a personal thing anyway

Each respondent was asked only to choose one answer.

A detailed of the results from the survey for this question is shown in the Table 8 (Appendix 11), the crosstabs analysis has identified that there is a high propensity of the Chinese respondents to care about how other people see what phone they are using when they go out whereas the majority of the British respondents in this question tended to disagree to it. (Chart 3)

Indeed, as illustrated in the Table 8 (Appendix 11), while looking at the student groups (including both group of 16-18 years old and 19-23 years old, a total of 80 respondents: a 40 Chinese and a 40 British): there were 42 of them have chosen the Option A, this counts 52.5 percent of the total student population. Among them, there were a total of 30 Chinese nationals and 12 British. This has indicated strongly that there is a tendency among young people, particularly, among young Chinese students to see mobile phone as an item with public meanings rather than private one. Similarly, a total of 75 percent of Chinese workers (including both of Blue and White collars) have chosen the Option A too while there were only 27.5 percent of British agreed with them. This is probably partly due to the fact that it is part of these people's job requirements to wear nicely and to use smartly in order to appear professionally and partly due to the differences between collectivistic society and individualistic society as this research has discussed in the earlier part of this project. Finally, although the aging population from both countries have shown a much less interest in the option A (in total, there were only 25% of them or 10 out of 40 have chosen this option while the rest of the population from this group prefers either the option B or C), the Chinese respondents have once again topped the table.

Overall, the survey results of the Question 13 have largely reflected and reaffirmed the conclusion made from the previous findings, which indeed indicated once again strongly that Chinese consumers associate mobile phone with the public meanings, while the British, on the other hand see it more as a private item.



Part D in the questionnaire consists of Question 14 and 15, the aim of this section was to find out how the public conception of the meanings of the mobile phone in China as well as in the UK have partially affected the consumers' choice of the phone in these two countries.

If Usunier (2000) along with some others' theories on the people's buying behaviour of a product in the East and in the West were correct, then when it comes to make a decision on what phone to buy, we should see, because of the fact that the mobile phone has a public meaning in China, and a private one in the UK, Chinese consumers should therefore rely heavily on the public opinion from their social reference groups on which phone they should choose to buy and as a result, value very much so of the brand image of the mobile phone manufacturer (Usunier 2000); whereas in the UK, due to the same reason, the British consumers should hence make their decisions largely based on their personal judgement. (Usunier 2000)

Question 14, Part D asks respondents in both countries about where they seek the information from about the phone they have purchased from before making a decision on whether to buy. A choice of options was provided in the question. They were:

Family Friends Internet Advertisement Information obtained from the mobile phone provider service counter A mobile phone salesperson Other source (Please specify)

Each respondent was asked to choose only one option, the one which is the most relevant to him or her. The most popular one has been calculated and been published in the Table 11 (Appendix 14) in accordance with the respondents' occupational background. The survey results are showing that most Chinese consumers would seek the advice from their family and friends on what particular phone to buy before making a decision while the British, in contrast, would either rely on themselves to search for the information (mainly students and highly educated white collar workers) or rely on the professional advisors (blue collar workers and retired pensioners).

Question 15 asks respondents in China and in the UK on the reason why they decide to buy their phone. A choice of options was provided in the question on the basis of the literature reviewed previously. They were:

Price

Brand Image □

Design □

Functionality □

Each respondent was asked to rank each factor from the most important one to the least important one. As usual, in order to make our comparison and analysis easier, this research has divided respondents into four groups according with their occupations: students, blue collar workers, white collar workers and retired pensioners. The statistics for this question were presented in the Table 12 (Appendix 15) as a format of means, standard deviations and the statistical significance of the mean differences. The overall results clearly showed that Chinese consumers (in particularly, students and white collar professionals) value more of the brand image of a phone than any other factors in comparison with their British counterpart, followed by price, design and functionality, whereas in Britain, the functionality of a phone has been ranked as the most important factor for a consumer to make a decision and the brand image in contrast to the Chinese respondents, is the least important one.

The findings from these two questions have confirmed the assumption made by various scholars: because of the mobile phone in China has been attributed the public meanings by its users, as a result, people tend to rely largely on the public opinion from their social reference groups to make a decision on what phone to buy, therefore Chinese consumers value more of the brand image of a mobile phone than their British counterpart; whereas in the UK, because consumers do not associate mobile phone with the public meanings, thus we see more of the independent purchasing pattern based on the personal judgement and backed by the information available online, at the phone shop and from the professional advisors. Hence, British consumers value more of the functionality of a phone rather than its manufacturer's public image. This demonstrated largely the characteristics of the individualistic society, where private self expression is encouraged, and personal preferences are supposed to reflect a person's tastes and convictions.

Such findings are valuable and important for the mobile phone manufacturer in marketing of their products in a across cultural context. However, they do not reveal a full picture in relation to study of the consumers' buying behaviour of mobile phones in China and in the UK, because culture can also influence consumers on their understanding, accepting and

adopting of new mobile phone technologies, and subsequently, has a impact on what phone they would choose to buy too. The following section is dedicated to such study.

4.1.2.2 Adopting New Mobile Phone Technologies and their Relations to the Consumer Buying Behaviour of Mobile Phones

Nowadays, new mobile phone features such as wireless Internet accessing, multi-media servicing and global positioning system are at the centre stage of the development of the mobile technologies and are leading the market to an era, where the basic need of the phones: communication, is actually broadened to a new mean of interaction between users and users, and users and their service providers.

This has created new business opportunities for almost all the mobile operators around the globe. However, as we observed that today's world is not equally developed. Some countries such as Japan and South Korea are already started to upgrading its mobile technologies from third generation (3G) to the fourth (4G) while others are still in the process of shifting from the second to the third. Thus in terms of the diffusion of the new technologies, some nations are seemed always lagging behind others.

