

Face Consciousness and Decision-making Styles: An Empirical Study of Young-adult Chinese Consumers

Hai Bo Xue
East China Normal University

Xin Xin Wang
Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

The correlations between consumers' face consciousness and their consumption decision-making styles are explored for the first time. The study investigates 386 young-adult Chinese consumers randomly by using self-developed Face Consciousness Inventory and Consumer Styles Inventory. Based on exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), the study measures consumers' five characteristics of face consciousness and eight characteristics of consumer decision-making styles. Significant correlations between 13 of the 40 pairs of face consciousness and consumer decision-making characteristics are found after Pearson correlation analysis (PCA) and canonical correlation analysis (CCA) have been conducted. The suggestion of the conclusion of this study for marketing practice is discussed at the end of the paper.

INTRODUCTION

Many researches (Cheryl et al., 2005; Fan and Jing, 1998; Zotos et al., 1996) have shown that consumer decision-making styles vary across nations, which might be caused by the differences in their economics, psychologies, societies and cultures. Particularly culture as one of the most important factors, is gaining increasing attention. In lots of researches on the differences of cultures, however, face consciousness is rarely noticed ever before, as an important moderating factor in consumer behaviors.

Young-adult Chinese consumers are becoming the great force of all kinds of parts in the life such as society, work and consumption and coming under the spotlights of all circles as they grow up. Since they are the developing consumption communities, their consumption consciousness and behaviors will orient the fashion of our times and influence profoundly on the rules which were played in the competition. They raise their faces by inflated personality or self-exposing, save their faces by pursuing fashion and popularity, show their passion on consumption by making decisions simply out of intuition or emotion, whilst try all their ways to collect information for making the best decision carefully in case of losing face, so they contend

for face in every part of lives. Therefore, face consciousness influences a good many things in their lives. The purpose of this study is to explore how young-adult Chinese consumers' face consciousness influences on their consumption decision-making styles according to the methodology in consumer behaviors and the results of Chinese behaviors based on multi-perspectives of economics, sociology and psychology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Decision-Making Styles

A consumer decision-making style is defined as a mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making choices. It has cognitive and affective characteristics such as quality consciousness and fashion consciousness. Analogous to the concept of personality in psychology, it is essentially a basic consumer personality which influences consumption behaviors in practice (Sproles and Kendall, 1986). Based on an exploratory study, Sproles and Kendall designed a Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) and administered the inventory to all 501 students in 29 home economics classes in five high schools in the Tucson area (Sproles and Kendall, 1986). They got a eight-factor model of consumer decision-making by using factor analysis including (1) perfectionistic, high-quality conscious consumer; (2) brand conscious, "price equals quality" consumer; (3) novelty-fashion conscious consumer; (4) recreational, hedonistic consumer; (5) price conscious, "value for money" consumer; (6) impulsive, careless consumer; (7) confused-by-over-choice consumer and (8) habitual, brand-loyal consumer. Their study provided the foundation for standardized assessing consumer decision-making style taking on great practical values. However, there were some limitations in fact, such as the generality of consumer styles, the limited informant only of high school students and the validity of the CSI which is a complex process involving many research approaches and studies over time. Therefore, they called on researches to apply the CSI across populations and in different contexts including cross-nation or cross-culture especially on the adults to examine the generality of CSI.

There have been lots of studies from multi-perspective, cross cultures and beyond areas on consumer decision-making to generalize CSI. Hafstrom et al. (1992) compared the decision-making styles of young consumers between U.S. and Korea and found that they shared seven consumer characteristics except the style of "novelty-fashion conscious consumer" which was only witted in the U.S. consumers' data but not in their Korean counterparts. To test the generality of the CSI, Durvasula et al. (1993) studied both the U.S. and the New Zealand's consumers finding that there were only 3 identical characteristics between the two countries i.e. the perfectionistic consumer, the novelty-fashion conscious consumer and the recreational shopping conscious consumer, but the rest 5 characteristics were different, which they attributed to the differences in the sample and/or the retail environments. Then three years later they did another large-scale and cross multi-national research to assess the generality of CSI (Zotos et al., 1996). Furthermore, Mitchell and Bates (1998) explored out 10 decision-making styles by investigating the young university students in the Britain. At the same time, Fan and Xiao (1998) made comparisons among American, Korean and Chinese young consumers. The conclusions that they had got are that there were 5 common characteristics shared by the young consumers of the three countries including brand consciousness, time consciousness, quality consciousness, and price consciousness and information utilization while the other three factors such as novelty-fashion consciousness, impulsiveness and habitual-brand-loyal were only discovered between young consumers in Korean and American but not in the Chinese counterparts. This may be

