

(一) 近五年內主要研究成果說明

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(二) 研究計畫之背景及目的

Core Cultural Shopping Mediators in the Media Servicescape: A Study of Marketing Metaphors

Introduction

Previous Uncovered Metaphors in Shopping Relationship

The importance of understanding the culturally specific shopping metaphors lies in the relationship between the service provider and customer. While relationship building has been emphasized in marketing literature of late, much of this is oriented towards Western assumptions of what relationship means. If we are to truly adopt relationship marketing approaches, we must first understand what do consumers in culturally distant settings, such as Chinese culture compared to American culture, hold as core cultural relationship values. The objective of this research project is to uncover and clarify culturally specific behaviors and codes imbedded in the servicescape of numerous shopping environments for Chinese culture when compared to American and Japanese cultures. This research directly expands on the conclusions of the authors previous findings examining metaphors of shopping across American, Japanese, and Chinese cultures within the television home shopping environment. That previous exploratory work found important differences that can be summarized as American emphasis on friendship (fraternity), Japanese emphasis on service formality (sabisu), and Chinese disposition towards an exciting and busy shopping environment (renao).

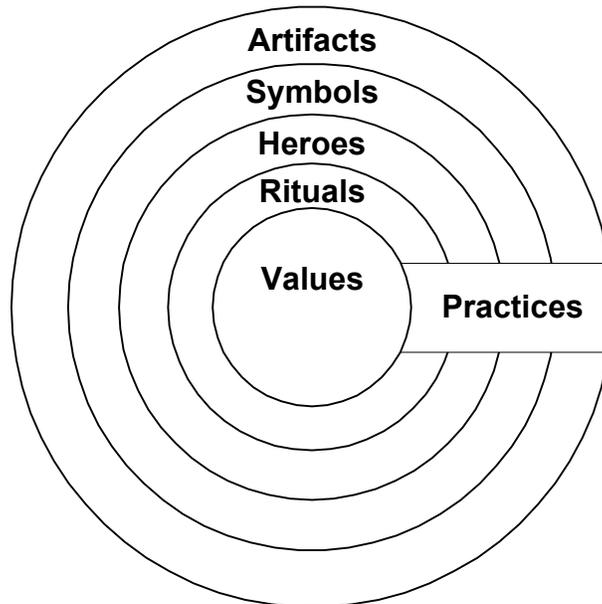
Research Motivation

Define Relationship:

Shopping relationships can be implemented through salespeople in physical settings or program hosts in television settings, in the case of QVC (the Quality, Value, Convenience network—the leading American television home shopping network), who carry on conversations with repeat customers on air. Relationships developed between the salesperson and shopper

were found to reduce perceived risk while increasing purchase intent (Kim & Lennon, 2000). Creating a warm and intimate environment through, “. . . a sense of friendship and intimacy . . .” (Stephens, Hill, & Bergman 1996, p. 196) This feeling is accomplished through techniques such as friendly greetings, encouraging friendship through discussion of personal topics, introducing family members that use the products, and self-disclosure of interest or use of the product. Nevertheless, behaviors such as these appear highly related to American culture’s emphasis on informality, individuality, and neighborly friendship. Thus, we assert that at the core of the marketing relationship specific cultural values must be considered. Since these values cannot be directly observed (see Figure 1; Hofstede, 1997), we propose to measure shopping behavior of Chinese consumers in order to elaborate the core values for specific shopping contexts.

