ASEAN Journal of Management & Innovation
Vol. 5. No. 2, 49 - 62

DOI: 10.14456/ajmi.2018.24
ajmi.stamford.edu
Received: July 30, 2018
Revised: September 12, 2018
Accepted: September 13, 2018

Exploring Similarities and Differences Of Mall Shopping Motives and Patterns Among Chinese and Thai Shoppers.

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Abstract
Prior cross-cultural studies have shown few investigations of mall shopping behavior in non-western contexts. In order to bridge this gap, this study explored shopping motives and patterns in two Eastern cultures – Thailand and China, in a mall setting. Our results indicate that while both Chinese and Thai shoppers are driven to shop at malls for purchase-related reasons, Thai shoppers are more likely to visit shopping malls for fulfilling hedonic needs. In addition, similarities and differences were found in the shopping patterns of the shoppers across two countries. The findings contribute to the existing mall literature by showing that within a larger framework of Asian culture, there do appear to be cultural differences between the two countries, affecting consumer behavior in ways that mall retailers should be aware of. The results are expected to provide practical guidance for international mall retailers.

Keywords: Shopping Motives, Shopping Patterns, Chinese and Thai Shoppers, Mall Shopping Behavior

1. Introduction

According to a recent report by CBRE, China and Thailand are among the most active markets in the world for constructing and developing shopping malls (Smith, 2017), despite the rapid growth of online retail in both countries. This counter-intuitive phenomenon might be ascribed by two reasons. First, both of Chinese and Thai retail market have indicated positive signs of growth (Smith, 2017; Setboonsarng, 2018). Second, consumers' shopping experience gained from traditional retail stores cannot be fully substituted by online shopping channels. The key drawback of online shopping - lacking of physical experience has pushed many online retailers to extend their offline channels with the expectation to improve customers' overall shopping experience (Shen, Cai & Guo, 2016).

The growth of retail industry in both countries presents new opportunities for Thai retailers to expand their business into international and domestic markets. On one hand, the popularity of bricks-and-clicks shopping has provided Thai retailers new chances to expand their business into Chinese market both online and offline (Setboonsarng, 2018). On the other hand, ranked as the most popular overseas travel and shopping destination for Chinese tourists (China Travel News, 2017; Inside Retail Asia, 2017), Thailand is attracting more and more Chinese shoppers to its local market. According to Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), 30% (around 9.5 million) of total inbound travelers are Chinese, and they allocate 41% of their traveling budget to shopping (Tungsirisurp & Athigapanich, 2017).

Given its one-stop nature and attractive image, shopping mall can be one of the most favorable shopping avenues for Chinese tourists. Nonetheless, despite these great opportunities, one of the formidable challenges that Thai retailers face is how to attract and retain Chinese consumers by marketing their retail offerings in the way that highly match consumers' needs and wants. Past experience has proved that simply transplant successful marketing strategies from Thai market to Chinese market can lead to disastrous effect (Inside Retail Asia, 2014).

In order to address this issue, it is crucial for Thai retailers to understand *why* and *how* Chinese shoppers are different from their Thai counterparts in their mall shopping behavior. Specifically, the knowledge about the similarities and differences in the shopping motivation among Chinese and Thai consumers may enable Thai mall retailers to adjust the existing mall ambience in a way that is more attractive to Chinese shoppers. By understanding the similarities and differences in the shopping patterns among consumers in both countries, Thai mall retailers might be able to enhance shopping experience of the Chinese shoppers by tailoring products and services that are preferred by them.

Existing retail theories and research have mostly originated from 'Western' cultures (e.g., El Hedhli, Chebat & Sirgy, 2013). Most of the cross-culture consumer shopping behavior research has examined differences between Westerners and Asians (e.g., Schutte & Ciarlante, 1998; Li, Zhou, Nicholls, Zhuang & Kranendonk, 2004). From a Western perspective, it is believed that there are many similarities in consumer behavior within Asian cultural groups, due to similar cultures (Schutte & Ciarlante, 1998). However, differences do exist within Asian cultural groups, which are often not recognized from a Western perspective (Warden, Chen and Caskey, 2005; Cai and Shannon, 2012). In order to bridge this gap, this study aims to explore commonalities and differences in the shopping behaviors among mall shoppers in Eastern cultures. Specifically, the present study seeks to investigate how the mall shopping motives and shopping patterns of Chinese and Thai consumers varies, given the different core cultural values they share.

