



In-store shopping experience in China and France

The impact of habituation in an emerging country

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Dong Ling Xu-Priour and Gérard Cliquet

CREM UMR CNRS 6211, IGR-IAE, University of Rennes 1, Rennes, France

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the hypotheses about whether the effects of consumer enjoyment shopping experience, derived from seven aspects of recreational shopping (i.e. social aspects of retail environment, service quality, browsing, bargain hunting, social interaction, enduring involvement and brand experience) on consumer attitude towards stores channels are comparable between France and Chinese cosmetic shoppers.

Design/methodology/approach – To achieve this objective, a questionnaire of 500 French and 480 Chinese working females were conducted. Both the convergence and habituation theories were applied.

Findings – Results of the multiple regression analysis support the above assumptions and suggest that customer enjoyment shopping experience and its relation with consumer attitudes towards store channels in China tends to be more in line with those in developed countries.

Research limitations/implications – The findings presented are the views of women's in-store enjoyment shopping experiences in two cities in French and Chinese cosmetic markets. To ensure the generalizability of the findings, other products, consumer groups and regions (i.e. Indian etc.) can be envisaged.

Practical implications – Multinational retailers and cosmetics vendors have to recognize these customer enjoyment shopping experiences in both retail settings. In particular in the Chinese retail market, to improve these experiences so as to achieve positive consumer attitude towards retail outlets and finally strike the deal in this numerous market.

Originality/value – This paper is the first to employ convergent and habituation theory to examine the stability or change of the aforesaid relation between China and France. Hence, it adds to international marketing theory concerning the usefulness of these growing important theories in explaining the comparability between developed countries and developing ones in relation between constructs.

Keywords Customer enjoyment shopping experience, Attitudes towards store channels, Cross-cultural research, Convergence theories, Habituation theories, Cosmetic markets, China, France

Paper type Research paper



1. Introduction

As globalisation and competition intensify, internationalisation strategy has become a key to the success of multinational corporations (Adler and Graham, 1989; Yaprak, 2008). Convergence theory or divergence theory is more than ever before a primary question in the internationalisation strategy (Alden *et al.*, 2006; Barnes *et al.*, 2009; Zhou and Belk, 2004). In this context, businesses are aware that only by understanding the differences or similarities of attitudes and behaviours between customers in domestic and foreign countries, can they correctly adapt to and win in foreign markets.

According to the convergence theory, industrialized countries might have the identical attitude and behaviour although they differ culturally from each other. On the contrary, divergence theory claims that individual attitude and behaviour will remain different although the economy and society tend to become consistent among countries (England and Raymond, 1974; Kelley and Clayton, 1973). The above discussion raises an interesting question: With the economic take-off in Asia, its citizens' cultural values in this area had a dramatic change, and tended to converge on Western cultural values. For example, increasing research reveals changes in Chinese culture (e.g. Child and Tse, 2001) and China's people have become less collectivistic and more individualistic (Lu and Yang, 2006), or bicultural, especially for young people (Zhang, 2009). This change poses a daunting challenge to local marketing and management practices of the multinationals (Child and Tse, 2001; Peng *et al.*, 2008). Thus, it is important for business to understand the stability or change of individual attitude and behaviour of customers in this area (Alden *et al.*, 2006; De Mooij and Hofstede, 2002), especially a comparison of this key issue with that of in western countries.

As one of the most determinants of individual attitude and behaviour and an emerging concept in retail outlet, consumer enjoyment shopping experience is increasingly being recognised as a key competitive tool, influencing consumer attitudes towards store channels and store selection (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009), and this latter has become a primary consideration in marketing decision making process of all companies (Alden *et al.*, 2006; Osman, 1993), since consumers nowadays tend to choose multiple shopping channels, and attitudes towards store channels is one of the most important factors influencing this critical behaviour (Fazio *et al.*, 1989). Hence, if retailers and firms hope to build brand loyalty, channels and services so as to succeed, understanding how customer enjoyment shopping experiences influence their attitudes towards store channels is essential (Badgett *et al.*, 2007; Osman, 1993).

However, consumer enjoyment shopping experience and attitudes towards store channels both are constructs that influenced by the national culture and economic growth, and manifest themselves to different degrees among consumers in different countries (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Davis *et al.*, 2008; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). Thus, a solid understanding of the stability or change of the relation between the two constructs across customers in emerging and western countries is critical for business success (Alden *et al.*, 2006; De Mooij and Hofstede, 2002).

According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), consumer enjoyment shopping experience refers to consumer's perception of shopping pleasure, feelings, fantasies, fun, and multisensory from a multifaceted shopping activity. For example, browsing, bargain hunting, social interaction etc. (Bäckström, 2006; Cox *et al.*, 2005; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). This multiple activity may contain customers meaning of this concept of enjoyment shopping experience, how consumers feel about the pleasure during the whole shopping process (Bäckström, 2006; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). Based on Verhoef *et al.* (2009, p. 32), consumer enjoyment shopping experience can be defined as "the total experience, including the search, purchase, consumption, and after-sale phases of the experience".

Although there are a large number of studies on convergence and divergence consumer behaviour such as the culture of managers' value (Heuer *et al.*, 1999), few studies look at the stability or change of consumer enjoyment shopping experience in retail outlet in a developing country (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Heuer *et al.*, 1999),

especially in the context of multicultural retail contexts (Tsai, 2010). Despite Griffin *et al.* (2000) demonstrate that habituation theory explains better why people, share the same hedonism (measured as consumer perceptions from the consumption experience such as fun, amusement, fantasy from imagery and sensory elements of the shopping experience) (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982) regardless of economic background, it is important to note that the comparison here is limited to the concept of enjoyment value and does not involve the relation between the enjoyment value and outcome behaviour such as attitudes towards store channels. So far, it is still unclear whether there is any comparability between consumers in emerging and western countries in the above relation. As people around the world become increasingly epicurean, the consumer desire has changed from being rational towards being emotional, in particular, with the world's economic centre has shifted from Atlanta to developing countries in Asia-Pacific region, the cultural values of people in this area tend to be the Western-oriented, therefore, we may expect that the effects of consumer enjoyment shopping experience, derived from multiple aspects of customer enjoyment shopping experience (i.e. browsing, bargain hunting etc.) on attitudes towards stores channels of the consumers in emerging markets will be affected by the impact of this change and will become comparable with Western consumers.

To address the above limitations and questions, we first develop seven determinants of customer enjoyment shopping experience, namely: social aspects of retail environment (Luomala, 2003; Snyder and Debono, 1985), service quality (McCabe *et al.*, 2007; Zeithaml, 1988), browsing (Bloch *et al.*, 1989; Brown and Pope, 2003), bargain hunting (Cox *et al.*, 2005), social interaction (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Borges *et al.*, 2010; Lindsey-Mullikin and Munger, 2011), enduring involvement (Bloch and Bruce, 1984a; Hightower *et al.*, 2002) and brand experience (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009) based on prior research (i.e. Cox *et al.*, 2005; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009) and based on a combination of qualitative and quantities methods. Next, to examine the stability or change of the above relation between China and France, based on convergent and habituation theories, we propose a conceptual framework and examine hypotheses about the effects of these enjoyment shopping experiences on attitudes towards stores channels are comparable between cosmetic shoppers in both markets.