Previous studies by various scholars (e.g Rogers, 1962 and Hofstede, 1991, 2001) have shown that culture can also play a role in this phenomenon: Culture can influence consumers on their understanding, accepting and adopting of new technologies. This related to the consumers' buying behaviour of mobile phones, it has a significant impact on, what type of the phone that a consumer is likely to buy. As a result, it requires an extensive study too. In order to do so, and also based on the literature reviewed earlier, this research has established the following hypothesis:

Chinese consumers prefer a phone that has the latest mobile technologies built in and is able to offer them new advanced services and functions than their British counterpart.

Question 16 and 17, Part E of the questionnaire were set out to test such hypothesis.

Question 16, Part E, asked respondents in both of China and UK to express their usage of mobile phone in the daily lives. Seven estimated common features of a modern phone were provided for rating. They were:

- Make/Receive Phone Calls
- Send/Receive Text Messages
- Use Internet Services
- Take Pictures/making videos
- Listen to the Music/Radios
- Navigate
- Play Games

Each respondent was asked to rate the frequency of using each of these features as according to: Daily, Every Two or Three Days, Weekly, Monthly, Occasionally and Never. The overall results were presented in the Table 13 (Appendix 16), it has revealed that Chinese consumers do utilise more of the latest mobile technologies on their phones than British. Indeed, as according to the table, the most popular mobile phone feature today for a Chinese consumer is sending and receiving text messages, 86 percent of respondents in the survey answered that they would use this feature on the daily basis; followed by making or receiving phone calls (63%); listening to the music or radios (48%); playing games (43%); use the Internet services (36%); taking pictures or making videos (18%) and navigate (6%). However, for the British consumers, making and receiving phone calls are remained as the most popular feature for a modern mobile telephone in the UK, 88 percent of the respondents reported to use it every day in their daily life; followed by sending and receiving text messages (85%); Listening to the music or radios (35%); playing the games (31%); Use the Internet services (24%); Taking pictures or making videos (13%) and Navigate (3%). This could be explained partly by the economic reasons and partly by the cultural reasons. Economic reasons: it is more expensive in China to make and receive phone calls than to send and receive text messages or emails via the mobile phone, due to the Both Party Pay (BPP) system that China has adopted (Mitomo et al 2006), as a result, the Chinese consumers prefer to utilise more of the mobile internet services on their phones than the British consumers. Cultural reasons: In the previous chapter of this study, we have already seen that Britain has secured a higher score than China in Hofstede's (1991, 2001) study of uncertainty avoidance, this implies that Chinese consumers are more willing to explore and adopt the functions on their phones that they are not familiar

with before and these actions can subsequently result in accepting and utilising the latest mobile technologies.

The Question 17, Part E was set to examine such assumption. It asks respondents in both countries their likelihood to explore and adopt the functions on their phone that they are not familiar with before. The results were published in the Table 14 (Appendix 17), overall speaking, Chinese consumers do show a more willingness than their British counterpart in exploring and adopting the functions on their phones that they are not familiar with; in particular, young students and white collar professionals: nearly 90 percent of the Chinese students have expressed their willingness compared to 56 percent of the British; in the white collar workers category, 80 percent of Chinese would take as the same action as the students contrast to 66 percent of the British. Even in the retired pensioners group, there are still 19 percent of Chinese would explore and adopt the functions on their phone that they are not familiar with, and this rate is still 6 percent higher than the British pensioners' group.

Based on such results, this research can confirm that Chinese consumers do prefer a phone that has the latest mobile technologies built in and is able to offer them new advanced services and functions than their British counterpart, and therefore consumers in China are more willing to buy a phone which has with such functionality than the consumers in the UK.

4.2 Analysing Qualitative Data

4.2.1 Profile of Respondents

A total of twenty mobile phone users from the two hundred of participants in the survey were interviewed. Of those, ten Chinese and ten British: half of these interviewees were male and the other half were fe-male. Among them, students account 40 percent of the sample population, followed by blue collar professionals (20%), white collar professionals (20%) and retired pensioners (20%) respectively and all of them have had experience in using of the mobile phones for a least a year.

4.2.2 Data Analysis & Findings

Qualitative data have been collected through semi-structured interviews (See Appendix for an interview sample) in order to enhance the interpretability of this research and cross check the

results obtained from the quantitative data analysis. The qualitative data has been analysed through the content analysis. (See Appendix 18)

4.2.2.1 The Social Meanings of the Mobile Phone and its Implications

The first objective of this research project is to investigate the social meanings of a mobile phone for the Chinese consumers and British consumers. As a result, Question 1 and 2, Part A, directly asked participants about how they see their phones. Two alternative answers were provided: respondents can either see the mobile phone as a communication device only or to see the mobile phone as fashion item as well.

Not surprisingly that most of the Chinese respondents, except some elderly and some of the blue collar workers, answered that they see the mobile phone as a fashion item, because “a stylish phone from a good and well-known brand, equipped with all the latest technologies would make them feel more confidence when they go out to socialise with their friends.”

However, the majority of the British in the interviews have held an opposite view. Most of the British interviewees, except some students and white collar professionals, saying that they see the mobile phone more “as a communication device, for making and receiving phone calls and sending and receiving text messages, full stop,” they “can’t see anything to show off to their friends from a phone.”

This finding is correspondent to the one obtained from the quantitative research and is therefore, concluded that Chinese consumers do associate mobile phones with the public meanings, because of its ‘symbolic values’ while the British, on the other hand, views the mobile phones more as a personal item.