Prior study suggests that the importance of shopping motives lies in their significant influence on consumers' general evaluation of shopping malls (Allard, Babin & Chebat, 2009). In addition to understand *why* consumers shop, mall retailers can gain further insights about *how* consumers shop by investigating their shopping patterns (Li, et al., 2004). Accordingly, this study seeks to answer two research questions: 1) how do Chinese shoppers' mall shopping motives different from their Thai counterparts? 2) what are similarities and differences between the shopping patterns of Chinese and Thai shoppers?

2. Conceptual Background& Hypotheses

Mall Shopping Motives

Westbrook and Black (1985) propose that motives are "hypothetical and unobservable psychological constructs postulated to explain both the energized and directive aspects of human behavior" (p. 89). Given that motives are "forces instigating behavior to satisfy internal need states" (Westbrook and Black, 1985, p. 89), it is proposed that shopping motives can be defined as "the drivers of behavior that bring consumers to the marketplace to satisfy their internal needs." (Jin and Kim, 2003). Shopping motives are among the most heavily examined in the literature during past decades (Kesari & Atulkar, 2016; Atulkar & Kesari, 2017; Horváth & Adıgüzel, 2018), because understanding consumers' underlying shopping motivations provides retailers significant insights for developing successful market strategy by meeting consumers' needs and wants (Kesari & Atulkar, 2016). It also helps retailers to effectively anticipate customer traffic flows (Roy, 1994).

Moreover, shopping centers that provide offerings which match consumers' motives are more likely to attract them as regular patrons (El-Adly & Eid, 2016; Rahman, Wong & Yu, 2016). Shopping malls were initially conceptualized as a community center where people would converge for shopping, cultural activity, and social interaction (Gruen & Smith, 1960). Nevertheless, today's newer versions of mega-malls have been designed to go beyond these basic expectations and make them places not just centralized shopping alternatives, but places for entertainment and social and recreational activities (Csaba &Askegaard, 1999; Ng, 2003).

Prior research indicates that in general, consumers are motivated to shop at a mall for satisfying utilitarian and/or hedonic needs (Kesari & Atulkar, 2016; Atulkar & Kesari, 2017; Das & Varshneya, 2017; Horváth & Adıgüzel, 2018). Mall shoppers who visit the mall for utilitarian benefits tend to be deliberate, task-oriented, efficient, and rational. In other words, they visit the mall for necessity rather than for recreation (Farrag et al., 2010). In contrast, mall shoppers who visit the mall for hedonic benefits tend to value the entertainment and emotional benefits of the shopping (Farrag et al., 2010). They consider shopping a pleasurable activity due to the enjoyment and excitement experienced during a shopping trip (Hirschman, 1982; Schindler, 1989; Arnold & Reynolds, 2003).

The Influence of Chinese and Thai Cultural Values

According to Hofstede (1980), both Chinese and Thai cultures are collectivist in orientation. Collectivist cultures emphasize the roles of people as members of group, as well as the rules and principles concerning social shaming and social sanctions (Hofstede, 1991). In addition, it is suggested that collectivist culture possess qualities or values as prescribed by Confucian principles, including confrontation avoidance, face saving, high power distance, loyalty, family oriented, thrift, filial piety, and respect for authority (Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Triandis, 1995; Nakata & Sivakumar, 1996; Usunier, 1996; Schwartz, 1999; Carolyn, 2001). Traditional Chinese culture includes Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and a host of regional cultures. Among them, Confucianism is considered the most influential. It forms the foundation of the Chinese social and cultural value system (Zhang and Harwood, 2004), and provides the basis for the norms of Chinese interpersonal behavior (Fung, 1952; Pye, 1972; Liu, 1997; Tu, 1998).