The central question of this study is as follow: whether there exists comparability between Chinese and French consumers in terms of the effects of the above seven aspects of consumer enjoyment shopping experiences on attitudes? If the effects are same for both countries, this not only means these relations indeed show signs of assimilation but also indicate that habituation theory can better explain the comparability between developed countries and developing ones in relation between customer's perception of enjoyment shopping experience and attitudes towards store channels.

The cosmetic markets in China and France were chosen for several reasons. First, as the world's largest developing countries, China sees rapid growth in pleasure-seeking consumption. In 2005, China became the world's third largest pleasure-seeking consumer market, just behind the US and Japan (China Chain Store Almanac, 2006). In particular, foreign cosmetics brands dominate Chinese cosmetic market (90 per cent). Second, after China's WTO accession, major retailers entered China, leading to unprecedented development of retail market in the country and narrowing the gap with

its western counterpart. In particular, French retailers such as Carrefour, Auchan, Sephora and L'Oréal enjoy a lion's share in this field, which have well established themselves as household names in China (China Chain Store Almanac, 2006; IMI, 2004-2005). Therefore, the cosmetics market is comparable between the two countries. Further, many studies show that the potential influence of Western culture is particularly strong due to China's adoption of a market economy and China's policies to attract foreign investment in the late 1976, as well as the subsequent influx of Western lifestyles, consumer images, symbols and preferences (Child and Tse, 2001; Zhou and Belk, 2004), typically for cosmetic brands. Thus, such a comparison presents an ideal case to examine the stability or changes of in-store shopping experience across emerging countries.

This research seeks to make the following twofold contribution. Firstly, from a theoretical perspective, this study represents the first one to employ convergent and habituation theory to examine the stability or change of the aforesaid relation between China and France using a large sample of real customers, thus it adds to international marketing theory concerning the usefulness of habituation and convergence theories in explaining the comparability between developed countries and developing ones in relation between constructs. In addition, we measure attitudes towards store channel as the general consumer perception of four main methods of purchasing in store channels (i.e. Chain boutique, independent boutique, hypermarkets and department stores) in the cosmetics markets in China and France. Further, we measure customer's enjoyment shopping experience in a multiple way, hence, the conclusion contained in this paper can provide a more comprehensive picture for multinational retailers and cosmetic companies to better understand the similarities and dissimilarities in customer enjoyment shopping experience in retail settings of both countries. Second, the findings of this study can help retail managers in the emerging markets especially Chinese cosmetic market to select the appropriate marketing channel strategy from the enjoyment shopping experiences as they appear to be in China compared to what they are in France. It can also help retailers and managers in their marketing channels management on how to induce Chinese enjoyment shopping experiences and to create competitive advantages.

In the following section, we first describe consumer behaviour in cosmetic markets in France and in China. Next, the convergence theory and habituation theory, together with the focus groups and in-depth interviews across both countries are illustrated to develop our hypotheses. The research methodology and results to test hypotheses are then followed. Based on the findings, we discuss the implications of this study for multi-national retailers and cosmetic companies, and suggest avenues for further research.

2. Consumer behaviour in cosmetic markets in France and in China

If looking back at the market and consumer behaviour three decades ago, it was particularly evident that there were upheaval changes of cosmetics market in China. Three decades ago, the Chinese retail market was government controlled, and a limited number of homemade cosmetics brands were available only in department stores (Department Store Office of Chinese Ministry of Commerce, 1989). The product varieties were no more than vanishing cream and skincare cream. The quality of salespersons in the department stores is poor because of the seller's market, not to

mention use sales promotion and other marketing measures to meet the consumer needs, and brand awareness was quite low at that time (People's University, 2002). Nowadays, three decades later, China's retail environment has changed substantially after a series of political and institutional reforms such as China's accession to WTO and opening-up of Chinese retail market. Such substantial change is manifested at least in the shopping environment and product display. With a growing purchasing power, Chinese consumers began seeking pleasure out of shopping experience instead of struggling at the survival level (China Chain Store Almanac, 2006). The cosmetic products (i.e. Make-up and skin-care) are no longer regarded as luxury product as before, but as a necessary daily need for many Chinese females (Barnes *et al.*, 2009; Hopkins, 2007).

As the main product of the pleasures of consumption, cosmetics (especially brand-name cosmetics) are developing dramatically. In addition, based on the statistic report of the National Bureau of Statistics of China, cosmetic market is one of the most developed sectors internationally in China, retail sales of cosmetics companies reached 110.3 billion Yuan in 2011 with a growth of 18.7 per cent yoy than that in 2010 (16.6 per cent yoy). International brands such as P and G, Avon, L'Oréal, Christian Dior, are widely popular in China, especially for young Chinese consumers (Barnes *et al.*, 2009; Chiang and Yu, 2010). Moreover, Chinese cosmetic shoppers have increasingly become experimental and brand conscious (Ogilvie and Mizerski, 2011); and most of them frequently shop in chain boutique (i.e. Avon, Shiaeibo, Bodyshop, Sephora), department stores (i.e. Printemps, Galeries Lafayette), independent boutiques (i.e. l'Occitane, Douglas) and hypermarkets (i.e. Carrefour, Leclerc, Auchan), etc. Thus, Chinese consumers became more beauty oriented than ever before (Hopkins, 2007; Souiden and Diagne, 2009; Ogilvie and Mizerski, 2011). In particular, Chinese women had long buried their desire to wear cosmetics and fashionable clothes as a result of the prevailing indoctrination by Chairman Mao that women are supposed to think, act and dress like men (Lee and Yau, 2004). Now, Chinese people are embracing the western outlook on beautification at an unprecedented speed as if just unshackled from the long-preserved iron cage (Barnes *et al.*, 2009; Hopkins, 2007). All of sudden, a wide variety of woman cosmetics ads are everywhere, and high-end cosmetics are seen in the display windows of shopping malls. Various beauty salons, plastic surgery services and fitness centres sprang up throughout the country. Beautification was in back in fashion (Hopkins, 2007; Ogilvie and Mizerski, 2011). These changes made Chinese cosmetics consumers think and act more like their western counterparts. Table I summarises some important information on the characteristics of consumer behaviour in Chinese cosmetics market.

By contrast, the French cosmetic market is the fourth largest cosmetic market in the world, with an annual rate of cosmetic product exportation increased stably and cosmetic and fashion products are considered as two of essential things in French people's life (Cosmetic Magazine, 2003). Further, as a major international actor with a long tradition of very high quality, France has historically developed several modern retail formats (department stores, hypermarkets, specialty store in chain, in franchise, and in group, and in independent boutique) critical for the cosmetic market. Most importantly, many of which have already entered into China and received great success in this market.