Figure 1. Core cultural values cannot be directly observed (adapted from Hofstede, 1997)



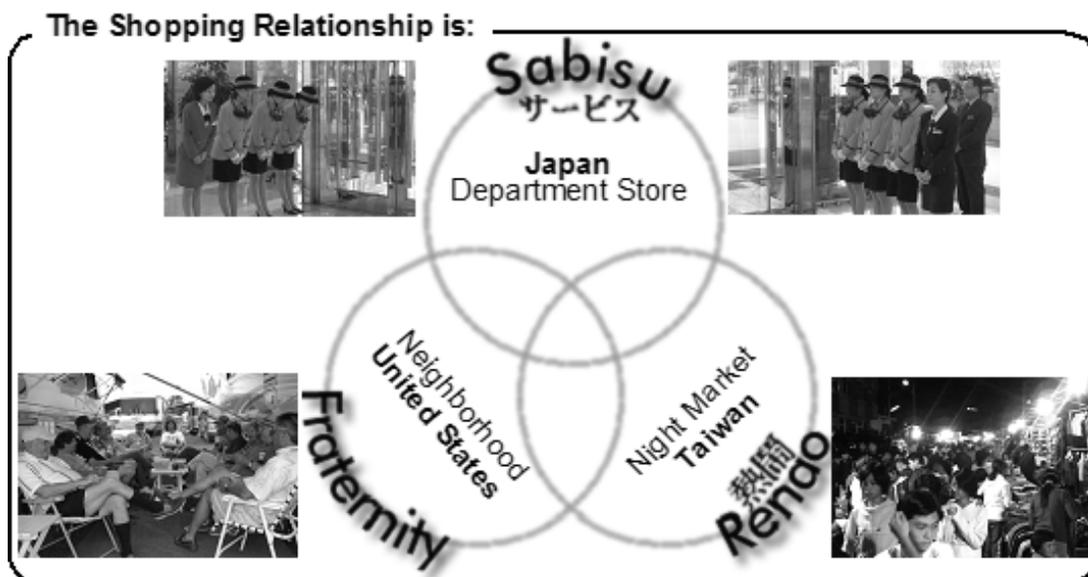
The outside layers of the cultural onion are all more easily accessed by people outside of the culture, while the inside layers are accessed only with increasing difficulty. Outermost layers are more commercial in nature, easily shared, require only somewhat reduced levels of ethnocentrism and, most important to this research proposal, can act as a point of entry to the deeper levels of the cultural onion. Shopping behavior observed at the top layers can lead to insights of the internal values (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997). Underlying culturally specific values, or what Hall (1980) labeled cultural code, embedded within the analogies can be further drawn out to develop metaphors for each culture’s shopping relationship with implications in

other marketing contexts (Cornelissen, 2003). Usunier (1996, p. 51) states that “All countries have their traders and merchants, and since marketing is a powerful tool for developing and controlling existing and new businesses, they may rightfully borrow it. However in doing so, they transform it and then integrate it into their own culture.”

Contextualization

Emphasizing mood and image through a low-key selling approach is more effective in high-context cultures when compared with direct and explicit explanation of products or discount prices (Han & Shavitt, 1994). Direct marketing messages common in the West may be perceived as offensive in cultures where harmony within the group (collectivism) is emphasized (Taylor, Franke, & Maynard, 2000; Taylor, Miracle, & Wilson, 1997). Eastern cultures emphasize a long-term personal relationship with their customers (Kazuo, 2000). Personal associations are dominated by distinctions on numerous social levels. The American assumed friendliness of greeting a stranger, for example, may be misplaced in Chinese culture, where strangers are ignored, and one will remain such until introduced by a common association.

Previous research by the author combined content analysis with local observations and interviews, resulting in a grounded theory expressed through shopping relationship metaphors of television home shopping across three cultures. These culturally specific shopping metaphors are summarized here:



American shopping metaphor previously found

Putnam's (2000) observation that Americans have a strong desire for community and fraternity is reminiscent of Tocqueville's observation that Americans easily form associations (1850/1969, p. 516). Although such proclivity has fluctuated throughout American history (Gamm & Putnam, 1999), Americans view it with nostalgia, related to living in small communities where everyone knew each other and had time to associate. Modern associations, however, are often based on consumption patterns and common interest involving mass-produced consumer goods. Kozinets (2001), for example, found that the Star Trek subculture provided boundaries that allowed consumers to legitimize their consumption through fraternity of fandom (group of fans). A traditional American value tapped in marketing relationships that enables a relationship. Consequentially, the text of mass sales through mass media is mutated to a friendly and personal text of window shopping with friends, friendly advice (word of mouth), and family values. Thus the American shopping relationship is Fraternity.