In contrast, about 95 per cent of the Thai population is Buddhist, with the Theravada school being dominant. Ethnic Chinese constitute the most significant minority group in Thailand, making up about 15 per cent of the population (CIA World Factbook, 2004). As a result, Buddhism and Confucianism are two schools of thought that coexist and influence Thai culture. However, it is assumed that the impact of Confucianism may be stronger among the Chinese Thai rather than the Ethnic Thai group, whereas Buddhism plays a more important role to influence the majority Ethnic Thais.

A comparison between Chinese and Thai core cultural values indicates that except *mai pen rai*, present oriented and *sanuk* values, the rest of the Thai valuesseem to more or less overlap with the Chinese values. Those three values are specifically shaped by the Buddhist teachings, thus are represented as values unique to Thai society (Ovatsatit, 2007). The tendency of Thais to seek present or immediate gratification has been noted by several scholars (Skinner, 1962; Slagter & Kerbo, 2000). Ethnic Thais learn to enjoy life and to live life in the present and face little pressure to do otherwise. The present oriented value also has been influenced by the Buddhist concept of karma. The value of *mai pen rai* (literally, something doesn't matter) suggests that adverse outcomes will get better eventually, so one should not worry about them, while the value of *sanuk* (literally, fun and joy) reflects that Thais tend to view life as full of fun and joy and not to be taken too seriously, even in the context of work (Warner, 2003).Chetthamrongchai and Davies (2000) propose that hedonic shoppers score relatively high on present orientation, indicating that they are more concerned with what is happening now than in the past or in the future. Taken together, it is suggested that Thai shoppers will be more likely to shop for hedonic reasons.

The review above implies that while there are many similarities between the two cultures, some behavioral differences may be expected due to differing values. Culture can shape consumer behavior and lead to differences between groups. For instance, Chinese shoppers are cautious about spending and are less likely to make purchase during their shopping trip (Li et al., 2004). The Chinese saying "never make a purchase until you have compared three shops"

(*Huo Bi San Jia*) reflects the typical searching behavior of Chinese consumers. In addition, China's ruling party over the past four decades has also been extolling the virtue of thriftiness and discouraging a hedonic life style (which is viewed as self-indulgent and wasteful). As a result, it is socially desirable to save money and be a meticulous shopper in China (Wang & Rao, 1995).

Overall, these claims lend additional support to the empirical findings that Chinese mall shoppers are more likely to be utilitarian driven (Tse, Belk & Zhou, 1989; Tse, 1996; Nicholls et al., 2000; Tsang, Zhuang, Li & Zhou, 2003; Li et al., 2004). Babin, Darden and Griffin (1994) assert that utilitarian shoppers tend to shop intentionally and always taking efficiency into account; in contrast, hedonic shoppers tend to behavior less seriously, whichmainly result from their emotional and recreational experience. Therefore, we propose that:

H1a: Chinese mall shoppers will exhibit stronger utilitarian shopping motives than their Thai counterparts.

H1b: Thai mall shoppers will exhibit stronger hedonic shopping motives than their Chinese counterparts.

A further review of literature reveals that utilitarian shoppers tend to view shopping a work/burden rather than fun (Rao & Monroe, 1989; Sherry 1990; Nicholls et al. 2000), and they are more time conscious than recreational shoppers (Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980; Wilson & Holman 1984).Therefore, compared with hedonic shoppers, they are less likely to spend relatively long time in the mall and visit malls frequently (Talpade and Haynes, 1997; Tsang et al., 2003; Stoel et al., 2004; Kim, Christiansen, Feinberg and Choi, 2005).Thus:

H2: Chinese mall shoppers will shop less frequently than their Thai counterparts.

H3: Chinese mall shoppers will stay shorter in the mall than their Thai counterparts.

As one of important situational factors, time can influence shopping behavior significantly. Researchers have found that shortage of time can lead to reduction in purchases (Iyer, 1989; Park, Iyer and Smith, 1989). Shoppers who spent more time tend to spend more money and visit more stores in the mall (Nicholls, Roslow and Dublish, 1997). Shoppers in collectivist culture have found prefer go shopping as a group (Nicholls et al., 1997). Those who shop with others tend to visit more stores and do more purchase in the mall (Nicholls et al., 1997).