Retail channel types	France ^a		China ^{b,c}	
	Category of retail stores	Category of cosmetic products	Category of retail stores ^d	Category of cosmetic products
Hypermarkets	Carrefour	Skin-care	Carrefour (70)	Skin-care
	Auchan	Makeup	Auchan (13)	Makeup
	Leclerc	Fragrance	Matto	Fragrance
	Cora	Others	Lotus Wal-Mart	Others
Chain	Séphora	Skin-care	Séphora (24)	Skin-care
Boutiques	Marionnaud	Makeup	Watsons (200)	Makeup
Independent boutique	Yves Rocher	Fragrance	Avon (8,000)	Fragrance
	Bodyshop	Others	Oreal	Others
Department stores	Printemps	Skin-care	Printemps	Skin-care
	Galeries	Makeup	Galeries	Makeup
	Lafayette	Fragrance	Lafayette	Fragrance
	Nouvelles Galeries	Others	Nouvelles Galeries	Others
Total of sales value in category of cosmetic products			80.1	92
Total store visits for cosmetic products			82.0	> 84.2

Note: Figures between parentheses indicate the number of selling points developed in China

Sources: ^aFip (2003); ^bIMI (2004-2005); ^cwww.cosmetic.com.cn

Table I.
A summary of important information on the characteristics of consumer behaviour in French and Chinese cosmetic markets

For example, since entered into China in 1995, Carrefour has already opened 130 selling points in total in the largest cities in China, and is still planning to open another 20 selling points in the next year in China. Auchan (vs. Champion) have also set up respectively twenty (vs. six stores) in eight (vs. two) of the largest cities in China. Besides, Watson (associated with Marionnaud) has already established more than 200 selling points in China, and this retail ranks now at 11th (vs. 10th) in terms of the most favourite cosmetic retailers by Chinese people in Shanghai (vs. Chong Qing) cities respectively in China (China Chain Store Almanac, 2006). In addition, since Sephora has entered China in 2006, this retail format has already established 24 selling points in 11 the largest cities in China during only two years (www.cosmetic.cn.com). There are also several independent boutiques (i.e. l'Occitane, Douglas) that have already presented in this market. Further, since Paris Printemps has entered in Shanghai in 2000, this retailer has already built a good reputation in China. Importantly, with the recent surge Chinese visitors in French, the department stores (i.e. Galeries Lafayette, Printemps in Paris) have been classified as the most frequented stores by Chinese visitors in France, and the majority of their purchases in France have been fulfilled in these two types of stores (www.zhenji.info), suggesting China's consumers exhibit a radically change in behaviours and consumption patterns that tend to be more similar to those in the West. This change can be explained by the theories of habituation and convergence which we discussion next.

3. Habituation theory and convergence theory

As mentioned in our introduction part, the convergence theory maintains that when a country becomes more economically developed, the citizens of this country will think and act more like their counterparts in developed countries. Based on this theory, the Chinese consumers, now with more money at their disposal and in the face of an improved retail environment, have a growing need for spending in pursuit of pleasure (China Chain Store Almanac, 2006; Yu and Bastin, 2010). In addition, their attitudes towards shopping channels are also improved due to the advanced Western retail channel management philosophy stationed in China. Based on our earlier discussion regarding the changes in China, we expect that Chinese consumers' enjoyment shopping experience and its effect on their attitude towards shopping channel will become increasingly convergent with those in developed countries like France, which can be explained by the following two reasons.

First, as noted before, Chinese people had long been so plagued by lack of commodity and weak purchasing power that they bought commodities for the only sake of utility. As observed by Tse *et al.* (1989), the Chinese consumers on mainland China were more utility-oriented than their counterparts in Hong Kong and Taiwan when it comes to making purchasing decisions as the latter adopted the western culture. However, also as mentioned before, such situation has changed dramatically along with China's economic take-off. So far, Chinese people buy things more for the sake of emotional pleasure, satisfaction (China Chain Store Almanac, 2006; Wang *et al.*, 2000), social and psychological factors (Hopkins, 2007; Ogilvie and Mizerski, 2011). Hence, enjoyment shopping experience becomes more important to their daily life and store choice decision (China Chain Store Almanac, 2006). Thus, retailers in the cosmetic industry should consider the emotional and psychological factors of the target market and the social-psychological processes underlying consumption choice and experience



of cosmetic procedures in China. In contrast, France is a developed country, in which hedonic shopping has long been regarded as an important characteristic (Roth, 1995; Tse *et al.*, 1989), and one important part of people's daily life. From this discussion, we suggest that convergence theory may be valid in Chinese market, and Chinese consumers' perception of shopping enjoyment along with its effect on their attitude towards shopping channels will become more in line with those of French consumers.

Second, based upon habituation theory, we may also expect that the above effect between constructs is comparable between both groups. Since compared with previous experience, Chinese consumers' hedonic values will rise faster than those of French consumers due to the dramatic change of a series of regime and the rapid development of the economy in China (Child and Tse, 2001; China Chain Store Almanac, 2006). As noted by Griffin *et al.* (2000), the habituation theory maintains that one's experience determines his/her hedonic response. The primary determinant of satisfaction is when the actual experience deviates from the expected one. Thus, even mediocre performance can lead to a favourable hedonic response if the expectations are low. The above discussion suggests that the relation between Chinese consumers' enjoyment shopping experience and attitude will be the same as that in France. This result will help in the following seven hypotheses development.

4. Hypothesis development

Based on an extensive literature review and the results of empirical qualitative study, including focus-groups and in-depth interviews across both cultures, the above seven aspects of enjoyment shopping experience (see Table II) have been identified, and seven hypotheses on the comparable effects of these aspects of enjoyment shopping experiences on attitude towards stores between French and Chinese cosmetic shoppers are formulated.

4.1 Focus groups and in-depth interviews across cultures

As the first study to attempt to investigate this key issue, which requires new developments in cross-national research methodology (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982), thus, two focus groups (one consisting of a group of six French women, the other consisting of a group of ten Chinese women) and 58 in-depth interviews in each country were conducted in both cosmetics markets to identify the important aspects of enjoyment shopping experience, and to generate hypotheses in a cross-national situation (Mullen, 1995). We adopted the widely used method of scale development in consumer research. The participants were all working females aged 18 through 50 years and with a wide demographic profile (i.e. differing educational and occupational backgrounds).

The participants were first asked to give their opinions on the purchase of cosmetic products in a set of retail settings (i.e. chain boutiques, independent boutiques, hypermarkets, department stores), including as wide as possible the multifaceted enjoyment shopping activities. A guide of interview questions focused on three broad topics:

- (1) what do you mean by enjoyment shopping experience;
- (2) what fun and pleasure do you feel in stores; and
- (3) what do you enjoy the most about shopping in the stores?