Chinese shopping metaphor previously found

Yu (1995, 2004) observed that the quality of *renao* (熱鬧) is a requirement for successful Chinese night markets. *Renao* is often translated as lively, bustling, and exciting. Crissman (1972/1994) noted that local shopping among Taiwan residents in 1967-68 was often passed up in favor of traveling to a location with crowds and noisy activity of any kind. Locations with lots of activity are positive described as *renao* (DeGlopper, 1995) and highly sought out.

Modern night markets highly resemble historical descriptions and show little decline, as we found them packed and noisy, with lines of customers crammed together pushing down narrow walkways between stalls with owners hawking products in loud yells and occasionally with bull horns. A din of music can always be heard from the ever present CD sales stalls (often playing and selling pirated foreign CDs, VCDs and DVDs). We previously observed large numbers of youths, most often teens, visiting in groups made up of classmates and friends. "It's exciting and fun to come to the night market with my friends . . . Bargaining for a lower price can get a great deal." Bargaining behavior, so vital to the *renao* atmosphere of night markets, is

replaced in television home shopping by a parallel night market behavior of bundling products with free add-ons. Therefore, we assert that the Chinese shopping relationship is renao.

Japanese shopping metaphor previously found

The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO, 2003) points out that department stores in Japan place a strong emphasis on service. Such service not only includes staff available to assist customers, but also service in the sense of convenience such as helping in gift selection, home delivery, store location, and store design. The department store retail trend first appearing in France and America (late 19th century), emphasized lower prices with high inventory turnover, satisfaction guarantees, and wide category selection (Miller, 1981). When imported into Japan (early 20th century), this emphasis become distinctly Japanese with special services such as co-opting the Japanese tradition of gift-giving, and then developing new holidays centered around gifts. Mitsukoshi, Japan's oldest department store, led the trend of importing foreign ideas. As Creighton (1991, p. 677) points out, "If department stores are successful at creating meaning, their offerings will sell, and the stores may elude the appearance of being 'hard-sell' artists."

As department stores began their growth in Japan, the English word service was imported into the Japanese vocabulary: *sabisu* (サービス). Previously, the Japanese word for service (*fengshi* 奉仕) was used in the context of service to one's country or superiors. The Japanese language has a specific phonetic alphabet for imported Western vocabulary (Katakana), generally sounding similar to their original foreign pronunciations, but often taking on unique Japanese meanings. In the case of *sabisu*, this is most obvious when used to indicate something is included for free, given to special customers, or part of an extended (long-term) relationship. *Sabisu* is central to department stores in Japan and is more broadly considered important to all Japanese marketing relationships. In our visits to Japanese department stores in Japan, we often found gift departments with customers sitting at computer terminals being personally counseled by employees, guiding them through the correct gifts and delivery: "They can take care of everything for you here. They have good service."

Large numbers of employees are nearby for the all-important, intricate, and meaningful gift wrapping (Matsunaga, 2000, p. 62). As Barthes (1970/1982, p. 46) states, "Thus the box acts the sign: as envelope, screen, mask, it is *worth* what it conceals, protects, and yet

designates.” This packaging is signaled throughout the department store’s servicescape, from the packaging of elevator girls (in their smart uniforms and mechanistic precision). Even a small two meter square area can be immersed in details of the product to the extent that one must search out what the specific product for sale is. This signals the shopper the product is not simply a physical goods, but is part of a larger meaning, thus giving a feeling of good *sabisu*.