caused by the different market environments and/or even the distinct economic development stages as well as the diverse interpretation of the items in the CSI as suggested by the authors. Through administering the CSI to 387 adult consumers in China, Hiu et al. (2001) found five decision-making styles including perfectionistic, novelty-fashion conscious, recreational, price conscious and confused-by-over-choice under traditional Chinese culture. Moreover, they segmented the Chinese adult consumers into three groups, i.e. trendy and perfectionistic consumer, traditional and pragmatic consumer and confused-by-over-choice consumer. To enhance understanding of different decision-making styles between cultures, Cheryl et al. (2005) examined data from the specific cultures of Singapore and Australia. They found there were salience diversity in innovative shopping, brand conscious and confused-by-over-choice among the consumers in the two countries, and attributed all those differences to their different cultures.

All those studies have made the generality of the CSI possible and the decision-making styles well understood. However, the researches foregoing have little to explore the underneath factors causing the obvious differences in consumer decision-making styles across various nations. Even if they did, they always attributed the cross-national variance in consumer decision-making styles to the differences in economics, politics, society and culture (Cheng, 1989; Maheswaran and Shavitt, 2000) while seldom research on consumer decision-making styles comes from the face consciousness perspective (Bao et al., 2003).

Face Consciousness

Attaching importance to favor and face is a salient character of Chinese society, which has been confirmed by lots of studies and/or comparison among cultures (Zhai, 2004). There are a couple of meanings of Face i.e. decent or glory and favor in the Etymological Dictionary of Chinese Common Characters. When the face of people is endowed with ideology of human beings, face cultures come into being. In consumption, face consciousness has usually been explained as decent or glory.

From the perspective of social psychology, face is the mental status deserved in others' mind which s/he hopes based on their self-assessment in the social interaction with other people (Zhai, 1991). "In the first instance it must be the manifestation of one's possession or self-esteem in the mind, then be represented through the interaction with others. People always love face and are sensitive about their reputations no matter how high or low their social class and prestige are even for those whose social class is wondrously low. This might be the penetration of the weightiness of ethics in traditional Chinese culture, the exposure of the feelings of maintaining ancestors and the exact embodiment of pursuing ideal personality. (Le, 2002)" We experience a good many things involved with face including blush, feeling awkwardness, embarrassed, shame or glory and pride etc. On the one hand, we try our best to keep decent and have face; on the other hand, we are to the best of our abilities to save face but not lose face. Therefore face consciousness can be defined as a mental orientation characterizing people's endeavor to build up, maintain or save from losing face while they are in social activity and personal relationships. Face consciousness influences a lot of consumers' behavior in their lives. For example, when people around us bought something wonderful, others might buy the same commodity out of saving face or in case of losing face or taking into account buying things better to build up face.

With the knowledge of face deepening, study on face has come across fragmentary essays and random thoughts into the specialization research with systemic modern social psychology experiment and empirical methods such as the study on face conducted by Ruiling Zhu, Zhizhao Chen, Bing Zuo and Tiejun Wu respectively. Ruiling Zhu (1994) found 9 sets of affairs about

face including transgressing behavior, dishonorable morality, ethic issues, family ethic, ability, status and dignity, responsibility, misplayed behavior and exposure privacy. And she concluded 6 types of emotional responses about losing face as well as the methods of avoiding losing and/or redeeming face. Then she did the experimental research on those, and got that the experiences of success or lose influence on the needs of faces, however, the influences of the needs of faces on the achievements behavior are not significant. Zhizhao Chen (1988) inspected the relationships between face behavior and needs of face as well as personalities such as Self-esteem, Insularity, Machiavellianism and Authoritarianism by investigated 412 university students. The results were that face behavior was associated positively with needs of face, Insularity and Machiavellianism but negatively with inferiority complex. Face behavior of male students was more than that of female students but vice versa in needs of face. Bing Zuo (1997) surveyed 192 citizens in Wuhan city finding 4 kinds of behaviors which makes people feel like losing face including moral violation, ability limitation, badness habit and exposure privacy. Tiejun Wu (2003) developed a "Face Idea Questionnaire (FIQ)" and administered it to the college students in Suzhou city finding 5 positive face ideas including respect tradition and custom, ability and achievement, good appearance, social acclaim and benign interpersonal relationship as well as 5 negative face ideas such as resisting tradition and custom, disability and failure, negative and laziness, tough interpersonal relationships and bad appearance.