Authors	Sources of shopping experience in the literature
Cox <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Mingling Browsing Bargain hunting Sensory experience Kinesthetic experience Being pampered
Jones (1999)	Social aspects Tasks Time; Product involvement; Financial resource Retail prices Selection Store environment; Salespeople
Arnold and Reynolds (2003)	Hedonic
Babin <i>et al.</i> (1994)	Utilitarian
Mathwick <i>et al.</i> (2001)	Aesthetics (visual appeal, entertainment) Playfulness (escapism, enjoyment); Service excellence Customer ROI (efficiency, economic value)
Arnold and Reynolds (2003)	Adventure Gratification Role Value Social Idea shopping
Hart <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Accessibility Atmosphere Service personnel Environment
Luomala (2003)	Semantic aspects of retail environment (what kind of people (e.g. in
Johnstone and Conroy (2006)	terms of age, occupation, wealth etc.) Social aspects of retail environment

Table II.
A summary of literature review of shopping experience

After this initial step, we again reviewed the literature to explore factors suggested in interviews that we had not originally detected in the literature. The in-depth interviews were then conducted in both cultures to reexamine these factors in February 2007. Each interview was conducted by the corresponding author, and was then transcribed and translated. Between July and October 2007, an additional round of data collection was conducted. From this iterative process, we identified the above seven aspects for identifying a framework of the significant retail enjoyment shopping activities across cultures (see Figure 1).

The results of focus groups and in-depth interviews (discussed next) confirmed that the above seven factors are clearly associated with customers enjoyment shopping



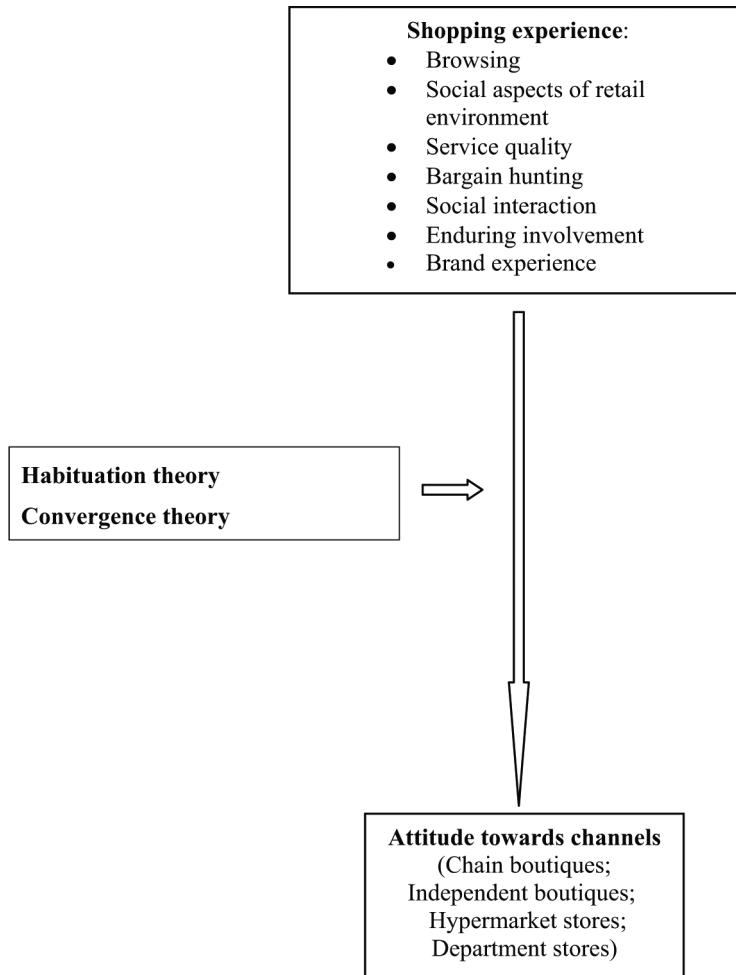


Figure 1.
Theoretical model of
consumer in-store
shopping experience
across cultures

experience in retail settings for both groups, which are furthermore related to their attitudes towards offline shopping channels (i.e. department stores and chain boutique).

However, when comparing the degree of enjoyment perception of these seven experiences between the two groups, six aspects (e.g. social aspects of retail environment, service quality, browsing, bargain hunting, social interaction and brand experience) seem to be more important components for Chinese respondents than for the French respondents. By contrast, the opposite was found for one aspect: enduring involvement. For French participants, their perception of enjoyment shopping experience in stores depends closely on whether the products they bought or the stores they frequented carry hedonic value; while Chinese respondents' enjoyment shopping experience are seemingly involved with all kinds of buying. These findings will be discussed in more detail in the Discussion Section, as well as in sections below to

generate hypotheses. In conclusion, the findings support the above convergent theory, suggesting enjoyment shopping experiences in China may be convergent to that of in western countries (Griffin *et al.*, 2000).

4.2 Social aspects of retail environment

Social aspects of retail environment has received a great attention by recent studies on enjoyment shopping experience (Andreu *et al.*, 2006; Johnstone and Conroy, 2006; Luomala, 2003), which refer to the symbolic meanings of the more subjective characteristic aspects (i.e. social class of the other shoppers, luxury atmosphere) in retail environment. This meaning expresses a certain social or sign value, and space, which can be seen as symbols that convey social meanings and serve to build stabilisation and express one's identity (Luomala, 2003; Rittfeld and Cupchik, 1996; Snyder and Debono, 1985). Based upon previous researchers, factors in the social aspects of retail environment such as what kind of people in terms of age, occupation, wealth and forth (Luomala, 2003) and the social dimensions within the retail environment (Johnstone and Conroy, 2006) directly associated with customer perceived enjoyment shopping experience, which in turn affected attitude toward stores and retail patronage behaviour. However, these studies focused on developed countries without exploring it in developing countries such as China. Based on the results of our interviews, the Chinese respondents give greatest consideration to the social aspects of purchase, especially "the other shoppers" such as foreign, well-off, and well-dressed customers in the stores, including a luxurious store atmosphere. As the income gap further widens in China as a result of economic takeoff, social aspects (e.g. face saving, social or sign value) can be seen as symbols that convey social meanings and can express one's identity, which has a growing effect on Chinese consumers' behaviour (Yu and Bastin, 2010). Hence, social aspects of retail environment will surely produce strong influence on consumer perception of enjoyment shopping experience, and this effect will inevitably be more noticeable than ever before. In line with this discussion along with the above convergence and habituation theories, we suggest that social aspects of retail environment will have the same effect on Chinese consumers' attitude towards stores as they do on French consumers. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H1.* The direct effects of the social aspects of retail environment on Chinese consumers' attitudes towards store channels are comparable to that of the French consumers.