Sabisu was brought to the television screen by taking time to show each product in detail, such as close-ups of clothing seams (Economist, 2003), while contextualizing products. As in department stores, every detail of the servicescape serves to bring meaning to the shopping relationship. This approach is implemented right down to the wooden paneling and floor boards for a living room set or the porcelain tiles of a kitchen. In contrast, the American set displays objects behind the hosts in an abstract minimalist fashion to signal the setting, such as a bicycle and some tools hung on a wall to signify a hobby area. The contrast is even starker in the Chinese setting where no attempt to contextualize the product is made, like night market settings where stalls appear to be out of place (any location that can be *renao*) and out of time (an open light bulb refutes the time of night). In conclusion, the Japanese shopping relationship is *sabisu*.

Culturally bound strategies

Tapping into core cultural values can be a very successful customer service strategy. Like Wal-Mart’s emphasis on traditional American values, such as door greeters’ personal relationships with customers and the firm’s focus on employee independence and autonomy through ownership (associates). The same strategy placed in a different culture, however, can have radically different results. Schneider (1998, p. 296) points out Wal-Mart’s difficulty of reconciling globalization forces “. . . with a corporate culture that delivers promises of a vibrant local identity, based on mythic values of a disappearing Americana (a strong sense of community solidarity, parochialism, and exclusion).”

Insight through the servicescape

Rather than depending on the physical product, these behaviors make up what Bitner (1992) has labeled *servicescape*. “Similar to a tangible product’s package, the servicescape and other elements of physical evidence essentially ‘wrap’ the service and convey an external image

of what is ‘inside’ . . . the servicescape aids in the socialization of both employees and customers in the sense that it helps to convey expected roles, behaviors, and relationships. (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996, p. 524-5) ” Based on stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory, servicescapes help ease consumers into the consumption experience.

In its most basic form, servicescapes create within the visitor a reaction that is either positive (leading to a longer stay) or negative (leading to a shorter stay). Paco Underhill’s (1999) use of observation in real shopping contexts often points out the central importance of servicescape design. Interestingly, Underhill finds support to differentiate servicescapes based on gender (the third section of his book being titled: Men are from Sears hardware, Women are from Bloomingdale’s).

Importance of the servicescape depends on who actually comes into the service facility. Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) point out that the complexity of the service is another central factor. Although self-service has expanded, with the Web being almost entirely absent of employees, television shopping is a technology exhibiting just the opposite trend. Fitting into Zeithaml and Bitner’s typology (Table 1), television shopping is interpersonal (with both customer and employee entering the servicescape) and elaborate, requiring great attention to the servicescape in order to overcome the one-way medium of television and the lack of physical contact with the product.

Table 1. Zeithaml and Bitner servicescape typology

Servicescape usage	Complexity of the servicescape	
	Elaborate	Lean
Self-service (customer only)	Golf Amusement part	ATM Kiosk Movie theater
Interpersonal services (both customer and employee)	Hotels Restaurants Health clinic Hospital Bank Airline School	Dry cleaner Hot dog stand Hair salon
Remote service (employee only)	Telephone company Insurance company Utility Professional services	Telephone mail-order desk Automated Voice activated service

This research orientation

Since specific commercial messages sent in advertising can be assumed to reinforce cultural norms, the distorted mirror (Pollay, 1986), the servicescape in television shopping presents an excellent opportunity to study cultural differences in relationship marketing practices. Simply observing differences, however, may not result in meaningful theory development, since even slight differences in culturally-based practices can result in statistically significant differences. Albers-Miller (1996) found that simply examining content would be not as useful as finding theoretical constructs with explanatory power that can be used in marketing localization practices generally. They suggest that “the usefulness of cross-cultural research will be enhanced if a researcher utilizes anthropological and cultural measures to develop hypotheses specifying the direction and magnitude of anticipated differences between countries (Albers-Miller, 1996, p. 67).”