To sum up, researchers have made great strides in the areas of mainland conception of face from theoretic discussion to empirical study. The existing results of empirical study are enlightening. However, as for the above-mentioned empirical studies, some emphasized particularly on the explanations of the definition of face, while others attached their special importance to the influences of personality or situation factors on the face behavior. There are rare studies on the influences of face consciousness on the consumption behaviors. Aiming at this research gap, this study will focus on the influences of face consciousness on the consumer decision-making styles.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Research Design

The research designs are as follows: firstly, we chose the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) as our chief source and used the designs of Fan and Xiao (1998), Hiu et al. (2001) and Shaohong Wu (2001) as reference to develop our first part of questionnaire to investigate young-adult Chinese consumers' decision-making styles and based on the study on face idea conducted by Tiejun Wu (2003) to design the second part of questionnaire to inspect their face consciousness. The questionnaire adopted a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "1" for "strongly disagree" to "5" for "strongly agree". Secondly, we made a pre-test to 50 university students and asked them to evaluate on the questionnaire then based on their evaluation we eliminated some items and got our 20-item formal questionnaire in the end. Thirdly, we administered it to students in the universities of Shanghai by heading them off in the study hall, library and dormitory and presenting gifts for compliment. After the data collected we deleted the invalid questionnaires. Finally we did exploratory factor analysis (EFA) by SPSS18.0 and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) by LISREL8.70 to examine the characteristic of consumers' decision-making styles and face consciousness. In succession we conducted thoroughly analysis on the extracted factors by using software SPSS18.0 including one variable correlation analysis, multivariate linear regression and canonical correlation analysis.

Sample and Data Collection

The sample data used in this study were collected from university students with the age from 18 to 29 including undergraduate, master and PHD candidate from Fudan University, Tongji University, Shanghai University of Economics and Finance, East China Normal University and East China University of Science and Technology.

Finally 386 usable questionnaires were returned. Among the students who returned usable questionnaires, 48.2 percent were males, students from urban home towns occupied 67.1 percent, singleton accounted for 53.6 percent. Students in the sample majored in economics (26.3%), management (21.8%), literature (12.7%), law (10.5) and science and technology (28.7%) from Fudan University (22.0%), Tongji University (6.7%), Shanghai University of Economics and Finance (42.5%), Shanghai International Studies University, East China Normal University (8.8%) and East China University of Science and Technology (20%). According to grades there were freshman (6.0%), sophomore (2.6%), junior (7.8%), and senior (25.9%), master (54.9%) and PHD candidate (2.8%). On the maintenance sources, 51 percent students count on family support totally, 9.8 percent students were from part-time jobs, and 34.7 percent were partly from family support and part-time jobs while still 4.4 percent students had else sources such as earning or save before. We classified the cost of living into 4 groups: 201~600 yuan (47.7%), 601~1000 yuan (38.1%), 1001~1500 yuan (10.9%), above 1500 yuan (3.4%).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors of Consumer Decision-Making Styles and Face Consciousness