The second objective of this research project is to identify how the different social meanings of the mobile phones between China and UK have partially influenced the consumers’ buying behaviour of the phones in these two countries. Question 3 to 6 from the Part B of the questionnaire was therefore designed for such purpose.

Question 3, asked interviewees in both countries about the reason why they have bought their current phone. A choice of five options were provided, they were: Price Brand Name Design Functionality Other (Please specify); and only one was allowed to choose from. Question 4, asks interviewees to explain the reason of why they have chosen such answer.

For this question, Chinese respondents were very much split on the surface: while the majority of the white collar professionals have either chosen the brand name or the functionality; many students, most of the blue collar workers and retired pensioners have chosen the Price as their main reason why they have bought their current phone. This was due to the fact that Chinese mobile operators do not offer free or heavily discounted mobile phones to their customers. Based on such reason, the interviewer asked them what if all the phones available on the market are free of charge, what is the most important factor for them to consider on deciding what phone to buy. The results were: most of the male students said the functionality, while the female went with the design and majority of the blue collar workers and retired pensioners chose the brand name. When to ask the reason why:

- Most male students and white collar professionals said that because they love all the modern communication technologies, therefore, they went with the functionality; they also emphasise that they believe only the big and well known mobile phone manufacturers can offer them a product with such functionality, as a result, they also care about the phone brand.
- Female students, some of the female blue and white collar workers, however, said that they care more of a phone's appearance and the size than functionality, thus they've chosen the design. But this does not mean that they do not care about the brand- a phone which is made by a good and well known manufacturer is also very important for them too, because it can "help them to boost their confidence when they are socialising with their friends."
- Most male blue collar workers and retired pensioners, said that they believe a phone which is made by a good and well known manufacturer can offer them all of these things mentioned above already as well as the quality they desired very much so, hence they went with the brand.

British respondents, by comparisons, much more unified. Most of them have chosen the functionality. When to ask why: most interviewees explained that because of their requirements for a phone is simple –

- For the blue collar workers and retired pensioners, they only want a phone to make and receive phone calls and to send and receive text messages.

- For students, on the top of the things mentioned above already, they also want a phone to take good quality pictures and to make long length good quality videos, thus a good camera with big memory is very important for them too.
- For the white collar professionals, in addition to all the things mentioned above, they also want a phone which can allow them to access to the internet, so they can check emails and browse the web pages on a regular basis. Very few have also said that they want a phone to be able to navigate, so they don't have to buy a GPS as a result.

Different from the Chinese, no one from the British group have said anything about the price or the brand. This can be explained, partly due to the fact that the British mobile operators do offer free or heavily discounted mobile phones to their customers; and partly due to the different meanings that a phone has been assigned to by their users in China and in the UK.

Based on the above findings, we could conclude that Chinese consumers value a lot about the brand, because they believe that a good brand can offer them: the functionality, the style, and the quality that they would otherwise not to get while for the British, majority care about the functionality only.

Question 5 asks respondents in both countries about where they seek the information from about the phone they have purchased before making a decision on whether to buy, and Question 6 asks them the reason why.

Similar to the results obtained from the quantitative research, majority of the Chinese interviewees have answered that family or friends were their main source of the information while some British has chosen, the Internet, others from the professional salesperson.

When to answer why: most Chinese interviewees said that because they trust the advice given by their family or friends, as a result, they would take an appropriate action to comply with their opinion, in this case, would to buy the phone that they have suggested to buy. This implies that the Oriental style of interdependent purchasing patterns is also apply to in buying the mobile phones.

Whereas for the British, majority of the interviewees have responded that because they believe in the self-judgement, therefore they do not need to consult with their family or friends on what phone they should buy; instead, they would either go on to internet and

search for the information they need in helping them to make a decision, or go into the phone shop and seek for the professional advice.

The answers from these two questions have suggested very strongly the importance of the public opinion in marketing the mobile phone products to their final users in China, whereas in the UK, because of the independent purchase pattern, mobile manufacturer should invest more on their websites and frontline staffs.

4.2.2.2 Adopting New Mobile Phone Technologies and their Relations to the Consumer Buying Behaviour of Mobile Phones

The third objective of this research project is to identify the using behaviour of the mobile phones in China and in the UK, because it can also determine on what type of the phone that a consumer is likely to buy.

Question 7 from Part C was set out for this purpose. It provides seven common features of today's mobile phone to the respondents, they were:

- Make/Receive Phone Calls
- Send/Receive Text Messages
- Use Internet Services
- Take Pictures/making videos
- Listen to the Music/Radios
- Navigate
- Play Games

And asks them to rank these features from the most important to the least important according to their using behaviours. The results are showing at the table below:

Using Behaviour of a Mobile Phone in China and in the UK

China	UK
1. Making and Receiving Phone Calls	1. Making and Receiving Phone Calls
2. Sending and Receiving Text	2. Sending and Receiving Text

<p>Messages</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Using the Internet Services 4. Navigate 5. Playing the Games 6. Listening to the Music and or Radios 7. Taking the Pictures and or Making the videos 	<p>Messages</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Taking the Pictures and or Making the Videos 4. Listening to the Music and or Radios 5. Using the Internet Services 6. Playing the Game 7. Navigate
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Both Chinese and British interviewees see that making and receiving phone calls and text messages are the most important function for them. However, the differences between these two consumer groups have emerged after that: most Chinese said that the internet access feature on their phone is the third most important for them, while the majority of the British have replied as taking the pictures or making the videos. When to ask why: most Chinese interviewees responded that because they rely on the Internet a lot in their lives, therefore it would be great for them to enjoy the freedom to access wherever and whenever they want without to carrying a computer with them. However for the British, most people said because of the fact that they like more to use their phone to take pictures or making videos with their friends and family than accessing to internet, hence they would value a phone which can produce good quality of pictures and videos, so they don't have to carry a camera with them when they go out. This difference has led to a different ranking placed in the table above and validated the findings from the quantitative research: Chinese consumers do prefer a phone which has equipped with all the latest technologies and is able to offer them new advanced services and functions than their British counterpart. As a result, we can conclude that consumers in China would more willing to buy such phone than the consumers in the UK.