Dholakia (1999) proposes that one of the benefits to shop with others is to gain shopping enjoyment. Consistent with this notion, it is found that compared with utilitarian shoppers, hedonic shoppers are more likely to shop with companions (Li et al., 2004). Driven by the *sanuk* value, which emphasizes fun and joy, it is expected that Thais will be more likely to shop in a group than Chinese do.

H4: Chinese mall shoppers will visit less stores than their Thai counterparts.

H5: Chinese mall shoppers will spend less money than their Thai counterparts.

H6: Chinese mall shoppers will shop with less companions than their Thai counterparts.

3. Research Methodology

Data Collection and Sample Characteristics

A self-administered web-based survey with convenience sampling was used to collect the data in both countries. Screening questions are provided in the questionnaire, so the qualified respondents are those who have ever been to a shopping mall, which located in metropolitan city in the past two months and are at least 20 years old. The total number of usable returned questionnaires was 643, with 320 in China, and 323 in Thailand, with a response rate of 50% in each country. After the data editing and cleaning, the final number of questionnaires with no missing values in all variables under analysis was 305 in China, and 308 in Thailand.

The characteristics of the respondents are reported in Table 1. Consistent with previous studies, the respondents in the present study were also dominated by females (Dholakia, Pedersen and Hikmet, 1995; Nicholls et al., 2002). Respondents in both countries were relatively young (20-38 years old), with a high educational background (bachelor degree or higher) and a middle-income level (10,000-30,000 Baht/ 2,00-6,000 Yuan). Overall, a further analysis revealed that compared to Chinese respondents, Thai respondents were older, tend to be single with no children, have higher educational levels and monthly income.

Table 1: Respondent Profile

Characteristic	China	Thailand	Characteristic	China	Thailand
Gender*(%)*			**Education***(%)*		
Male	33.8	28.2	Junior High and below	0.7	0.3
Female	66.2	71.8	High School	5.9	1.0
			Diploma	23.9	2.9
			Bachelor	62.0	52.9
			Master	5.6	41.6
			Phd	2.0	1.3
Age *(%)*			**Occupation***(%)*		
20-26 years old	56.7	31.8	White collar	67.2	64.3
27-38 years old	38.7	52.9	Blue collar	3.9	0.6
39-50 years old	3.9	10.1	Student	19.3	19.2
51-67 years old	0.7	5.2	Private business	4.6	13.6
			Retired	0.3	0.3
			Unemployed	4.6	1.9
Marital Status*(%)*			**Income***(%)*		
Single	65.9	77.3	Under 2,000 Yuan/ 10,000 Baht	31.8	17.2
Married	31.1	21.4	2,000- 4,000 Yuan/ 10,000-20,000 Baht	30.8	23.7
Divorced	0.3	1.0	4,001 – 6,000 Yuan/20,001-30,000 Baht	20.3	15.6
Others	2.6	0.3	6,001 – 80,000 Yuan/30,001-40,000 Baht	6.2	13.6
			80,001 – 10,000 Yuan/40,001-50,000 Baht	6.2	8.8
			10,000 Yuan/50,000 Baht and above	4.6	21.1

Measures

Items to measure shopping motives were modified from the scale developed by Nicholls et al., (2000). It consists of three items to measure utilitarian shopping and seven items to measure hedonic/social shopping. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which each item described their shopping motives based on six-point Likert-type scales anchored by not at all descriptive /very descriptive.

Shopping frequency was operationalized by presenting respondents three options: less than once per week, once per week and more than once per week. Time spent in the mall was operationalized by presenting respondents five options that range from 30 minutes to more than 120 minutes. Money spent in the mall was operationalized by presenting respondents four options that range from less than 100 Yuan/ 500 Baht to more than 1000 Yuan/ 5000 Baht.

Number of stores visited was operationalized by presenting respondents four options that range from 1 to 3 stores to more than 10 stores. Number of companions to shop with was operationalized by presenting respondents five options that ranged from 0 to 4 and more.