Table 1 shows consumers' decision-making style characteristics and face consciousness characteristics confirmed by factor analyses. There are eight characteristics in their decision-making styles including: ① Novelty-Fashion Conscious Consumer (NFCC), a characteristic identified by 3 items, indicating a young-adult Chinese consumer who pursues new and innovative products and is excited by seeking out new things; ② Confused-by-Over-Choice Consumer (COCC), inspected by 3 items, showing consumers expose to too many brands and stores from which to choose and feel so bewildered that it is difficult to make decisions; ③ Perfectionism, High-Quality Conscious Consumer (PHQCC), consisting of 3 items, a characteristic describing the degree to which consumers search carefully and systematically for the best quality in products which should be perfect in their minds; ④ Brand Conscious Consumer (BCC), shown by 3 items, a characteristic measuring consumers are keen on buying more expensive, well-known national brands and international brands; ⑤ Recreational, Hedonistic Consumer (RHC), shown by 2 items, a characteristic expressing consumers who go shopping just for fun not necessarily buying some things; ⑥ Habitual, Brand-Loyal Consumer (HBLC), identified by 2 items, a characteristic showing consumers who repetitively choose the same favorite brands or stores out of shopping habit; ⑦ Impulsive, Careless Consumer (ICC), identified by 2 items, a characteristic showing some consumers who buy products immediately just excited by the situations at that moment and do not care about what the prices are. But when they have gotten those things they might be some compunctious in their minds; ⑧ Price Conscious Consumer (PCC), inspected by 2 items, indicating a consumer who always looks for commodities with low prices as possible as he can.

TABLE 1
FACTOR ANALYSES RESULTS OF CONSUMER STYLES AND FACE CONSCIOUSNESS

Factors	Eigenvalues	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Cronbach's α
Consumer Decision-making Styles (KMO=.747; sig.=0.000; α=.787)				
NFCC	2.494	12.469	12.469	.845
COCC	2.134	10.672	23.140	.766
PHQCC	2.072	10.362	33.503	.749
BCC	1.836	9.179	42.681	.693
RHC	1.657	8.285	50.967	.823
HBLC	1.649	8.247	59.213	.754
ICC	1.398	6.990	66.203	.536
PCC	1.380	6.901	73.104	.515
Face Consciousness (KMO=.888; sig.=0.000; α=.900)				
BR	2.534	16.890	16.890	.860
AA	2.466	16.438	33.329	.866
MK	2.248	14.984	48.313	.823
HR	2.147	14.311	62.623	.775
YP	1.877	12.513	75.137	.800

When it comes to face consciousness, we identified 5 characteristics including: ① Benevolence and Righteousness (BR), inspected by 3 items, a characteristic indicating consumers who are benevolent and righteous with wide breadth of mind enjoy due respect; ② Ability and Achievement (AA), shown by 3 items, a characteristic expressing a consumer who owns ability and has made some achievements is a VIP; ③ Maturity and Knowingness (MK), identified by 3 items, a characteristic showing consumers who look mature and have the ability to meet the emergency in the social activities are decent; ④ Harmonious Relationships (HR), inspected by 3 items, a characteristic indicating a consumer who lives in harmony and enjoys general popularity has influential; ⑤ Youthfulness and Promising ness (YP), identified by 3 items, a characteristic showing consumers who are diligent, promising and loving are influential. Table 2 presents the statistics of the confirmatory factor analysis results which show the Goodness of Fit Indices are very well.

TABLE 2
GOODNESS OF FIT INDICES

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NFI	NNFI	CFI	IFI	GFI	AGFI
Consumer Styles	281.53	142	1.98	0.051	0.92	0.94	0.95	0.96	0.93	0.90
Face Consciousness	162.34	80	2.03	0.052	0.97	0.98	0.99	0.99	0.95	0.92

Correlations of Consumer Decision-Making Style and Face Consciousness

To explore the interrelationships between consumers' decision-making styles and their face consciousness, this study firstly used Pearson correlation analysis to assess the basic association

between each consumer style and face consciousness characteristic based on factor scores identified in the factor analyses before. As is shown in the table 3, there are 13 significant correlations of the 40 pairs found between consumers' decision-making styles and face consciousness characteristics. In four of the eight regression analyses, two or more face consciousness characteristics are significant predictors of consumers' decision-making styles. Totally, these findings show that there are substantially significant interrelationships between consumers' decision-making styles and face consciousness characteristics. We will discuss these important correlations in the following part.

TABLE 3
CORRELATION COEFFICIENT MATRIX

Consumer Decision-Making Styles	Face Consciousness				
	BR	AA	MK	HR	YP
NFCC	-.043	.178(**)	.151(**)	.130(*)	-.026
COCC	-.055	.085	.016	-.046	.028
PHQCC	.120(*)	.160(**)	.252(**)	.161(**)	.114(*)
BCC	-.103(*)	.124(*)	.100(*)	.021	-.049
RHC	.016	.106(*)	.088	.142(**)	.028
HBLC	.088	.054	-.002	.097	.048
ICC	-.043	.070	.039	-.059	-.085
PCC	-.073	-.043	-.065	-.027	-.033

Level of Sig.: **p<.01; *p<.05.