Chapter Five- Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

This exploratory research study was conducted to increase our understandings of the mobile phone market in general through analysing the consumers' behaviour under the influence of the different cultures. As a result, it has selected two culturally diametric countries: China and UK (Hofstede 1991, 2001) for the purpose of case study and attempted to cast light on much of the unexamined area of consumers' perception and using behaviour of the mobile phones and their relations to the purchasing patterns of such product.

Based on the literature review, the following objectives were set in order to achieve the above aims:

1. To investigate the social meanings of the mobile phone for the consumers in China and in the UK. This is mainly due to the fact that consumers buy objects for the value they provided. (Usunier 2000) In valuing things, consumers attribute public or private meanings to it. (Richins quoted in Usunier 2000) Culture as according to the literature can influence consumers through affecting the meanings they have attributed to the product they bought, (Usunier 2000) however such assumption may over simplified the reality, it is therefore subject to the investigation.
2. Over the years, many scholars such as Richins (1994) and Usunier (2000) have also discovered that different social meanings that consumers attribute to the same product would also result in a different purchasing pattern to emerge. Thus this research study was set to identify how the social meanings of the mobile phone for the Chinese consumers and for the British consumers have partly influenced their choice of the phone.
3. Finally, as the previous academic literature has revealed that Culture can even influence consumers on their understandings of the product. This related to the consumers' buying behaviour of mobile phones, it could have a significant impact on, what type of the phone that a consumer is likely to buy. For such reason, the third objective of this study was to test the consumers' using behaviour of the mobile phones in China and in the UK.

In order to achieve these objectives, this study has adopted a positivistic research philosophy with a deductive approach and backed by the multiple data collection methods. The primary means of this study in collecting data has been, through the survey strategy, by using the questionnaires. As a result, self-administered questionnaires have been developed and employed. A total of more than three hundred mobile phone users from China and UK have filed and returned the questionnaire. Among them, two hundred (a 100 Chinese and a 100 British) were selected and analysed. Furthermore, in order to enhance the interpretability of this study and cross check the results obtained from the quantitative data analysis, a total of twenty mobile phone users from the two hundred participants in the survey have also been interviewed.

As a result of analysing both of the quantitative data and qualitative data, this study has found that:

1. Chinese consumers normally associate mobile phones with the public meanings; while the British, on the other hand, see it more as a private item. This finding has implied that Chinese consumers would buy a mobile phone partly for its symbolic value, this indicated that the social reference group of the consumers in China will have an important impact on their choice of the phone whereas for the British, by comparison, would simply buy a mobile phone for the personal use on the basis of the individual judgement.
2. Such implications stated above have been verified by the results obtained for the Objective Two of this study, which have indeed identified that majority of the Chinese consumers would rely largely on the public opinion from their social reference network to make a decision on what phone to buy; however in the UK, we see more of the independent purchasing pattern based on the personal judgement and is backed by the information obtained from the online sources, at the phone shops and from the professional advisors.
3. There are also empirical evidence to support that Chinese consumers do prefer a phone which has the latest mobile technologies built in and is able to offer them new advanced services and functions than their British counterpart. This implies that Chinese consumers would more willing to buy a phone which has equipped with such functionality than the British consumers.

5.2 Recommendations

These findings have several important and remarkable implications for the mobile phone manufacturers and operators in developing and marketing of their products in China and in the UK, they are:

1. Chinese consumers are requiring much more sophisticated mobile phone devices than the British. As a result, when developing a new product for the Chinese market, mobile manufacturers should ensure that it has all the latest technologies built in and is able to offer all the new and advanced services and functions to their customers in China at the lowest possible costs.
2. When to market such product, mobile manufacturers and operators should focus on the emotions of their target audience, relate its product to their target audience's lifestyles and emphasize on the innovation, passion and aspirations side of the product.
3. For the British, by contrast, it should ensure the simplicity of their product in designing.
4. When to come to marketing, mobile manufacturers and operators should emphasize on what end users can do with their product rather than simply highlighting all the properties. Thus, more attention should be paid to the educative advertising.

5.3 Academic Implications

From an academic viewpoint, this research has contributed greatly to an area which has not been examined by the academics thoroughly before: how the culture differences between Eastern Chinese and Western British have influenced their consumers' buying behaviour of the mobile phones.

It has found that the culture differences do indeed have an impact on consumers in their choice of the phone through influencing their perceptions and understandings of such product.

However, such contributions could only be made base on the existing literature of culture and consumers' behaviour theories forward by various authors, in particularly, Hall's (1960, 1990) concept of high and low context culture, Hofstede's (1991, 2001) theories of

individualism, collectivism and uncertainty avoidance and Richins (1994) and Usunier (2000) theory of consumers' buying patterns in East and West.

5.4 Future Research

Despite the fact that this piece of research has provided us some valuable insights into how cultural differences have influenced the consumers' behaviour of buying the mobile phones in different countries. However, due to the time and cost restrictions, this study is centred on using a relatively small sample size and did not correspond to the inferior cultural groups within the country; any further study could therefore apply the contextual framework of this research and apply to a larger sample size with the correspondence to the ethnic minorities in each country as well. As a result, it would further enhance the findings which have already obtained from this study.