4. Results& Discussions

Shopping Motives

Table 2: Differences in Shopping Motives between Chinese and Thai Shoppers (n_{China}=305, n_{Thai}=308)

	China (*n*=305) Mean	**Thailand (*n*=308) Mean**	**F Value**	**Sig.**
Utilitarian Motives				
To get ideas for future purchase	<u>4.43</u>	3.56	61.48	0.00
To make a specific purchase	4.37	<u>4.88</u>	27.32	0.00
To shop in a specific store	3.76	<u>4.51</u>	46.85	0.00
Overall Mean	*4.19*	*4.32*	*3.09*	*0.08*
Hedonic Motives				
To hunt for bargains	3.28	4.01	36.23	0.00
To look and browse	<u>4.42</u>	<u>4.52</u>	1.03	0.31
To hangout	4.19	4.22	0.10	0.75
To meet and spend time together with friends	4.09	4.25	1.70	0.19
Appointment with someone	4.08	4.38	6.58	0.01
To eat	3.61	4.42	54.40	0.00
To escape from routine life	3.37	3.37	0.00	0.98
Overall Mean	*3.86*	*4.17*	*16.41*	***0.00***

One-way ANOVA was utilized to compare the differences in shopping motives across two countries. As can be seen from Table 2, in terms of being labeled as utilitarian, inconsistent with our expectation, significant difference was not found between Chinese and Thais (*p*=.08). Thus, H1awas not supported. As expected, Thai respondents were found to show significantly stronger hedonic motives to shop at the malls (*p*=.00), supporting H1b. According to the results, both Chinese and Thais are motivated to shop in a mall mainly for purchase-related reasons. This is consistent with what Roth (1995) suggested in that collectivistic shoppers tend to fulfill functional needs rather than experiential needs.

It was found that Chinese visit a mall for getting ideas for future purchase first (m=4.43), followed by making a specific purchase (m=4.37). Similarly, Thais visited a mall mainly for making a specific purchase (m=4.88), followed by making a purchase in a specific store (m=4.51). Given their more purchase driven motives, it is suggested that compared to Chinese, Thais are more likely to do some shopping plans in advance.

The reason to shop at a specific store may be due to the fact that they are relatively more familiar with the mall and know exactly which stores sell the products they want. In contrast, the more information-driven behavior of Chinese may be due to prudence and risk-averse value shared by Chinese. By having these values in mind, Chinese may compare among shops before they purchase, even if the product is low involvement, therefore, information is necessary for making an appropriate pre-purchase evaluation. Further, it is found that as suggested by literature (e.g., Tse et al., 1989; Tse, 1996; Nicholls et al., 2000; Li et al., 2004), Chinese are more likely to shop for utilitarian reasons alone. One possible explanation may be that hedonic consumption goes hand-in-hand with economic development. Campbell (1987) argues that hedonic shoppers tend to use disposable income to satisfy their ever-growing desires for consumption. Similarly, positive relationships between economic development and non-utilitarian consumption have been found in Western developed countries and some developed Asian cities (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996; Tse, Belk, & Zhou, 1989). According to the results of the present study, Thais are found more likely to shop for both utilitarian and hedonic/social reasons. Some possible reasons may be that Thai respondents in the present study have relatively higher income compared to their Chinese counterparts; in addition, they exhibited significant more importance on "an exciting life", a value that motivates personal fun and enjoyment.

In addition, the early emergence of malls in Thailand and its rapid retailing growth during 1986-1997 may also change the meaning of shopping in Thai shoppers' minds, therefore, they may behave more like modern shoppers who seek to satisfy diverse needs rather than purchase alone. In contrast, the emergence of shopping malls in China was 20 years behind that in Thailand. Moreover, China is still in its transitional economy, thus Chinese may demand more material goods (Belk & Zhou, 1987; Balan, 1999) than symbolic satisfaction (Belk, 1999), they may still possess a more traditional view of shopping. This may be especially true for those with lower disposable income. Therefore, Chinese are more likely to shop for utilitarian reasons, whereas Thais are more likely to shop for multiple reasons.