Taking into consideration the importance of servicescapes in television shopping, we propose to examine the culturally specific attributes that make up core-values of shopping behavior and the building of customer relationships. Observations will be collected on the components of numerous domestic servicescapes. Wong & Ahuvia (1998) pointed out that existing consumer research directions often are based on Western cultural assumptions, which differ from Asian ones namely in the area of individualism, and that influences the purposes products are obtained for, as well as their symbolic meaning. Through ethnographic data collection, we attempt to describe the cultural contexts that influence the servicescapes observed.

Previous work contrasting relationship marketing in China.

Direct marketing in China has been studied by Luk, Fullgrabe and Li (1999), who found its recent success to be based on Chinese cultural reliance on renqing and guanxi, which traditionally make up the basis for social relationships in Chinese culture. These two factors have been incorporated in the model of quanxi (Wong, 1998) that shows the importance of trust and adaptation to current needs in a relationship. Trust in Chinese business relations is often built upon renqing. This is especially important in Chinese culture due to high levels of risk aversion (UAI) and strong collective values (low IDV) (Wong, 1998). It would at first appear that Chinese culture, with its emphasis on relationships, owing favors, and face, is the perfect cultural setting for a highly relationship-based marketing approach. However, on closer examination, attributing marketing success to these traditional Confucian values may be misguided.

Confucianism centers more on what is common among people, and sharing it, then with exchange and short-term social relationship. As DeGlopper (1995, p. 18) states:

“Confucianism thus lacks a model of any sort of limited functionally specific, contractual social relation. It also lacks a model of any sort of social group other than such ascriptive, corporate, and primary ones as families or perhaps small and isolated hamlets. This means that it is impossible to use Confucian concepts or terminology to talk about a marketplace, a city, a wholesaler and his customers, a formal association, or a rotating credit society.”

The complimentary side of relationship is the responsibility it implies. For this very reason, shoppers may avoid family and other renqing entanglements by shopping in night markets where the large crowds make one anonymous (DeGlopper, 1972/1994). Hwang (1987) notes

“For an individual strongly conditioned by the rule of renqing who wishes to evade its entanglements, one way to do so is to leave the interpersonal network of the mixed tie. One may go to an unfamiliar community, establish instrumental ties with people there, and interact with them in accordance with the equity rule. For instance, when a merchant leaves his native place to earn a living in a distant town . . . The merchant who is doing business in a strange community may drive hard bargains with customers in order to maximize profits.”

In other words, renqing and quanxi do not act universally as influencing factors on consumers. These constructs lie more in the social (and for Chinese social is itself defined by family) than in the domain of commercial exchange behavior. Visiting a night market, a department store, or a restaurant may not be highly influenced by these factors, and to date the influence of such factors in influencing people to avoid renqing entanglements have not been taken into account. Thus the existing literature has a serious gap in understanding Chinese consumer behavior.

Research objectives

Our first goal is to elaborate on the servicescape characteristics that support the relationship with the shopper. Existing observations of what constitutes American shopping relationships will be reviewed and combined with preliminary data from our previous research in America, Japan, and Taiwan. Secondly, we will draw out the core values represented in Chinese cultures' approach to relationship building with the consumer. Integrating existing shopping literature, direct observation, and historical data, we will propose the underlying shopping metaphors for each of the unique servicescape environments. These shopping metaphors will contain the basis for forming the marketing relationship. Content analysis is employed to uncover the mechanisms that implement or enable the metaphors, followed up with conjoint analysis. The differences and similarities can then act as departure points for future localized marketing efforts and research.

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(三) 研究方法、進行步驟及執行進度

Method

Before any internal response, a shopper encounters the most immediate environmental dimensions appearing on the screen. According to Bitner (1992), these include Ambient Conditions, Space/Function, and Signs, Symbols & Artifacts (see Table 2). These are all very culturally bound symbols and artifacts. Thus we will center our attention on the servicescape in order to uncover the meaningful underlying culturally specific relationships.