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Appendix 1 Questionnaire

This survey is conducted by a postgraduate student in the International Marketing Management programme at the Bournemouth University UK. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the cultural differences between China and UK on consumers' buying behaviour of mobile phones.

This questionnaire is therefore designed for such purpose. I would be Very grateful as if you could spend 10 minutes of your spare time to fill in the questions in this form and return it to the person who handed it to you. All the information you provided will be treated highly confidential. Thus you will not be identified for any reasons.

Thank you very much for your help!

Please tick the box for ONE the most appropriate answer from each question.

Section A About You

Q.1 Your Nationality: Chinese British or (please specify) _____

Q.2 Your Gender: Male Female or (please specify) _____

Q.3 Your age: 16-23 24-65 66 above

Q.4 Your marital status: Single Married / Engaged (including those of you who are currently living with your partners)

Q.5 Any children: None 1 2 3 or more than 3

Q.6 Your highest level of education: School College University

Q.7 Your occupation: Student Working (full time only) Unemployed Retired

Q.8 Your monthly income level after tax: (in the UK it would refer as Stirling, whereas in China, it would be called as Yuan. 1 UK Stirling = 12-15 Yuan)

< 500 500-1000 1001-1999 2000-5000 above 5000

Section B General Information about Your Current Mobile Phone

Q.9 What is your current phone brand? (if you have more than one phone, please state the one you like the most)

Nokia Sony-Ericsson Samsung LG Blackberry Motorola Lenonvo iPhone
Other (Please specify) _____

Q. 10 How long have you had your current phone?

< 1 year 1-2 years 2 years above

Section C You and Your Phone

Q. 11 I see my phone only as a personal communication device for making or receiving phone calls and to send or receive text messages.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Disagree nor Agree Agree Strongly Agree

Q.12 I see phone as a fashion item

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Disagree nor Agree Agree Strongly Agree

Q. 13 Do you care about how other people see what phone you are using when you go out?

I care, my phone is like my clothes, a good looking phone makes me feel good too and helps me to build up my confidence when I go out No idea I don't care, it's a personal thing anyway

Section D Choice of Your Mobile Phone

Q. 14 Before you bought your phone, where did you search for the information about that particular phone? (Please only tick the one that is the most relevant to you)

Family Friends Internet Advertisement Information obtained from the mobile phone provider service counter A mobile phone salesperson Other source (Please specify) _____

Q. 15 Why did you decide to buy your current phone? (Please rank the factors at the below from the most important one to the least important one as following 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Price Brand Image Design Functionality

Section E Usage of Your Mobile Phone

Q. 16 Please rate the below questions

I use my phone to

Daily; Every Two or Three Days; Weekly; Monthly; Occasionally; Never

Make/Receive Phone Calls

Send/Receive Text Messages

Use Internet Services

Take Pictures/making videos

Listen to the Music/Radios

Navigate

Play Games

Q.17 After you bought a new phone, how likely are you to explore and adopt the functions in your phone that you are not familiar with?

Very unlikely Unlikely Neither unlikely nor likely Likely Very Likely

Appendix 2 Interview Guideline

Cover letter

Dear Sir or Madam

I am a postgraduate student in International Marketing Management programme at Bournemouth University, currently conducting a survey as part of my postgraduate dissertation. The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the impact of the cultural differences between China and UK on consumers' buying behaviour of mobile phones.

Your participation to this survey is therefore essential for this research.

The questionnaire is easy to fill and will take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed to all the respondents. The results of this survey will be sent to people who are participated in this research upon request.

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation.

Section A You and Your Phone

Q. 1 How do you see your phone? (Please choose one, which is the most important one for you)

A Communication Device ONLY A Fashion Item

Q.2 Can you please explain the reason why you have chosen that particular answer in the above question?

Section B Choice of Your Mobile Phone

Q.3 Why did you decide to buy your current phone? (Please choose a one which is the most important one for you)

Price Brand Name Design Functionality Other (Please specify)

Q.4 Can you please explain the reason why you have chosen that particular answer in the above question?

Q.5 Before you bought your phone, where did you search for the information about that phone?

Family Close friend Close friends who are familiar with that particular phone Close friend who are familiar with the phone related information Internet Advertisement Information obtained from the mobile phone provider service counter A mobile phone salesperson Other source (Please specify) _____

Q.6 Can you please explain the reason why you have chosen that particular answer in the above question?

Section C Usage of Your Mobile Phone

Q. 7 Can you please rank the functions on your phone below (from the most important one to the least important for you using 1,2,3,4,5,6,7) and explain the reason why.

Make/Receive Phone Calls

Send/Receive Text Messages

Use Internet Services

Take Pictures/making videos

Listen to the Music/Radios

Navigate

Play Games

Appendix 3 Suggestions on how to improve the questionnaire from the Plot Test

1. Some of the questions were unclear
2. Some questions were sensitive to answer for the respondents such as age, educational background and income, as a result, only a rough answer is required for the final version of the questionnaire
3. There were too many questions and it took too long to answer
4. Suggestions for the layout of the questionnaire
5. Some of the instructions in the questionnaire were unclear

Appendix 4 Table 1

<i>Beijing China</i>				<i>Bournemouth UK</i>	
	Age Group	Socio-Economic Status	Population	Socio-Economic Status	Population
Male	16-18	High School / College Students	10	High School / College Students	10
	19-23	University Students	10	University Students	10
	24-65	Blue Collar Working Professionals *	10	Blue Collar Working Professionals *	10
	24-65	White Collar Working Professionals **	10	White Collar Working Professionals **	10
	66 above	Retired	10	Retired	10
	Fe-male	16-18	High School/College Students	10	High School/College Students
19-23		University Students	10	University Students	10
24-65		Blue Collar Working Professionals *	10	Blue Collar Working Professionals *	10
24-65		White Collar Working Professionals **	10	White Collar Working Professionals **	10
66 above		Retired	10	Retired	10
Total		China	100	UK	100

* Blue Collar Workers: refers to those of workers who perform manual labour such as manufacturing, building, mechanical work, maintenance, repair and technical installations.