The novelty-fashion conscious consumer style characteristic is discussed firstly. Three of five face consciousness characteristics are of significant positive correlation with this characteristic. The ability and achievement characteristic face consciousness appears to be correlated most strongly with it. In the next place, there are maturity and knowingness and harmonious relationships characteristics which are positively associated with the novelty-fashion conscious consumer style characteristic. These relationships indicate that consumers who believe that those are high ability and achievement, maturity and knowingness and harmonious relationships enjoy due respect are novelty-fashion conscious consumer and inclined to novelty-fashion products, since these things make them feel like being more influential. Next to the perfectionism, high-quality conscious consumer characteristic has maximum relationships to face consciousness characteristics. All the face consciousness characteristics were found to be associated with perfectionism, high-quality conscious consumer, and the strengths of the relationships were as follows: maturity and knowingness, harmonious relationships, ability and achievement, benevolence and righteousness and youthfulness and promise. This suggests that young-adult Chinese consumers desire for high-quality products which must be the "best buy" and want to show their influences by having perfect products. When it comes to the brand conscious consumer characteristic, three of five specific face consciousness characteristics were found having significant positive correlations with it. These were ability and achievement, benevolence and righteousness and maturity and knowingness in turn. As is shown in Table 3, however, benevolence and righteousness is negatively correlated with it namely that those who appreciate benevolence and righteousness higher then might less care about whether the brand is international name brand or not when they make the decisions. This tentatively suggests that

benevolence and righteousness consumers always show their admission and tolerance to others so do they to the brand-choosing. Furthermore only harmonious relationships and ability and achievement have significant positive correlations with habitual, brand-loyal consumer characteristic. Finally, to the rest four consumer style characteristics including confused-by-over-choice consumer, habitual, brand-loyal consumer, impulsive, careless consumer and price conscious consumer, the statistics did not show any significant correlations five face consciousness characteristics. But price conscious consumer characteristic was found to be associated negatively with all the five face consciousness characteristics. Although these were not significant, it seems we still can expect that there might be a negative correlation between price conscious consumers characteristic and face consciousness characteristics. Since it must be not decent for a consumer to buy a product with low price.

Canonical Correlations of Consumer Decision-Making Style and Face Consciousness

Since we have to deal with so many variables, a canonical correlation analysis of the eight consumer style versus five face consciousness characteristics have been used to completely explore the interrelationships between consumers decision-making and their face consciousness characteristics (as shown in Table 4). Canonical correlation is a multivariable statistic method for assessing the relationship between variables. Specifically, this analysis allows us to investigate the relationship between two sets of variables. It creates new variables, made from linear combinations of the original variables, for each set such that the correlation of the new variables is maximized. There may be more than one such linear correlation relating the two sets of variables, with each such correlation representing a different dimension. Generally speaking, 1~2 such linear correlations are relatively enough to explain the relation of the two sets of variables (Zhang 2004).

Table 4 summarizes results of canonical correlation analysis and shows the canonical coefficients of the first two most important statistically significant roots. The canonical correlation of the first root is 0.310 which is more than all the Pearson correlations analyzed above. To examine the second root, the canonical correlation of it is 0.235 which is also more than the majority of the Pearson correlations except for the correlation (0.252) between maturity and knowingness and perfectionism, high-quality conscious consumer characteristics. It is obvious that the results of canonical analysis are stronger than that of Pearson correlation analysis. The significant probabilities of the first two roots are 0.000 and 0.008 respectively, which deny the test that remaining correlations are zero under the condition of $\alpha=0.01$ showing that the canonical coefficients are significant. Therefore the study on the relationships between face consciousness and consumers' decision-making styles characteristics can be translated into research of the canonical coefficients of the two sets of variables.