Table 2. Variables under study

Bitner	Example
Ambient conditions	Temperature, lighting, noise, music, scent, and color
Space/function	Machinery, equipment, and furnishing layout Capability of items to facilitate accomplishment of customer and employee goals
Signs, symbols & artifacts	Signs displayed on exterior & interior Quality of construction materials
Employee response	Employee actions/behavior
Customer response	Customer actions/behavior

Research stages

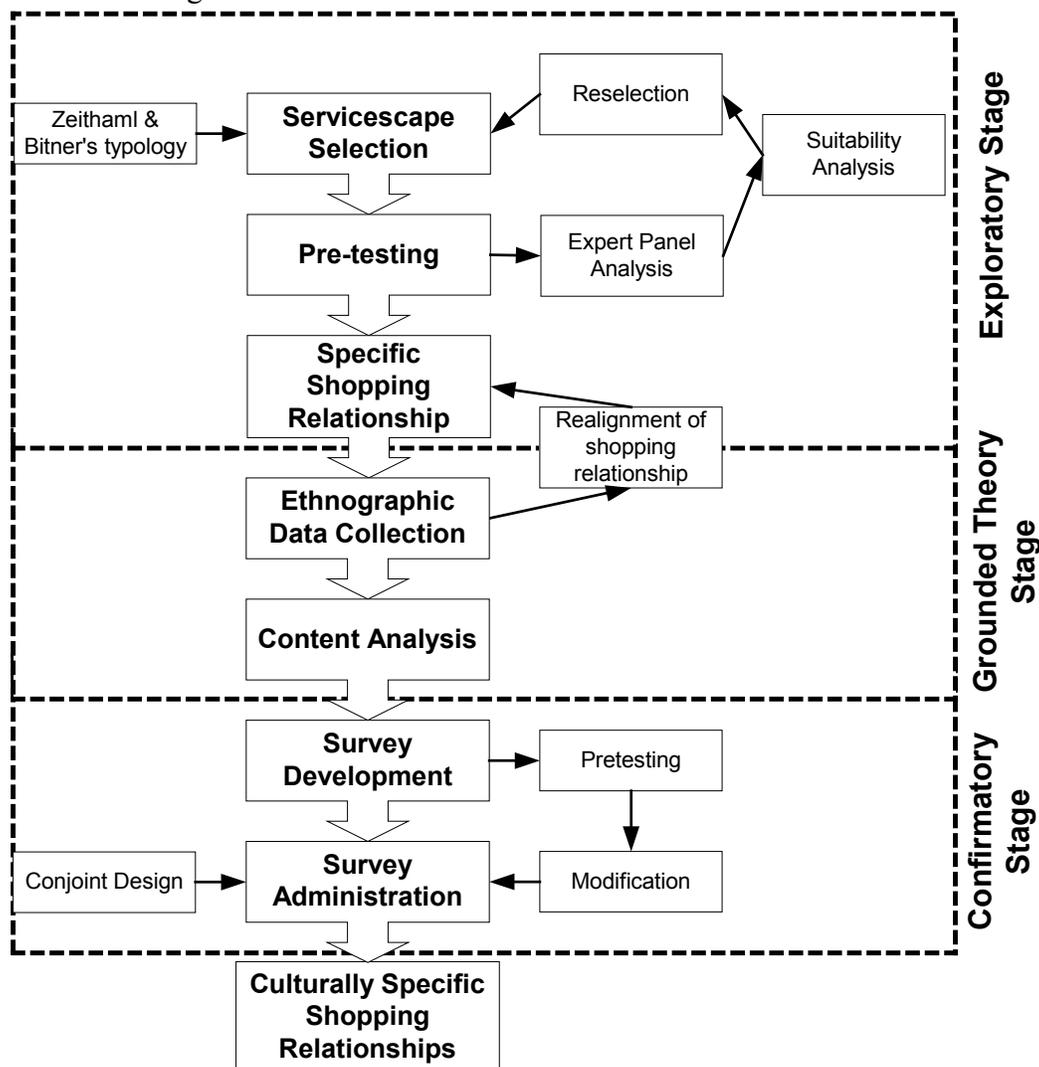
Since human behaviors are the center of this research, an inductive approach is adopted that is later confirmed in a deductive analysis. This combination of research techniques allows for richer theory development, with more cultural specificity than simply survey administration. By completion, all the recommended servicescape research approaches (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996) will be employed (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Servicescape research approaches