It is also interesting to note that although Thai shoppers were found more likely to shop for hedonic reasons compared to their Chinese counterparts, consumers in both countries share some universal hedonic motives to visit the mall, namely to look and browse, hangout and to meet friends. This finding suggests that the notion concerning malls as places for leisure and socializing is forming in China. This notion may be better established in Thailand, given more Thai shoppers visited the mall for making appointments with their friends and dining out.

Shopping Patterns

As indicated in Table 3, Chinese and Thais shop statistically different in their frequency (p=.008). Specially, more Chinese shop less than once per week in the mall than do Thais (56.4% vs. 45.1%). The result is consistent with what we expected that Chinese will shop less frequently than Thais. Therefore, H2 was supported. Contrary to our expectation, the result shown in Table 4 indicates that Chinese and Thais spend similar duration of time in the mall in each trip (p=.850). Thus, H3, which hypothesizes that Chinese will stay shorter in the mall was not supported.

Table 3: How often do you shop at this mall (χ^2=9.671, p=.008)

	China		**Thailand**	
Frequency	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**
< once per week	172	56.4	139	45.1
Once per week	77	25.2	111	36.1
> once per week	56	18.4	58	18.8
Total	305	100	308	100

Table 4: How long do you spend per trip (χ^2=1.366, *p*=.850)

Frequency	China #	%	Thailand #	%
1-30 minutes	7	2.3	11	3.6
30-60 minutes	61	20	55	17.9
60-90 minutes	99	32.5	104	33.8
90-120 minutes	72	23.6	70	22.7
More than 120 minutes	66	21.6	68	22.1
Total	305	100	308	100

Table 5 presents the total number of stores visited by each shopper per trip. Chinese and Thais are statistically different in this regard (*p*=.000). Specifically, Chinese tend to visit more stores than Thais do. More than half of Chinese report that they visited at least 7 stores, while more than half of Thais report that they visited 1-6 stores. The result is consistent H4, which suggests that Chinese shoppers will visit more stores than their Thai counterparts.

Table 5: How many stores do you visit per trip (χ^2=63.964, *p*=.000)

Frequency	China #	%	Thailand #	%
1-3 stores	44	14.4	89	28.9
4-6 stores	89	29.2	129	41.9
7-9 stores	57	18.7	54	17.5
10 and more stores	115	37.7	36	11.7
Total	305	100	308	100

Unexpectedly, statistical difference was not found on money spend per trip between Chinese and Thais(*p*=.670). As can be seen from Table 6, on average, majority of shoppers across nations spend 100 to 500 Yuan or 500 to 2500 Baht per trip.H5, which proposes that Chinese mall shoppers will spend less money than Thai shoppers, was not supported.

Table 6: How much do you spend at this mall per time (χ^2=1.554, *p*=.670)

Frequency	China #	%	Thailand #	%
<100 Yuan / 500 Baht	40	13.1	32	10.4
100-500 Yuan / 500-2500 Baht	209	68.5	217	70.5
500-1000 Yuan / 2500-5000 Baht	49	16.1	49	15.9
>1000 Yuan / 5000 Baht	7	2.3	10	3.2
Total	305	100	308	100

In line with our hypothesis, Thais tend to shop with more companions than their Chinese counterparts do (*p*=.000). As shown in Table 7, over half of Chinese reported that they shop by their own or with one companion, whereas only about 33% of Thais reported the same. Majority of Thais (45.5%) tend to shop with two companions. Therefore, H6was fully supported.

Table 7: How many companions do you shop with per trip (χ^2=1.025, *p*=.000)

	China		Thailand	
Frequency	#	%	#	%
Zero	22	7.2	60	19.5
One	147	48.2	41	13.3
Two	111	36.4	140	45.5
Three	20	6.6	40	13
Four and more	5	1.6	27	8.8
Total	305	100	308	100

Ho, Ong and Lee (1997) found that Asian shoppers in the United States do not differ much in their shopping patterns except for a few situations. This finding, although not directly related to the present study, may help to infer that some universal shopping patterns could be expected between Chinese and Thais. Overall, the result of analysis reveals that their shopping patterns are different in the majority of respects that include shopping frequency, number of stores visited, and number of companions to shop with. Respondents in both countries were only found similar in terms of money and time spent in the mall.

