Chinese Luxury Consumers
A new rising purchasing power —— “Chinese Dama”

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**Abstract**

Luxury consumption is more and more common in China with the rapid economic development today. Chinese consumers are becoming a main purchasing power of the fashion luxury brands. Chinese women accounted for 45 percent of Chinese luxury goods consumption at the end of 2012. There is no denying that the female Chinese consumers are playing an increasingly important role in the global luxury goods market. Chinese female luxury consumers between 30 and 50 are considered to be called Chinese Dama. The influences of this group of people on fashion luxuries market is becoming more significant. However, no research seems to have noticed the middle aged female luxury consumers group named Chinese Dama.

The purpose of our research is to find out the reasons why this group of people, who are so called “Chinese Dama”, are consuming fashion luxuries. We want to define and identify this special fashion luxury consuming group. Hopefully, the findings in our thesis can inspire some fashion luxury companies to notice this new purchasing power and to come up with better sale and product strategies for Chinese Dama.

A qualitative research method was developed to meet the purpose of collecting relevant data. Interviews were made with Chinese Dama we met in Gothenburg airport and a Munich fashion luxury shopping mall. We also made a content analysis on articles collected that explain the issue of who are Chinese Dama and the features and lifestyle of Chinese Dama for the empirical study.

The findings of our research can provide information for marketers in the luxury market, which concludes that Chinese females have different type of attitudes and motivations including those found by other scholars and the new motivations and attitudes that were discovered in our investigation towards purchasing fashion luxuries, which are brand awareness, materialism, social comparison for attitudes and guanxi, saving face and reselling to make profit. We not only confirm common acknowledge about Chinese Dama, which is known by everyone in China, but also obtain a better understanding of Chinese Dama. We also concluded that the expression Chinese Dama is no longer appropriate.

**Keywords:** Fashion luxuries, Chinese Dama, Attitudes, Motivation.
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1. Introduction

In this introduction part we will start with the general background of the Chinese fashion luxury market and the current situation of Chinese consumption of fashion luxury. The literature written by scholars will be showed in this part and discussed in the part about the problem area and a gap will be found and showed in this part as well. Moreover, we will develop our purpose and research questions.

1.1 Background

Here we want to focus on fashion luxury instead of other types of luxury goods like yachts or luxury cars. Compared with other type of luxuries, fashion luxuries are more affordable for Chinese consumers even if these goods are not cheap for Chinese consumers either.

1.1.1 The concept of fashion luxury

Many factors can characterize fashion luxury brands such as differentiation, exclusivity, scarcity, brand strength, innovation, premium prices, high quality, product craftsmanship and precision. What is more, outstanding customer service, flawless store presentations, powerful advertising, core competence and global recognition are also important factors serving as distinctions when it comes to identify fashion luxury brands. All these factors can enhance the brand value which can be transferred to the revenues and the intangible asset of a fashion luxury brands. Besides, iconic product designs, the personality of the founder, the brand’s name and visual symbols associated to the brand and its history can also characterize fashion luxury brands according to Hines & Bruce & Okonkwo (2007).

Brand names or brand logos play a very important role in attracting consumers to a brand and relates their chosen brand with them. The luxury companies have acknowledged the importance of the brand logo or brand name and therefore treat it as a key focus and core ability in competing with other brands (ibid.). This is also the reason for fashion luxury brands why they strive for innovation, differentiation and appeal (ibid.).

According to Hines & Bruce & Okonkwo (2007), luxury goods are symbols of personal and social identity. Fashion luxury brands confer esteem upon their owners and satisfy psychological and functional needs which characterize the main factors distinguished from non-luxury products or counterfeits according to Reed (2009).

China is a new rising fashion luxury market for famous fashion luxury brands since the purchasing power of Chinese luxury consumers keeps growing. The situation of Chinese fashion luxury market is different from western luxury market.