Environment Surveys	Experiments
Photographic Blueprints	Direct Observation

The general stages of this project include first exploratory, where specific servicescapes for study are drawn out and initial shopping relationships generalized. Second, the grounded theory stage includes contextual study of Chinese consumer behavior within the specific servicescape (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997; Underhill, 1999). Results from the second stage are then confirmed through content analysis, including use of video recording, photography, and direct observation. During the last part of this stage, the core shopping relationships are tested for validity through a survey that includes experimental conditions eliciting reactions from respondents in order to finally confirm and measure the relative importance of the shopping relationships drawn out.

Figure 3. Research stages



Sample

Based on Hofstede's (1997) dimensions, the Chinese cultural setting is located well for testing contrasting values with standard Western, specifically American, relationship values (see Table 3). Taiwan offers the best opportunity for generalizing any results to the emerging greater China market since Taiwan shares history, language and many cultural traits with mainland China. Oyserman, Coon and Kimmelmeier, (2002) has raised questions concerning the convergent validity and antithetical relationship of the individualism and collectivism construct such that generalizations may not be supportable in all cases. In that same study Oyserman et al. (2002, p. 23) did clearly find a contrast between U.S.A. respondents and the Chinese people of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong on measures of individualism (IND) and collectivism (COL), writing, "Americans are higher in IND and lower in COL than are Chinese people in PR China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and effects for these comparisons with Chinese are large." Albers-Miller (1996) found many differences among eleven countries' when using Hofstede's dimensions, yet warn that communication style may simply differ and not always be related to these cultural dimensions.

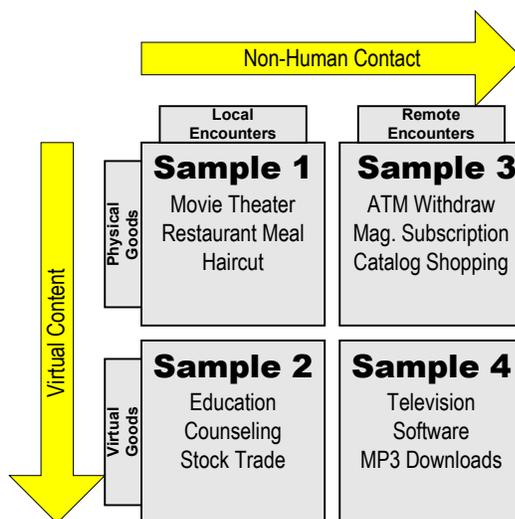
Table 3. Hofstede's six combined distance measures for U.S.A., Japan, and Taiwan

	Power distance & individualism	Power distance & masculinity	Masculinity & individualism	Masculinity & uncertainty avoidance	Uncertainty avoidance & individualism	Power distance & uncertainty avoidance
U.S.A.	Small power distance Individualist	Small power distance Masculine	Individualist Masculine	Weak uncertainty avoidance Masculine	Weak uncertainty avoidance Individualist	Small power distance Weak uncertainty avoidance
Japan	Large power distance Collectivist	Large power distance masculine	Collectivist Masculine	Strong uncertainty avoidance Masculine	Strong uncertainty avoidance Collectivist	Large power distance Strong uncertainty avoidance
Taiwan	Large power distance Collectivist	Large power distance Feminine	Collectivist Feminine	Strong uncertainty avoidance Feminine	Strong uncertainty avoidance Collectivist	Large power distance Strong uncertainty avoidance

The next stage of sampling is the specific servicescapes to be examined. As Figure 4 shows, we will attempt to sample from each of the four servicescapes, each having a different level of human contact and virtual content. In this way, it will be possible to find relationships that Chinese value across all settings, while other relationship characteristics may be specific to certain servicescapes, industries, or product/services. Through an expert panel, the representation of a proposed specific servicescape will be judged for suitability, and feedback fed into reselection if required. Once the shopping servicescape sampled are determined, initial

marketing relationships will be formed. These are based on past literature in both business and anthropology, and act as starting points for the interactive research process of the next stage: the grounded theory research stage.