** White Collar Workers: are those of workers who perform non-manual labour such as people who are working in the office or in the classroom

Appendix 5 Table 2 Marital Status

Population	Marital Status	Nationality	
		Chinese	British
Students (a 40 Chinese and a 40 British)	Single	32 (80%)	38 (95%)
	Engaged / Married	8 (20%)	2 (5%)
	Total	40 (100%)	40 (100%)
Working Professionals (a 40 Chinese and a 40 British)	Single	10 (25%)	15 (37.5%)
	Engaged / Married	30 (75%)	25 (62.5%)
	Total	40 (100%)	40 (100%)
Pensioners (a 20 Chinese and a 20 British)	Single	1 (5%)	2 (10%)
	Engaged / Married	19 (95%)	18 (90%)
	Total	20 (100%)	20 (100%)

Appendix 6 Table 3 Education Level

Population	Highest Level of Education Qualification Obtained	Nationality	
		Chinese	British
Blue Collar Working Professionals (a 20 Chinese and a 20 British)	School Leaving	12 (60%)	10 (50%)
	College Diploma	5 (25%)	8 (40%)
	University Degree	3 (15%)	2 (10%)
	Total	20 (100%)	20 (100%)
White Collar Working Professionals (a 20 Chinese and a 20 British)	School Leaving	2 (10%)	5 (25%)
	College Diploma	3 (15%)	4 (20%)
	University Degree	15 (75%)	11 (55%)
	Total	20 (100%)	20 (100%)
Pensioners (a 20 Chinese and a 20 British)	School Leaving	13 (65%)	10 (50%)
	College Diploma	5 (25%)	7 (35%)
	University Degree	2 (10%)	3 (15%)
	Total	20 (100%)	20 (100%)

Appendix 7 Table 4 the Monthly Income Level after Tax *

Population	Nationality	
	Chinese	British
Students (a 40 Chinese and a 40 British)	£50-£100	£400-£700
Blue Collar Working Professionals (a 20 Chinese and a 20 British)	£100-£500	£500-£1,000
White Collar Working Professionals (a 20 Chinese and a 20 British)	£500-£1,000	£1,001-£1,999
Pensioners (a 20 Chinese and a 20 British)	< £500	£500- £1,000

* All the Evaluation in this table was either made in or translated into UK Stirling (at the exchange rate of 1UK Pound= 12 Chinese Yuan)

Appendix 8 Table 5 The Mobile Phone Brands Ranking

Mobile Phone Brand	China	Mobile Phone Brand	UK
1. Sony Ericson	43%	1. Sony Ericson	37%
2. Nokia	25%	2. Samsung	25%
3. Jinpeng	12%	3. Nokia	23%
4. Samsung	9%	4. LG	10%
5. LG	7%	5. Motorola	3%
6. Motorola	4%	6. iPhone	2%
Total	100%	Total	100%

Appendix 9 Survey Results for the Question 11

Q.11: I see my phone only as a personal communication device for making or receiving phone calls and to send or receive text messages				Nationality		Total
				China	UK	
A. Strongly Disagree	Male	16-18	4 (4%)	2 (2%)	6 (3%)	
		19-23	5 (5%)	2 (2%)	7 (3.5%)	
		24-65 (Blue)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	4 (2%)	
		24-65 (White)	5 (5%)	3 (3%)	8 (4%)	
		66 above	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	5 (2.5%)	
	Female	16-18	4 (4%)	2 (2%)	6 (3%)	
		19-23	5 (2.5%)	4 (4%)	9 (4.5%)	
		24-65 (Blue)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (1.5%)	
		24-65 (White)	6 (6%)	3 (3%)	9 (4.5%)	
		66 above	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (1.5%)	
		Total	39 (39%)	21 (21%)	60 (30%)	
	B. Disagree	Male	16-18	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (1.5%)
			19-23	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	5 (2.5%)
			24-65 (Blue)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (1.5%)
			24-65 (White)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	5 (2.5%)
			66 above	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	4 (2%)
Female		16-18	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (1.5%)	
		19-23	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (1.5%)	
		24-65	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	5 (2.5%)	

			(Blue)				
			24-65 (White)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	
			66 above	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	5 (2.5%)	
			Total	24 (24%)	14 (14%)	38 (19%)	
	C. Neither Disagree	Male	16-18	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)	
			19-23	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	
			24-65 (Blue)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)	
			24-65 (White)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	2 (1%)	
			66 above	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)	
		Female	16-18	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)	
			19-23	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (0.5%)	
			24-65 (Blue)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)	
			24-65 (White)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)	
			66 above	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)	
			Total	11 (11%)	21 (21%)	32 (16%)	
		D. Agree	Male	16-18	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)
				19-23	1 (1%)	4 (4%)	5 (2.5%)
	24-65 (Blue)			2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)	
	24-65 (White)			1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)	
	66 above			2 (2%)	2 (2%)	4 (2%)	
	Female		16-18	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)	
			19-23	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)	