4.3 Service quality

Service quality is defined as the consumer's judgment about the overall excellence or superiority of a product or service (Zeithaml, 1988). Jones (1999) defines it as a specific facet of the entertainment shopping experience. Based on Blakney and Sekely (1994) and McCabe *et al.* (2007), customers perceived service quality of salespersons in the stores may influence one's perceived pleasurable shopping experiences and consequently influence their loyalty and behavioural intentions. Other research argues that, customers in developing countries (i.e. Chinese) in general have lower quality expectations and more satisfaction in lower level needs (physiological and safety needs) as compared to customers in developed countries (i.e. French). However, as mentioned in our introduction part, the investments of foreign capital brought the



western approach to service into China, and the Chinese consumers gain tremendous pleasure from such western way of service (Yu and Bastin, 2010), which increased the overall quality of services offered by salespersons in China. Further, with the improvement of people's living standards, the desire and expectation of today's Chinese people for high service quality has also increased. This view was additionally confirmed by the results of our interviews that showed Chinese respondents give more thought to the quality of service. In line with this discussion, we assume that Chinese consumers will feel more satisfied with the service provided by retailers in stores. As a result, the effect of service quality on consumer attitude towards store tends to be similar between the two groups. Thus, we propose:

- H2.* The direct effects of service quality on Chinese consumers' attitudes towards store channels are comparable to that of the French consumers.

4.4 Browsing activity

Browsing is defined as a "just looking" activity such as an activity whose motives is mainly recreational and not for the rewards associated with the purchase of products (Bloch *et al.*, 1989). Based on Rich and Portis (1963), go browsing in stores to see new items and get ideas is the main factor influencing customers enjoyment shopping experience in retail settings (i.e. discount and department stores). Cox *et al.* (2005) also observed that browsing (measured as "like to casually walk through mall, window shop and often shop to get ideas") is an important factor influencing American customer prevalent shopping pleasure in the brick-and-mortar store. Brown and Pope (2003) and Wang (2010) also cited that browsing has positive influence on shopping behaviour. However, these studies mainly focused on developed countries without examining whether browsing plays a similar role in customer enjoyment perception of shopping and their attitude towards stores across cultures. The respondents in our interviews mentioned that "browsing in stores just for looking without precise purpose to buy", or "browsing in stores in leisure time to see novelties etc.", are even more important for the Chinese than for the French in inducing their in-store shopping experience.

As natural landscape like parks in China is not as developed as in the Western world, retail environment became the main venue where Chinese people enjoy recreational activities in stores during holiday or off-work time with their friends and families. The increasingly improved retail environment in China is beneficial to enhancing this perception of enjoyment shopping experience. Therefore, the perception of this experience generated by Chinese consumers from browsing activities may rise faster than that of their French counterpart. Based on this discussion, together with the above convergence and habituation theories, we suggest browsing might have the similar effect on Chinese consumer attitude towards store as it has on French consumers. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H3.* The effects of browsing on Chinese consumers' attitudes towards store channels are comparable to that of the French consumers.

4.5 Bargain hunting

Bargain hunting refers to a shopping activity which gives consumers emotional satisfaction, pride and feelings of intelligence, and a sense of achievement from the bargain hunting in retail contexts (Morris, 1987; Mano and Elliot, 1997). Based on Cox

et al.'s (2005), bargain hunting is the most important factor influencing American customer enjoyment shopping experience in bricks and mortar. Additionally, Lee (2000) empirically found that bargain attitudes have positive influence on bargaining intention for both American and Chinese customers. However, these studies failed to examine whether bargain hunting influences customers' enjoyment shopping experience, which in turn influences their attitudes towards stores, especially in a comparative way even through research pointed out the differences in the retail bargaining behaviour between American and Chinese customers (Lee, 2000). Although sales discount is not so frequent in China's cosmetics market as it is in French market, Chinese consumers experience tremendous pleasure from bargain hunting and seeking information for low price. In addition, respondents from our interviews in both countries confirmed that bargain hunting is an important factor that influences their enjoyment shopping experience. However, compared to their counterpart French respondents, Chinese respondents indicated a much more important role of bargain hunting in their enjoyment perception of shopping as well as in their attitudes towards stores channels. In line with this discussion together with the above convergence and habituation theories, we likewise assume that the pleasant feeling resulting from bargain hunting will have the similar effect on Chinese consumer attitudes as it might have on French consumers. Thus, we propose:

- H4. The direct effects of bargain hunting on Chinese consumers' attitudes towards store channels are comparable to that of the French consumers.

4.6 Social interaction

Social interaction refers to consumer's enjoyment perception from shopping with friends and family, and the chance to meet with other shoppers and to have council from their companion (Cox *et al.*, 2005; Jones, 1999; Tauber, 1972; Westbrook and Black, 1985). Based on previous research (Borges *et al.*, 2010; Lindsey-Mullikin and Munger, 2011), social interaction can induce customers' enjoyment perception of shopping and subsequent behaviour intention. Similarly, previous studies mainly focus on developed countries (e.g. American, French), relatively few on developing countries such as China, particularly in a comparative way. China is a typical collectivist culture where social interaction is highly valued and shopping is regarded as an important social activity (Child and Tse, 2001; Lu and Yang, 2006; Zhang, 2009). Based on the results of our interviews, both French and Chinese interview participants identified social interaction as one source of enjoyment shopping experience. More importantly, it seems to be more important for Chinese respondents than for the French respondents. Therefore, we likewise assume that the feeling of satisfaction generated by Chinese consumers socializing each other from retail environment and its effect on their attitudes towards store channels will be comparable with those of their French counterparts. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H5. The direct effects of social interaction on Chinese consumers' attitudes towards store channels are comparable to that of the French consumers.

4.7 Enduring involvement

Based on Hightower *et al.* (2002), enduring involvement is an important factor in hedonic consumption (measured as the multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of



customer's experience with products). It is a construct that has received little attention by researchers. Bloch and Bruce (1984a) describe enduring involvement as consumer's ongoing relationship with a product as a consequence of it being related to his/her needs, values, or self-concept. Basic marketing research (Hightower *et al.*, 2002; Scammon, 1987) suggests that consumers' enduring involvement significantly related to customer entertainment-oriented activities and positive affect. Hightower *et al.* (2002) also observes that, customers would perceive enjoyment and happy feelings if they got satisfied, fantastic and expected products. However, like other aspects of enjoyment shopping experiences construct, previous studies failed to examine whether enduring involvement influences customer attitudes towards store channels, especially in a comparative research term, even though evidence was shown for the effect of another similar construct hedonic consumption on store choice behaviour. As mentioned above, enduring involvement is an important component in hedonic consumption. Besides, French respondents' enjoyment perception of shopping seems to be more associated with products or store channels that can give them hedonic, fantastic and emotional perception or feeling (i.e. dream/art, ecological products, etc.) even if respondents from both groups of our interviews confirmed that this factor closely related to their attitudes towards store channels. For example, most of French respondents view shopping in hypermarket stores as a chore to be accomplished as quickly as possible; While Chinese respondents expressed a positive sentiment towards buying all kinds of products even for the products sold in hypermarket stores. This discussion together with the above habitation theory and convergence theories suggest that, the effect of enduring involvement on Chinese consumers' perception of pleasure is comparable with that on French counterparts. Hence we propose the following hypothesis:

- H6.* The direct effects of enduring involvement on Chinese consumers' attitudes towards store channels are comparable to that of the French consumers.