Previous studies propose that hedonic shoppers tend to visit malls more frequently and spend more time in the mall (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980). In contrast, utilitarian shoppers tend visit the malls only when they need to buy something (Fischer and Arnold, 1990), therefore, they spend less time in the mall and are less likely to visit the mall frequently. Accordingly, we should expect less time spent and lower shopping frequency by Chinese in the present study. Unexpectedly, it was found that although Chinese shopped less frequently than Thais did, but they spent same length of time in the mall.

A plausible explanation may be that mall industry is still in its infant stage, the density of malls is relatively lower in China, in addition, majority of newly developed malls are huge in size (Wong et al., 2001), therefore, with limited choices, they are more likely to stay longer in the mall. Similarly, the fact that consumers in both countries share similar amount of expenditure (i.e., around 100-500 Yuan or 500-2500 Baht) per trip should be interpreted with cautions as well. Given that Thai respondents in the present study have comparatively higher income levels, the same amount of spending by Chinese respondents suggested that actually Chinese spent a higher proportion of their monthly income shopping in the mall.

Compared to Thais, Chinese also visited more stores. This is in line with previous finding that Chinese shoppers tended to gather more information before doing any purchase. It is reasonable to assume that the more stores they visit, the more information they will collect. In contrast, as Thai shoppers do more direct purchase, with a product in mind, they are more likely to shop directly in the target stores rather than collecting information in advance. Perhaps due to their bigger family size, together with their stronger needs for socializing, Thais shop with more companions compared with their Chinese counterparts.

Table 8: Summary of Hypotheses and Empirical Support

Hypotheses	Support?
H1a: Chinese mall shoppers will exhibit stronger utilitarian shopping motives than their Thai counterparts.	No
H1b: Thai mall shoppers will exhibit stronger hedonic shopping motives than their Chinese counterparts.	**Yes**
H2: Chinese mall shoppers will shop less frequently than their Thai counterparts.	**Yes**
H3: Chinese mall shoppers will stay shorter in the mall than their Thai counterparts.	No
H4: Chinese mall shoppers will visit less stores than their Thai counterparts.	**Yes**
H5: Chinese mall shoppers will spend less money than their Thai counterparts.	No
H6: Chinese mall shoppers will shop with less companions than their Thai counterparts.	**Yes**

5. Conclusions

The results of the present study suggest that similarities and differences are co-exist in the mall shopping behavior among Chinese and Thai consumers. Table 8 summaries our findings. The findings may provide important marketing insights for mall managers. First, giventhe increasing homogeneous among shopping malls and more and more sophisticated and diversified consumer needs and wants, mall managers who understand the underlying motives of consumers' mall shopping behavior may gain further insights in positioning a distinctive mall image to retain their existing shoppers and win over new shoppers from their competitors. Second, by focusing on the underlying shopping motives, mall managers will be able to tailor more effective communication strategies to drive consumers' mall patronage. Third, our findings suggest that shopping motive can be used as alternative basis to segment the mall shoppers. Finally, the cross-national evidence of similarities and differences between Chinese and Thai consumers may provide explanations for how shoppers differ cross-nationally, which makes intuitive sense for international mall managers when they determine whether localization or standardization marketing strategies should be developed.

Limitations & Future Research

As with any other research, this study has several limitations. First, our study only focuses on Chinese and Thai consumers in a mall setting. It is not clear if the comparison between China and other Eastern countries, such as Singapore, Malaysia or Japan will generate similar results. Thus, more cross-national comparisons among other Eastern countries should be conducted to enhance the external validity of our results. Second, our sample is somewhat dominated by female respondents, likely due to the nature of the shopping mall. Thus, caution should be taken when generalizing the findings to male consumers. Future study may replicate the study with more balanced gender composition to fully validate the results.

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