			24-65 (Blue)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)
			24-65 (White)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
			66 above	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	4 (2%)
			Total	16 (16%)	26 (26%)	42 (21%)
	E. Strongly Agree	Male	16-18	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
			19-23	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (0.5%)
			24-65 (Blue)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
			24-65 (White)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
			66 above	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
			Total	4 (4%)	8 (8%)	10 (5%)
		Female	16-18	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (0.5%)
			19-23	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	4 (2%)
			24-65 (Blue)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	4 (2%)
			24-65 (White)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
			66 above	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	4 (2%)
			Total	10 (10%)	18 (18%)	28 (14%)
Total				100 (100%)	100 (100%)	200 (100%)

* Blue and White here refers to the Blue and White Collar Professionals

Appendix 10 Survey Results for the Question 12

Q.12: I see my phone as a fashion item				Nationality		Total
				China	UK	
A. Strongly Disagree	Male	16-18	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	4 (2%)	
		19-23	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	2 (1%)	
		24-65 (Blue)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)	
		24-65 (White)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (0.5%)	
		66 above	3 (3%)	4 (4%)	7 (3.5%)	
		Female	16-18	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
			19-23	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)
			24-65 (Blue)	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	4 (2%)
			24-65 (White)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
			66 above	4 (4%)	5 (5%)	9 (4.5%)
	Total		15 (15%)	28 (28%)	43 (21.5%)	
	B. Disagree	Male	16-18	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
			19-23	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)
			24-65 (Blue)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)
			24-65 (White)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
66 above			2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)	
Female		16-18	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	4 (2%)	
		19-23	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)	

			24-65 (Blue)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)
			24-65 (White)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
			66 above	3 (3%)	4 (4%)	7 (3.5%)
			Total	16 (16%)	27 (27%)	43 (21.5%)
	C. Neither Disagree	Male	16-18	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	5 (2.5%)
			19-23	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
			24-65 (Blue)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
			24-65 (White)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (0.5%)
			66 above	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
		Female	16-18	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	2 (1%)
			19-23	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	4 (2%)
			24-65 (Blue)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	4 (2%)
			24-65 (White)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (0.5%)
			66 above	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
			Total	9 (9%)	18 (18%)	27 (13.5%)
	D. Agree	Male	16-18	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	5 (2.5%)
			19-23	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (1.5%)
			24-65 (Blue)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	4 (2%)
			24-65 (White)	4 (4%)	3 (3%)	7 (3.5%)
			66 above	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (1.5%)

		Female	16-18	4 (4%)	2 (2%)	6 (3%)	
			19-23	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	4 (2%)	
			24-65 (Blue)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	5 (2.5%)	
			24-65 (White)	5 (5%)	3 (3%)	8 (4%)	
			66 above	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	
			Total	30 (30%)	17 (17%)	47 (23.5%)	
			E. Strongly Agree	Male	16-18	3 (3%)	0 (0%)
	19-23	5 (5%)	2 (2%)		7 (3.5%)		
	24-65 (Blue)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)		3 (1.5%)		
	24-65 (White)	5 (5%)	3 (3%)		8 (4%)		
	66 above	2 (2%)	0 (0%)		2 (1%)		
	Female	16-18	4 (4%)		1 (1%)	5 (2.5%)	
		19-23	3 (3%)		1 (1%)	4 (2%)	
		24-65 (Blue)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)		
		24-65 (White)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	5 (2.5%)		
		66 above	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)		
		Total	30 (30%)	10 (10%)	40 (20%)		
		Total				100 (100%)	100 (100%)

* Blue and White here refers to the Blue and White Collar Professionals

Appendix 11 Survey Results for the Question 13

Q.13: Do you care about how other people see what phone you are using when you go out?				Nationality		Total
				China	UK	
A. I care, my phone is like my cloth, a good looking phone makes me feel good too and helps me to build up my confidence when I go out	Male	16-18	8 (8%)	3 (3%)	11 (5.5%)	
		19-23	7 (7%)	2 (2%)	9 (4.5%)	
		24-65 (Blue)	6 (6%)	1 (1%)	7 (3.5%)	
		24-65 (White)	9 (9%)	3 (3%)	12 (6%)	
		66 above	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	5 (2.5%)	
	Female	16-18	8 (8%)	4 (4%)	12 (6%)	
		19-23	7 (7%)	3 (3%)	10 (5%)	
		24-65 (Blue)	6 (6%)	3 (3%)	9 (4.5%)	
		24-65 (White)	9 (9%)	4 (4%)	13 (6.5%)	
		66 above	4 (4%)	1 (1%)	5 (2.5%)	
		Total	67 (67%)	26 (26%)	93 (46.5%)	
	B. No Idea	Male	16-18	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1.5%)
19-23			0 (0%)	3 (3%)	3 (1.5%)	
24-65 (Blue)			2 (2%)	4 (4%)	6 (3%)	
24-65 (White)			0 (0%)	3 (3%)	3 (1.5%)	
66 above			4 (4%)	3 (3%)	7 (3.5%)	
Female		16-18	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	2 (1%)	

			19-23	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	2 (1%)
			24-65 (Blue)	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	4 (2%)
			24-65 (White)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (0.5%)
			66 above	2 (2%)	6 (6%)	8 (4%)
			Total	10 (10%)	29 (29%)	39 (19.5%)
C. I don't care, it's a personal thing anyway	Male		16-18	1 (1%)	5 (5%)	6 (3%)
			19-23	3 (3%)	5 (5%)	8 (4%)
			24-65 (Blue)	2 (2%)	5 (5%)	7 (3.5%)
			24-65 (White)	1 (1%)	4 (4%)	5 (2.5%)
			66 above	3 (3%)	5 (5%)	8 (4%)
			Total	23 (23%)	45 (45%)	68 (34%)
	Female		16-18	2 (2%)	4 (4%)	6 (3%)
			19-23	3 (3%)	5 (5%)	8 (4%)
			24-65 (Blue)	3 (3%)	4 (4%)	7 (3.5%)
			24-65 (White)	1 (1%)	5 (5%)	6 (3%)
			66 above	4 (4%)	3 (3%)	7 (3.5%)
			Total	23 (23%)	45 (45%)	68 (34%)
Total Responses				100 (100%)	100 (100%)	200 (100%)