4.8 Brand experience

There has been considerable research about brand experience (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009), which refers to consumer perception of the brand of the retailer or the brand of the manufacturer sold in the retail stores as shaped by experience, and by the people that experience the brand (Rondeau, 2005; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). Based on Verhoef *et al.* (2009), brand experience might significantly influence customer's enjoyment shopping experience. In addition, Zarantonello and Schmitt (2010) conceptually argue that a positive emotional brand experience could affect customers' purchase intention. Further, traditional research argued that Western consumers tend to seek variety and hedonistic experiences of brand perception that reflect individual gratification (Batra and Indrajit, 2000; Roth, 1995); While customers from Eastern developing countries are more likely to prefer national or global brands to private label brands because of the symbolic meanings from buying global brands. Souiden and Diagne (2009) additionally observe that, compared to the consumers from developing countries, French consumers pay more attention to personality characteristics and preference rather than brand awareness in brand selection. However, once again, these studies failed to examine whether the effect of brand experience on attitudes towards store channels is convergent across cultures even though previous research found that brands had a larger impact on the purchase

intentions of consumers from the emerging markets (vs. developed markets) (Auger *et al.*, 2010). Based upon the results of our interviews, most of French participants expressed that the symbolic function of a brand is less important than the smell, colour or whether the product is an equitable or ecological product. While Chinese respondents' brand experiences are related to both the symbolic and individual gratification functions of a brand even though their enjoyment perception is more attached to the symbolic meanings of brand perception. As cited by several recent studies (Barnes *et al.*, 2009; Hopkins, 2007; Yu and Bastin, 2010), Chinese customers, especially the young people living in open coastal areas and the big cities, their cultural value and pleasure consumption behaviour in brands perception and selection have been deeply influenced by Western cultures due to the investments of foreign enterprises in China. Chinese people now also pay close attention to brands that express their self-respect and identity, etc. In line with this discussion along with the above convergence and habituation theory, we may expect that brand experience has a comparable effect on customers' attitudes towards store channels in China and France. Thus, we propose:

- H7. The direct effects of brand experience on Chinese consumers' attitudes towards store channels are comparable to that of the French consumers.

5. Method

5.1 Data collection

To test hypotheses, data collection enables to compose two samples of 500 French and 480 Chinese working females who purchase their cosmetic products from a set of retail stores located in the large metropolitan cities of Shanghai, Shenzhen for Chinese, and Rennes and Poitiers for French. We choose these two cities in China for the following two reasons. First, Shanghai is an international city as well as the economic and commercial centre of China while Shenzhen is also one of the most advanced cities in China. Second, as mentioned above, the cosmetic markets and modern retail formats in these two cities are highly developed (China Chain Store Almanac, 2006), which are comparable with Western countries. We focus on Rennes and Poitiers for reasons of convenience since there are not great differences in terms of research subjects among French customers.

We choose cosmetic products for several reasons. First, because women tend to practice more leisure-enjoyment shopping than men (Dubé and Morgan, 1996; Otnes and McGrath, 2001). Second, as cosmetic product is classified as experience goods (Klein, 1998; Nelson, 1974) that is an appropriate approach for our research purpose which explores customer enjoyment shopping experience in retail settings. Third, this type of product is more related to our research constructs (i.e. browsing, social interaction). Customers used to buy their cosmetic products when browsing or socialising with others in retail stores based on our results of interviews. Finally, this choice is more appropriate to the current comparative study (Mullen, 1995) because French and Chinese respondents use these categories of cosmetic products equally and for essentially the same reasons.

The data collection is mainly performed through face-to-face (90 per cent) in the workplace, respondents' home and leisure places (i.e. fast food restaurants, coffee rooms, etc.) during July-November 2007, but also by mail and e-mail (10 per cent). Online surveys are used due to lower costs, faster response times, and convenient

collection (Ilieva *et al.*, 2002). Based on Deutskens *et al.* (2004), both online and offline surveys methods are equivalent. The questionnaires were collected by the corresponding author. Customer surveys in both countries were in the similar ways to warrant data equivalence. Both groups over the age of 50 were ignored for the purpose of this study, given the use of cosmetic products declines in Chinese women over the age of 50. Women were chosen because they tend to practice more leisure-enjoyment shopping and also are the main consumers for cosmetic products (Dubé and Morgan, 1996; Otnes and McGrath, 2001).

The results of demographic profile are shown in Table III. As shown in Table III, 63.8/55.5 percentages of French/Chinese were married. The two group samples are similar in terms of age ($p > 0.10$), and most are aged 25-35 years old. This result corresponded to the official reports for the principal cosmetic shoppers in each country, which is representative for comparison purpose of this study. Finally, through the individual connections, an unusually high response rate was ensured (80 per cent/89 per cent for French/Chinese samples, respectively). Information was omitted due to the incomplete responses or obvious logic error. Response totals were 580 for French and 538 for Chinese. In total, 500 and 480 useable questionnaires were obtained for China/France countries, respectively. The response rate was 81 per cent for French sample and 91 per cent for Chinese samples, respectively. The deleted questionnaires are due to these questionnaires have incomplete responses or do not meet required criteria (e.g. self-contradictory or illogical).

5.2 Measures, translation and pretest

All of the enjoyments shopping experience aspects are measured according to the results of the literature review and the results of our in-depth interviews. We first develop 39 original items to pre-test our questionnaire. Each aspect is measured by multiple statements used a five-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree (see Table IV).

The pre-test questionnaire also contains the attitude scale, which consists of four aspects of attitude in total to describe respondents' attitude toward four methods of purchasing (i.e. chain boutique, independent boutique, hypermarket store and department stores) respectively when buying their cosmetics products (i.e. skincare, eye care, lipstick, make-up, foundation and mascara). A unidimensional bipolar continuum (as measured by a five-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 5 = very good; 1 = very bad) represents each aspect. The two principal reasons to choose these

Socio-demographic variables	French sample (500) (%)	Chinese sample (480) (%)
<i>Age</i>		
16-24 < 30	43.6	57.4
30-34	14.6	19.3
35-50	41.8	23.3
<i>Income</i>		
High	4.80	8.8
Average	71.0	65.0
Low	24.2	26.2

Table III.
Demographic profile of the respondents for the French and Chinese sample



