

### Consumer Behavior Research on Culture Identity of Traditional Chinese Costume

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**Background and Purpose:** Since the Chinese Bourgeois Revolution in 1911, the old dress codes and etiquettes that were implemented for nearly three thousand years have been abandoned. Especially since the Reform and Opening up policy in 1979, western dress culture of fashion trends and fast fashion have had enormous influence on the younger generation of contemporary way of wearing.

Yong et al. put forward the argument that there were three parts in cultural identity, including cognition (individuals' understanding of culture), emotional recognition (feeling) and behavior (Yong and Wan, 2003). Study by Wang (2014) primarily found that there were four dimensions in cultural identity of traditional Chinese costume, including pride cognition, style perception, preference and support, and behavior of etiquette consumption.

This paper's main purpose was to study the present situation of culture identity of Chinese traditional clothing for contemporary Chinese consumers in dimensions of cognition, attitudes and buying behaviors. This study used quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide decision-making references for enterprises in contemporary China and laid the foundation for further academic study.

**Methods:** This study adopted the quantitative and qualitative method to collect consumer concepts for Chinese traditional clothing style and accessories in the dimensions of cognition, emotion and action. In quantitative research, this study used street intercept questionnaire method in Beijing commercial circles. The sample in quantitative study was 509 adults ( male 41.3% , female 58.7%) between the age of 25 and 65, many of whom education background were college or above( 59.7%). All data completed statistical analysis by using SPSS19.0.

In qualitative research, this study used group interviews and invited four groups of sample, including one group of higher income (one person, more than 200,000 RMB a year) and three groups of middle income (60,000-200,000 RMB one person, a year). The sample in qualitative study was 40 adults (male 35%, female 65%) between the age of 20 and 60, all of whom education background were college or above.

**Findings:** The consumer's perception of Chinese style was mainly embodied in the physical and mental aspects, which was near to the results of Fu (2013)'s findings. Main aspects of material level included the representative types of traditional classic style, typical dynasties, material, color, pattern and craftsmanship; the spirit level embodied in the connotation of Chinese traditional culture, which was near to the results of Zhang (2009)'s findings.

Firstly, the representative types of Chinese traditional classic style were Cheongsam(39.7%), Tang suit (28.3%) and Chinese tunic suit (27.9%) ,which was the same conclusion found both in quantitative and qualitative study. Secondly, Tang dynasty was one of the most typical dynasties that 63.1% participants mentioned in quantitative study. Thirdly, typical Chinese traditional color included red (83.5%), black (43.4%), yellow (37.1%) and blue (32.0%). Fourthly, the pattern of dragon and phoenix was mentioned by 79.6% participants, and craftsmanship of Chinese traditional knotted button and Chinese embroidery was mentioned by 81.5% and 70.1% participants respectively.

Furthermore, qualitative study found that Chinese contemporary consumers had different demands for wearing Chinese style both on formal occasion and in daily life, and they hoped some improvement for more suitable to adapt to modern lifestyle. Besides, qualitative study also found that middle-class consumers mostly preferred the material aspects of the cognitive level, while higher-class consumers were more associated with Chinese traditional cultural spirit, who enjoyed the experience of wearing Chinese traditional style.

As to the dimension of attitude and feeling about Chinese traditional clothing culture, this paper found that two most important reasons for choosing Chinese style were loving the Chinese traditional culture (57.6%) and representation of being Chinese (47.0%). More than fifty percent participants (58.7%) like the comfort and practical functions of traditional style. Qualitative study also found that it was an urgent realistic problem to strengthen publicity and promotion of the traditional culture to contemporary younger generations.

For the dimension of behavior, quantitative study found that modern Chinese consumers (67.0%) preferred wearing traditional style on wedding and some important festivals and ceremonies and there were 50.7% participants selecting traditional style in daily life. Qualitative study also found that dressing Chinese style on festive occasions suggested wearers' deep cultural identity and ethnic identity. For higher-class participants, wearing traditional style in their daily life was the extension of personal interest to Chinese culture as well as the supplement for their other styles. Some research on Chinese lifestyles had found that there were consumers that preferred pursuing **traditional and conservative lifestyle** in modern China, Pan (2009)'s. This study provided more argument and explanation for the former research in fashion industry.

**Discussions:** The inheritance and innovation for Chinese traditional clothing culture were facing the same problem with other countries like Japan and South Korea in Asia, where their traditional domestic style had done a lot of effort to protect and inheritance, but still affected by the global fashion trends, and consumers also started to look for more changes to the classic especially for the younger generations.

Classical Chinese style had become the bottleneck of limiting its popularization and large-scale development to some extent for younger generations in modern China context. This paper also found that the uniqueness of Chinese traditional style now become able to highlight the wearer's status and hoped Chinese traditional clothing culture would bring more and more diversity and integrity to the modern fashion. The integration that brought the traditional style to modern life had become a pressing task in front of the designers all of world.

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