* Blue and White here refers to the Blue and White Collar Professionals

Appendix 12 Chi-Square Test Results for the Question 11

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.250E3	116	.038
Likelihood Ratio	97.8	116	.094
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.984	3	.015
N of Valid Cases	200		

Degree of freedom 3

Appendix 13 Chi-Square Test Results for the Question 12

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.200E2	115	.035
Likelihood Ratio	96.5	112	.084
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.884	2	.025
N of Valid Cases	200		

Degree of freedom 2

Appendix 14 Survey Results for Question 14

- the Most Popular Source of Information (by Professions)

Q. 14 Before you bought your phone, where did you search for the information about that particular phone? (Please only tick the one that is the most relevant to you)

Family Friends Internet Advertisement Information obtained from the mobile phone provider service counter A mobile phone salesperson Other source (Please specify) _____

	China	UK
Students	Friends (65%)	Internet (58%)
Blue Collar Professions	A mobile phone salesperson (32%)	Information obtained from the mobile phone provider service counter (36%)
White Collar Professions	Friends (53%)	Internet (55%)
Retired	Family (58%)	A mobile phone salesperson (45%)

Appendix 15 Survey Results for Question 15 (by Professions)

Q. 15 Why did you decide to buy your current phone? (Please rank the factors at the below from the most important one to the least important one as following 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Options	China				UK		
Price	Professional Groups	Mean	Standard Deviation	P-Value	Mean	Standard Deviation	P-Value
	Students	1.80	1.457	0.013 *	2.10	1.347	0.012 *
	Blue Collar Workers	1.60	1.576		2.50	1.576	
	White Collar Workers	3.10	1.357		1.50	1.452	
	Retired	1.90	1.572		1.80	1.457	
	Students	1.30	1.368	0.033 *	2.50	1.421	0.042 *
	Blue Collar Workers	3.50	1.457		3.70	1.357	
	White Collar Workers	1.40	1.451		2.10	1.457	
	Retired	3.10	1.574		2.60	1.281	
	Students	2.20	1.547	0.022 *	1.90	1.356	0.023 *
	Blue Collar Workers	3.30	1.412		2.40	1.312	
	White Collar Workers	2.80	1.457		1.40	1.271	
	Retired	3.50	1.573		1.60	1.452	
	Students	1.90	1.687	0.014	1.30	1.523	0.013

Functionality	Blue Collar Workers	3.80	1.571	*	2.20	1.459	*
	White Collar Workers	1.70	1.311		1.20	1.359	
	Retired	3.60	1.457		1.40	1.478	

*Significant at the 0.05 level

Appendix 16 Survey Results for the Question 16

Q. 16 I use my phone to

	Daily		Every Two or Three Days		Weekly		Monthly		Occasionally		Never		Total	
	China	UK	China	UK	China	UK	China	UK	China	UK	China	UK	China	UK
Make/Receive Phone Calls	63%	88%	20%	12%	15%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%
Send/Receive Text Messages	86%	85%	10%	13%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%	100%	100%
Use Internet Services	36%	24%	21%	13%	18%	9%	8%	5%	7%	27%	10%	22%	100%	100%
Take Pictures/making videos	18%	13%	15%	23%	14%	40%	23%	10%	20%	12%	10%	2%	100%	100%
Listen to the Music/Radios	48%	35%	21%	16%	17%	13%	4%	19%	7%	11%	3%	6%	100%	100%
Navigate	6%	3%	11%	6%	12%	7%	16%	12%	14%	13%	41%	59%	100%	100%
Play Games	43%	31%	17%	8%	13%	6%	5%	3%	3%	23%	19%	29%	100%	100%

Appendix 17 Survey Results for the Question 17

Q. 17 After you bought a new phone, how likely are you to explore and adopt the functions in your phone that you are not familiar with?

Very unlikely

Unlikely

Neither unlikely nor likely

Likely

Very Likely

	China	UK
Students	Very Likely (31%)	Very Likely (18%)
	Likely (58%)	Likely (38%)
	Total- 89%	Total- 56%
Blue Collar Workers	Very Likely (24%)	Very Likely (19%)
	Likely (27%)	Likely (23%)
	Total- 51%	Total- 42%
White Collar Workers	Very Likely (38%)	Very Likely (29%)
	Likely (42%)	Likely (37%)
	Total- 80%	Total- 66%
Retired	Very Likely (7%)	Very Likely (5%)
	Likely (12%)	Likely (8%)
	Total- 19%	Total- 13%

Appendix 18 Tabulation and Presentation of the Content- Analysed Data

Sample: Twenty mobile phone users who have at least of a year experience in using the mobile phones
Indicate if stratified and how: Ten Chinese and Ten British mobile phone users were interviewed
Prepare the data: a transcript of twenty conversations with relevant part of the interview was highlighted and coded with a number as 1 to 10
Interview Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To discover social Meanings of a mobile phone for the consumers in China as well as in the UK• To identify how these meanings have partly influenced on the consumers' buying behaviour of the mobile phones in these two countries• To test the hypothesis: Chinese consumers prefer a phone that has the latest mobile technologies built in and is able to offer them new advanced services and functions than their British counterpart and find out how it relates to the consumers' buying behaviour of the mobile phones in China and in the UK.