Figure 4. Sampling differing servicescape



Grounded theory

Grounded theory is an inductive research approach that can include both qualitative and quantitative data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) and is used to identify categories and concepts that emerge from the subjects under study by deconstructing and then re-arranging text to find linking concepts forming substantive theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Such an approach can be helpful when attempting to uncover consumer-related constructs (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997). The three coding stages (not necessarily sequential) are termed open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin 1998), resulting in a systematic, dense, explanatory theory.

Open coding examines text for low-level categories, while interactively examining how other data fit into the categories, an interactive process described as the *constant comparative method* by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Axial coding combines categories in a scheme or paradigm, where the phenomenon is contextualized and new data tested against the developing paradigm, with contradictory observations incorporated to bring depth of understanding (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Selective coding identifies a small number of core categories that then act as the framework for the grounded theory. This final stage is often overlooked, yet has the most

implications as it supplies theory that can later be tested further and developed in a deductive research approach (Priest, Roberts, & Woods, 2002).

Content analysis

Content analysis is next applied to the core grounded theory concepts drawn out during the ethnographic work. Photographic blueprint analysis (this includes photographs, videos, recordings, and transcribed interview data) is included in this stage to bring a deductive approach to bear. Results from the content analysis allow narrowing of and increased quantification of the servicescapes' relationship content characteristics. The results should be able to fit into marketing metaphors which can then be used generally in many shopping contexts, while also used to form specific parts of servicescapes in any of the four servicescape locations.

Survey design (conjoint analysis)

A direct result of the content analysis is the ability to create experimental studies that test the impact of inclusion of the relationship characteristics with in the servicescape. For this study, a survey will be administered along the lines of a conjoint analysis that will allow specific utility values to be drawn out.

(四) 預期完成之工作項目及成果

Expected Results

Each stage of the proposed research will result in useful applications in one of the three topic areas of marketing theory construction, local (within Taiwan specifically and China in general) application in servicescape design, and globally for foreign firms designing servicescapes for their offerings in Asian settings (see Table 4). Both exploratory and grounded theory results offer an opportunity to build an inductive foundation of consumer behavior observation specific to Chinese shopping behavior that has not been well covered in the existing marketing literature. The confirmatory deductive results from the content analysis supply specific descriptions of what is commonly included in Chinese servicescapes. This can give local business operators and educators an inventory of characteristics that can be aligned with

specific product categories or industries and act as a framework for future efforts directed towards Chinese consumers.

Table 4. Research results and applications

Result	Theory Construction	Local Marketing Application	Global Marketing Application
Exploratory Relationship Results	✓		
Grounded Theory Results	✓		✓
Content Analysis Results		✓	
Survey (Conjoint) results		✓	✓
Marketing Metaphors	✓		✓

The most practical results will be derived from the final survey results that employ a conjoint design in order to measure the relative importance of detailed servicescape characters. These results have the potential to inform both local and global marketing efforts in creating an inventory of servicescape characteristics. Lastly, the marketing metaphors that uniquely describe the servicescapes of Chinese shoppers, will lay the groundwork for future research into this topic by directing effort, rather than numerous efforts without cultural sensitivity. Global marketers can also benefit by using the marketing metaphors to quickly understand core values of Chinese consumers. Such a result has the potential to benefit not only marketers, but to improve the offerings for Chinese consumers.