TABLE 4
CANONICAL CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Variable and Sig. Index	Canonical Coefficients		Canonical Loadings	
	CC for Root-1 (U1/V1)	CC for Root-2 (U2/V2)	CL for Root-1 (U1/V1)	CL for Root-2 (U2/V2)
Consumer Decision-Making Styles				
NFCC (Y1)	.510	-.153	.718	.055
COCC (Y2)	.251	-.270	.234	-.361
PHQCC (Y3)	.495	.660	.668	.623
BCC (Y4)	.325	-.540	.607	-.332
RHC (Y5)	-.035	.230	.339	.264
HBLC (Y6)	-.344	.420	-.076	.423
ICC (Y7)	.065	-.052	.309	-.219
PCC (Y8)	-.109	-.255	-.119	-.280
Face Consciousness				
BR (X1)	-.422	.854	-.115	.926
AA (X2)	.455	-.150	.705	.182
MK (X3)	.817	.087	.792	.506
HR (X4)	-.030	.445	.328	.727
YP (X5)	-.143	-.223	.048	.586
Sig. Index				
Wilk's	.794	.878		
Canonical Correlations	.310	.235		
Chi-SQ	87.275	49.023		
DF	40.000	28.000		
Level of Sig.	.000	.008		

According to the results, the function of the canonical variates of face consciousness characteristics of the first root is:

$$U1 = -0.422X1+0.455X2+0.817X3-0.030X4-0.143X5$$

The function of the canonical variates of consumers' decision-making styles characteristics of the first root is:

$$V1 = 0.510Y1+0.251Y2+0.495Y3+0.325Y4-0.035Y5-0.344Y6+0.065Y7-0.109Y8$$

In the first root the standardized canonical coefficients of face consciousness characteristics such as variable X3, X2 and X1 are relatively high and this is true for that of consumers' decision-making styles characteristics such as variable Y1, Y3, Y6 and Y4. This shows that the effects of three of the face consciousness including maturity and knowingness, ability and achievement and benevolence and righteousness on the four of the consumers' decision-making styles characteristics including novelty-fashion conscious consumer, perfectionism, high-quality conscious consumer, habitual, brand-loyal consumer and brand conscious consumer are strong.

The canonical variates of face consciousness characteristics of the second root are:

$$U_2 = 0.854X_1 - 0.150X_2 + 0.087X_3 + 0.445X_4 - 0.223X_5$$

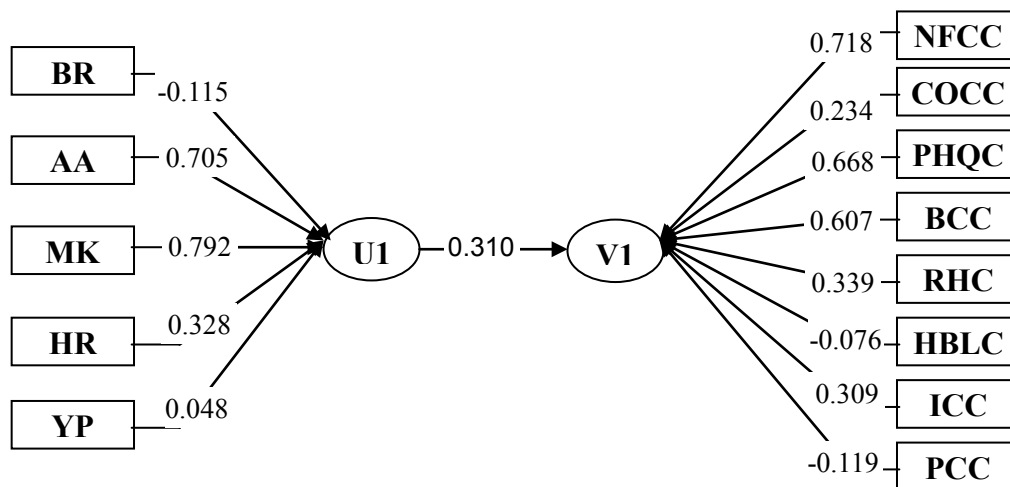
The function of the canonical variates of consumers' decision-making styles characteristics of the second root is:

$$V_2 = -0.153Y_1 - 0.270Y_2 + 0.660Y_3 - 0.540Y_4 + 0.230Y_5 + 0.420Y_6 - 0.052Y_7 - 0.255Y_8$$

In the second root the standardized canonical coefficients of face consciousness characteristics such as variable X1 and X4 are relatively high and this is true for that of consumers' decision-making styles characteristics such as variable Y3, Y4 and Y6. Thus the second root can be interpreted that there are strong influences of two of the face consciousness including benevolence and righteousness and ability and achievement on the three of the consumers' decision-making styles characteristics including perfectionism, high-quality conscious consumer, brand conscious consumer and habitual, brand-loyal consumer.