	Factor loading	<i>a</i>	
		French	Chinese
Social aspects of retail environment (Luomala, 2003)		0.72	0.64
1. Like to buy in a place where the clientele is well-off	0.84		
2. Not comfortable to buy in a store where the clientele is of modest	0.78		
3. do not like to buy in a store which sells popular brands (New)	0.78		
4. Like to buy in a luxury atmosphere (New)	0.85		
Browsing (Rizkalla, 1989)		0.85	0.74
1. Like to spend time in stores, without being objective to buy	0.73		
2. When I have time,I would like to go browsing (New)	0.78		
3. Like to stroll in the stores to see if there are the novelties (New)	0.74		
4. Strolling in the stores is an entertainment activity (New)	0.77		
Service quality (Bruce <i>et al.</i> , 2004)		0.84	0.76
1. The service of the saleswomen is more professional (New)	0.75		
2. The saleswomen offer me enough personal attention I need	0.82		
3. The saleswomen are very courteous	0.76		
4. I receive enough individual attention from their saleswomen	0.83		
Bargain hunting (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003)		0.84	0.76
1. I like to do shopping during the sales	0.77		
2. For the most part, I go shopping mostly when there are sales	0.81		
3. I enjoy hunting for bargains when shop	0.76		
4. I enjoy looking for discounts when shop	0.74		
Social interaction (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003)		0.77	0.62
1. Shopping with others is a bonding experience	0.75		
2. I enjoy socializing with others when I shop	0.74		
3. I go shopping with my friends or family to socialize	0.72		
4. To stroll in the stores is an occasion to out, to have a social life (New)	0.76		
Enduring involvement (Attaway, 1989)		0.72	0.61
1. Imagining which products might buy if had unlimited monetary resources	0.75		
2. Imagining wearing or using certain products	0.75		
3. Thinking about products that would like to purchase or own	0.82		
Brand experience		0.63	0.60
1. To buy brand goods (new)	0.78		
2. More a famous brand, more I enjoy (new)	0.63		

Table IV.

Results of factor analysis
(Varimax rotation)

Note: All items used a five-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree."

categories of products and methods of purchasing stands are as follows (Cosmetic Magazine, 2003):

- (1) they account for about 82 per cent/92 per cent of French/Chinese cosmetic market sales value; and
- (2) they present about 82 per cent/84 per cent of total store visits for French/Chinese cosmetic shoppers, respectively.

To ensure the instrument equivalence between China and France, the back-translation technique was used (Douglas and Craig, 1983; Mullen, 1995). The questionnaire



(original in English) was first translated into French and Chinese by one French and one Chinese bilingual translators, and then back-translated into English by another French and Chinese native speakers, respectively. The translations of new development scales have also been built based upon this technique (Kostova and Roth, 2002). To avoid the halo effect, the items measuring various aspects were mixed presented, and the order and structure of the questionnaire were also ensured to be identical in the two countries.

6. Results

6.1 Scale reliabilities

To check the reliability of the data, the exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis (in each sample) were performed on the data. The results of these analyses in Table IV showed that the factor loadings of variables ranging from 0.63-0.85 with eigenvalues greater than unity are generated, and the coefficients range from 0.60 to 0.85. In addition, the correlation between most measures of enjoyment shopping experiences is also significantly significant (see Table V), they are considered as reliable and unidimensionally (Nunnally, 1978).

6.2 Hypotheses testing

A multiple regression model analysis (with dummy variable) (Gujarati, 1970) was performed to test *H1-H7* about the comparability of the effects of the above seven aspects of enjoyment shopping experience on attitudes between the two countries. We adopt this method because unstandardised differential intercept coefficients values enabled us to distinguish between the intercept of both groups (Malhotra *et al.*, 1996). In addition, this method is robust in estimating interaction effects with a dummy variable such as nationality (Daechun and Sanghoon, 2008). In this model, the attitudes towards store channels serve as the dependent variables. The independent variables are the seven sources of enjoyment shopping experience, as well as the seven interaction variables between nationality (NAT: China coded 0 and France coded 1) and the above seven shopping experience factors (i.e. NAT*ENV, NAT*SQ, NAT*BR, NAT*SI, NAT*BH, NAT*SI, NAT*EI and NAT*BE). Here, if β is statistically significant, that means the effects of enjoyment shopping experiences on attitudes are different across the countries. However, the reversed case suggests that these effects are comparable between the two countries. From the results in Table VI, the regression model was significant ($F = 8.94$, $df = 14$, $p = 0.00$), and the explanatory power of the model, R^2 , was 0.35 (adjusted $R^2 = 0.12$). In addition, the variation inflation factor (VIF) test show that the values of VIF of these factors range from 2.15 to 3.65, which are much lower than the recommended value of 2.5 (Allison, 1999) and 10 (Hair *et al.*, 1998). These results suggest that there is no problem of multicollinearity among these shopping experiences.

From the results in Table VI, *H1-H7* can be supported, which state that the direct effects of social aspects of retail environment (*H1*), service quality (*H2*), browsing (*H3*), bargain hunting (*H4*), social interaction (*H5*), enduring involvement (*H6*) and brand experience (*H7*) on attitudes towards store channels will be comparable between China and France), as the relevant interaction variables NAT*ENV ($\beta = -0.093$, $p < 0.1$), NAT*SQ ($\beta = -0.024$, $p = 0.488$), NAT*BR ($\beta = -0.036$, $p = 0.298$), NAT*BH ($\beta = 0.035$, $p = 0.310$), NAT*SI ($\beta = -0.001$, $p = 0.975$), NAT*EI ($\beta = -0.037$,

Table V.
A summary statistics of
construct
intercorrelations

France vs China	Browsing	Environment	Service quality	Bargain hunting	Social interaction	Enduring involvement	Brand experience
Browsing	1						
Environment	0.22***	1					
Service quality	0.22***	0.32***	1				
Bargain hunting	0.33***	0.16***	0.33***	1			
Social interaction	0.32***	0.32***	0.32***	0.29***	1		
Enduring involvement	0.33***	0.30***	0.34***	0.22***	0.40***	1	
Brand experience	0.04 ^{ns}	-0.10**	-0.05 ^{ns}	0.01 ^{ns}	-0.01 ^{ns}	-0.05 ^{ns}	1

Notes: Correlations: Chinese sample below diagonal, correlations French sample above diagonal. ^{ns} shows that *p*-value is not significant; * *p*-value < 0.1; ** *p*-value < 0.05; *** *p*-value < 0.01

Independent variables	β	t	p	Expected effect on attitude	Hypotheses testing
Retail environment (ENV)	0.08	2.71	0.007		
Service quality (SP)	0.08	3.01	0.003		
Browsing (BR)	0.11	4.05	0.000		
Bargain hunting (BH)	0.07	2.88	0.004		
Social interaction (SI)	0.07	2.44	0.015		
Hedonic value (HED)	0.07	2.44	0.015		
Brand experience (BE)	0.06	2.33	0.020		
NAT*ENV	-0.09	-1.92	0.055	Not significant	H1 (confirmed)
NAT*SP	-0.02	-0.69	0.488	Not significant	H2 (confirmed)
NAT*BR	-0.04	-1.04	0.298	Not significant	H3 (confirmed)
NAT*BH	0.04	1.02	0.310	Not significant	H4 (confirmed)
NAT*SI	-0.00	-0.03	0.977	Not significant	H5 (confirmed)
NAT*HED	-0.04	-1.07	0.285	Not significant	H6 (confirmed)
NAT*BE	-0.06	-1.74	0.082	Not significant	H7 (confirmed)
Nationality (NAT)	-0.13	-2.69	0.007		
(Constant)	3.45	133.63	0.000		

Notes: Dependent variable: attitude towards stores. Nationality: France = 1, China = 0. The numbers represent the non-standardized structural coefficients β . $R^2 = 0.35$; Adjust $R^2 = (0.12)$; SE = 0.51

Table VI.
Results of regression analysis

$p = 0.285$) and NAT*BE ($\beta = -0.062$, $p < 0.1$) were found to be not significantly related to attitudes, suggesting these relationships are similar between the two samples, which are consistent with the hypothesised relationships in *H1-H7*.