Canonical factor structure is another way of interpreting the canonical roots to look at the simple correlations between the canonical variates and the variables in each set. These correlations are also called canonical factor loadings. The logic here is that variables that are highly correlated with a canonical variate have more in common with it. Based on these results we can draw sketch map of the canonical factor structure to interpret the relationship more obviously. Here we only draw the canonical factor structure (shown in the figure 1) of the first root which shows that there are significant effects of face consciousness characteristics on four of consumers decision-making styles characteristics including novelty-fashion conscious consumer, perfectionism, high-quality conscious consumer, brand conscious consumer and recreational, hedonistic consumer.

FIGURE 1
CANONICAL FACTOR STRUCTURE FOR ROOT-1



CONCLUSIONS

In short, one of important findings of the study is that there is a significantly positive relationship between consumers' perfectionism, high-quality conscious consumer characteristic and five face consciousness characteristics, which corresponds to their purchasing psychology. In order to purchase the perfect and most satisfying goods, they try various ways such as searching on line, consulting friends and comparing repetitively, and then make the final decision, which shows their ability and maturity. Furthermore, perfect goods provide them with harmonious relationships, so they feel having more influences. As a result, corporations should pursue perfection not only in the quality of goods, but also in other aspects, more importantly, should publish the goods and brands to consumers.

There is significantly positive relationship between novelty-fashion conscious consumer characteristic and three face consciousness characteristics, which shows that consumers who grasp the pulse of times observantly, are "in" and brave to try any novelties are leaders of various consumption tides. Since novelty-fashion consumption make them feel capable, sophisticate and can attract others' attention. Meters/Bonwe understands this and stresses its sportswear is most fashion and "in", so its market share expands increasingly, and it becomes top one in sportswear market in several years.

Brand conscious consumer characteristic is also positively correlated to three face consciousness characteristics significantly, but is negatively related to benevolence and righteousness characteristic. For some consumers, famous brand is not important, but they cherish simple goods more. Some firms have noticed this point, then support excellent college students in poverty and present them with goods, so poor college students with simplicity and diligence are their image ambassador which can attract consumers regarding simplicity as face. Of course, it should be noted that this is only a small market, i.e. niche market. To the most consumers, face is positively related to famous brand. Therefore, it is urgent for most firms to develop good reputation of brand.

There is significantly positive correlation between recreational, hedonistic consumer characteristic and two face consciousness characteristics, which reflects that consumers emphasize the experience of purchasing and pursuing hedonistic consumption when buying goods. Since hedonistic purchasing means that they enjoy life and the process make them feel like a VIP by enhancing the harmonious relationships. As a result, if firms notice both goods and enjoyment and increase the hedonistic experience in purchasing, consumers will be attracted greatly. Disney Park is outstanding in this regard. It can not only relieve consumers' humdrum but also excite their eagerness to experience by broadcasting particulars and interesting shows for visitors in line.

Finally, although there is no significantly positive correlation between other 4 consumer decision-making style characteristics and face consciousness characteristics, we also can predict reasonably that there might be a negative correlation between face consciousness characteristics and price conscious consumer characteristic, because it make consumers losing face when they care more about the tiny change of price or buy goods at low price. Of course, this needs more empirical study to prove. In addition, since the object of the study is very young whose habitual loyalty to a certain goods or brand has not been formed, or habitual, brand-loyalty consumer characteristic itself is not related to face consciousness characteristics indeed, which also needs further study.

To sum up, face consciousness is significantly correlated to consumer's decision-making

styles. In fact, there may be exists a certain direct causality relationship, which needs further study. Although the study combines face consciousness with consumer decision-making style for the first time by applying western research paradigm of consumer behavior to Chinese consumer behavior, however, this is only a small field of consumer behavior study. It is a key point to study the reasons for the difference between Chinese consumer behavior and western one in view of the ingrained traditional culture and the popularity of Chinese traditional learning.

Acknowledgement: The authors thank the editors and reviewers of IJCM for their reviews and suggestions.

REFERENCES

- Bao Yeqing, Kevin Zheng Zhou, Chenting Su (2003). Face Consciousness and Risk Aversion: Do They Affect Consumer Decision-Making? *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 20 (8),733-55.
- Chen Zhizhao (1998). The Theoretical Analysis and Empirical Study on Face, in Yang Guoshu. *The Psychology of Chinese People*. Taiwan: Laurel Books Company, 155-238.
- Cheng, J. L. C (1989). Toward a Contextual Approach to Cross-national Organization Research: A Macro Perspective. *Advances in International Comparative Management*, 4, 3-18.
- Cheryl Leo, Rebekah Bennett, Charmine E J Härtel (2005). Cross-Cultural Differences in Consumer Decision-making Styles. *Cross Cultural Management*, 12(3), 32-62.
- Durvasula, Srinivas, Lysonski, Steven (1993). Cross-cultural Generalizability of a Scale for Profiling Consumers' Decision-making Styles. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 27(1), 55-65.
- Fan Jessie X, Jing J Xiao (1998). Consumer Decision-making Styles of Young-adult Chinese. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 32(2), 275-294.
- Hafstrom, Jeanne L., Chae (1992). Jung Sook. Consumer Decision-Making Styles: Comparison Between United States and Korean Young Consumers. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 26(1), 146-158.
- Hiu, Alice S Y., Noel Y M Siu, Charlie C L Wang (2001). Ludwig M K Chang. An Investigation of Decision-making Styles of Consumers in China. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 35(2), 326-345.
- Le Guoan (2002). *Study on the Current Chinese Interpersonal Relationships*. Tientsin: Nankai University Press, 187-191.
- Maheswaran, D., Shavitt, S (2009). Issues and New Directions in Global Consumer Psychology. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 2009 (9), 59-66.
- Mitchell, V. W., Bates, L.(1998). UK Consumer Decision-making Styles. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 14(1): 199-225.

Sproles, George B., Kendall, Elizabeth L.(1986). A Methodology for Profiling Consumers' Decision-Making Styles. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 20(2), 267-279.

Wu Shaohong (2001). *The Consumption Style of the Generation III (Youth of China) : Consumer's Decision-Making Style and Value*. Macao: Macau Polytechnic Institute Press.

Wu Tiejun (2003). *The Face Idea of College Students and Its Similarity between Friends*. Jiangsu: Library of Suzhou University.

Zhai Xuewei (2004). Favor, Face and Reproduction of the Power: A Way of Social Exchange in An Reasonableness Society. *Sociological Research*, 2004(5), 48-57.

Zhai Xuewei (1991). Explore of Psychology of Chinese Interpersonal Relationships: Study on “Face” and “Mianzi”. *Jiang Hai Academic Journal*, 1991(2), 67-64.

Zhang Wentong (2004). *Advanced Statistical Analysis Using SPSS*. Beijing: Higher Education Press.

Zhu Ruiling (1994). The Pressure of “Mianzi” and Its Consequences, in: Yang Guoshu, Huang Guangguo. *The Psychology and Behaviors of Chinese People*. Taiwan: Laurel Books Company, 1994, 177-212.

Zotos Yioigos, Lysonski Steven, Durvasula Srinivas (1996). Consumer Decision-making Styles: A Multi-country Investigation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 30(12), 10-21.

Zuo Bin (1997). *The Face and Mianzi of Chinese People*. Shanghai: Central China Normal University Press.

APPENDIX A

MEASUREMENT ITEMS

The individual is asked to grade from 1 to 5 their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice.

In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality.

I make special effort to choose the very best quality products.

The well-Known international brands are best for me.

I usually have one or more outfits of the very newest style.

I keep my wardrobe up-to-date with the changing fashions.

Fashionable and attractive styling is very important to me.

Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life.

I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it.

I buy as much as possible at sale prices.

The lower price products are usually my choice.

I am impulsive when purchasing.

Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not.
There are so many brands to choose from that often I feel confused.
Sometimes it's hard to choose which stores to shop.
All the information I get on different products confuses me.
Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it.
I have favorite brands I buy over and over.
In general, the qualities of foreign brands are better than national brands.
When it comes to purchasing products, I prefer buying the foreign brands.
Note: These scales were presented in Chinese due to the interviewees' nationalities.