In addition, as shown in Table VI, all aspects of enjoyment shopping experiences are significant factors explaining the attitudes (i.e. $\beta = 0.08$, $p < 0.01$ for retail environment; $\beta = 0.08$, $p < 0.01$ for service quality; $\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.01$ for browsing; $\beta = 0.07$, $p < 0.01$ for bargain hunting; $\beta = 0.07$, $p < 0.05$ for social interaction; $\beta = 0.07$, $p < 0.01$ for hedonic value; and $\beta = 0.06$, $p < 0.05$ for brand experience). These results are consistent with the previous discussion about the important role of these experiences in consumer attitudes towards retail outlets, for instance, the effects of browsing (Brown *et al.*, 2003; Wang, 2010), service quality (McCabe *et al.*, 2007) and so forth. A more detailed discussion of the above findings will be given in the next section.

7. Discussions and conclusion

Given the rapid expansion of the global marketplace and changing consumer shopping behaviour, the shopping experience has become a critical concept in twenty-first century retailing (Auger *et al.*, 2010; De Mooij and Hofstede, 2002; Grewal *et al.*, 2009; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009), especially in the emerging countries such as China. Now more than ever it is vital for international retailers to understand if it is necessary true that the effects of customer enjoyment shopping experiences on attitudes towards store channels have become convergent among consumers in emerging countries such as Chinese to Western customers?

The objective of this research is to address this question by using convergence theory and habituation theory to examine hypotheses about whether the effects of customer enjoyment shopping experiences, derived from seven aspects (i.e. social aspects of retail environment, service quality, browsing, bargain hunting, social interaction, enduring involvement and brand experience) on consumer attitudes

towards stores channels are comparable between Chinese and French cosmetic shoppers. We test hypotheses using a combination of a large sample of qualitative and quantities studies in both markets. The findings provide empirical evidence to answer the above question and show that the moderating effects of culture on the above research relationships have no statistical significance, suggesting that the effects of the above seven aspects of experience on attitudes are comparable between both groups. Thus, all hypotheses were supported. The findings provide theoretical and practical implications that we discuss subsequently below.

Theoretically, the findings of this study provide evidences in support of our theoretical arguments that the habituation impacts on the influences of consumer enjoyment shopping experiences on attitudes towards store channels, implying that customer enjoyment shopping experience and its relation with consumer attitudes in China tend to be more in line with those in developed countries as China's increasing international presence. The findings cannot support Tse *et al.*'s (1989) view that consumer perception of shopping pleasure was stronger in Hong Kong and Taiwan than in mainland China, suggesting a significant change of certain consumer behaviours (such as relation between enjoyment shopping experience and consumer attitudes) in China due to the substantially changed Chinese people's values, social and commercial environment along with economic development which become more in line with Western counterparts French people. These results can also partially support Campbell (1987) and Mattila's (1999a) arguments that consumption value in Western countries and American country tend to be more hedonic than for Asians respondents.

This phenomenon is consistent with our earlier discussion about the aforesaid relation using convergence and habituation theory (Griffin *et al.*, 2000). Our findings expand previous studies concerning the application of these theories limited to conceptual comparison between countries by providing comparison of the link among constructs between French and Chinese consumers.

The most important contribution of this study is that, the paper is the first attempt to apply convergence and habituation theory to analyse the relation between enjoyment shopping experience and consumer attitudes in both cultures, therefore the results of the paper provide substantial conclusion about the usefulness of habituation and convergence theories in explaining the comparability between developed countries and developing ones in relation between constructs.

Another important contribution of this study is that, our results reveal that these enjoyment shopping experiences all have strong positive effects on consumers' attitudes towards store channels (see Table VI). These results are consistent with the previous discussion about the effects of these shopping experiences on consumer attitudes towards store channels, which were previously examined in limited retail contexts (Tsai, 2010), in the US and in isolation that were not totally examined in a conceptual structural model of in-store shopping experience, especially in a multinational sample. For instance, the effects of browsing (Brown and Pope, 2003; Wang, 2010), service quality (McCabe *et al.*, 2007) and so forth. Thus, our results provide a more comprehensive framework of these relationships in multi-channel retail contexts, especially across cultures.

In practical terms, the comparable effects of customer's enjoyment shopping experience on attitudes towards store channels indicate that international retailers should take account into cross-national comparability in the effect of enjoyment

shopping experience on consumer store choice behaviour between consumers in emerging countries and consumers in Western countries. Specifically, given the equally important role of these aspects of enjoyment shopping experiences between the two groups, international marketers in China should take into account the increased role of these experiences, in particular, the growing important role of hedonic consumption in China. Thus, relevant marketing effort to improve hedonic consumption should be offered in the Chinese market. Our findings can also be consistent with the previous arguments that Chinese consumers nowadays make purchasing decisions more for the sake of pleasure which is now an emerging trend (China Chain Store Almanac, 2006; Yu and Bastin, 2010 and so forth). These results suggest that multinational retailers in China must pay more attention to these evolving enjoyment shopping experiences and improve the Chinese consumers' perception of shopping pleasure in order to achieve positive consumer attitudes towards retail outlets and finally strike the deal.

In addition, in viewing of the significant effects of all these aspects of enjoyment shopping experience on attitudes, multinational retailers in both cultures should give sufficient consideration to these experiences when making management decisions, and better design and position their various attitude-favourable packages linking to these experiences.

8. Limitations and future research

Apart from the above contributions, like all research, this study suffers also from several limitations that deserve attention. First, longitudinal studies might be more efficient to determine the stability or change of the effects of multifaceted shopping activities on consumer store choice behaviour specified in this study. Second, to ensure the generalizability of the frameworks presented here, other products (i.e. less hedonically oriented products), and other consumer groups and regions, such as other emerging countries in various stages of economic and political development (i.e. Indian etc.) can be envisaged. Third, this cross-cultural study is encouraged to extend to online, mail and catalogue retail channel contexts, which is a trend that is largely unexplored in a cross-cultural context. Finally, as store re-patronage and loyalty have to be tackled more intensively, especially in China, this area of research deserves greater attention and future effort.

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About the authors

Dong Ling Xu-Priour earned her PhD in Management from University of Rennes 1. Her publications have appeared in *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*. She has also published book chapters in France. Dong Ling Xu-Priour is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: cecile_xu@voila.fr

Gérard Cliquet, Professor of Marketing and Retailing at the University of Rennes 1 (France), has published articles on retailing and franchising in *European Journal of Operational Research*, *Journal of Business Research*, and *Journal of Small Business Management*.

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