1.1.2 Chinese fashion luxury market

Luxury consumption is more and more common in China with the rapid economic development today, according to Goldman Sachs, cited by Wang, Sun & Song (2011). Not including private jets and luxury yachts, the total spending reached 6 billion US dollars in 2004, and occupied 12% of the global market. The figure of the spending has dramatically
grown during the last ten years. According to Fung, cited by Wang, Sun & Song (2011), Business Intelligence Center says that the luxury market in China reached 115 billion RMB and 209 million RMB overseas. Chinese consumers are becoming a main purchasing power of fashion luxury brands such as Chanel, Gucci and Louis Vuitton.

According to Xu & Wang (2011), the growing number of wealthy individuals drives luxury sales. By the end of 2011, there were 1,020,000 individuals with personal wealth of 10 million yuan or more in China. And the number of individuals with personal wealth more than 100 million RMB were 63,500, according to Hurun Wealthy Report, cited by Xu & Wang (2011). As the income of middle class persons are climbing, they can afford the upscale lifestyle they want. So, they are willing to buy more luxury goods and are becoming one of the major forces driving luxury consumption in China.

Chinese consumers show an increasing awareness of brand and they intend to buy products with luxury fashion brands according to Bruce & Kratz, cited by Xu & Wang (2011). Chinese consumers purchasing luxuries mainly prefer products of high quality and high price, especially fashion brands like Chanel, Burberry and Hermès. So this is a huge and increasing market of luxury brands to explore for the strong potential purchasing power of Chinese consumers. In our research, we want to focus on the purchase of fashion brands products.

1.1.3 Current situation of Chinese consumption of fashion luxury

1.1.3.1 Young consumers

Presently, Chinese luxury consumers are becoming younger and younger. According to Ngai & Cho (2012), the group of numerous young consumers is a significant feature of the luxury consumers in China, most of them are under the age of 40. However, in the Western markets, senior consumers are the main power. Especially the consumers between the age of 20 and 30 in China are gradually becoming a significant group for luxury consumption. The main reason for this is Chinese one-child policy in 1978 according to Ngai & Cho (2012). This policy was to slow down the rapidly rising population and reform economy. These young consumers were born under this policy. As economy developed in China, the one-child generation got high-level education and more support from the elders compared with previous generations, their income is much higher than the elders when they were at the same age of those young consumers. What’s more, they grew in a culture melting pot, which means they got more chances to know about foreign views that are different from Chinese traditional culture about fashion brands. This totally changed their “taste” about luxuries. They are educated and have more financial independence and women have the same opportunities as men when it comes to employments. This has generated a new thinking among Chinese women, primarily the younger women, who are more ambitious when it comes to shopping.

1.1.3.2 Different consumption awareness compared to western consumers

According to Xu & Wang (2011), in western countries, people prefer to pay for houses, cars and traveling. However, the typical Chinese luxurious consumption is to save their money from their daily consumption on food to buy luxury goods. The age distribution of the western luxury consumers is more average compared with Chinese luxury consumers. Figure 1 shows
that almost 60 percent of Chinese luxury consumers are between 20 and 39. People between 40 and 55 years old in China is around 30 percent. The rest of Chinese luxury consumers are only 12 percent compared to around 30% of western luxury consumers. However, the situation of luxury consumers in western countries is different. Around 38% of consumers between 20 and 39 years old belong to the biggest group of all as well. There are 22% of consumers between 20 and 39 in western countries less than those in China, which is the most obvious difference in the age distribution of China and western countries.

Figure 1 Age distribution of Chinese luxury consumers (Xu & Wang 2011)

1.1.3.3 Chinese female consumers

The Hurun Report according to A world of luxury (2013) announced that China currently has over 1 million millionaires and over 63,000 “super rich” (those with assets of over 16 million USD). Global management consulting firm McKinsey & Company (2009) predicted that by 2015, 32 percent of all Chinese families will be able to afford trips abroad and purchase luxury goods during their holidays, while management consulting firm Bane & Company (2015) estimate that Chinese consumers currently account for 25 percent of the world’s luxury goods market. Currently, this pushing power is largely coming from female Chinese consumers, which is a shift from around ten years ago, when luxury goods where most often aimed at men who would buy gifts for government officials or colleagues. In 2012, investment bank CLSA reported that Chinese women accounted for 45 percent of Chinese luxury goods consumption. Although this number is still below the world average, there is no doubt that the female Chinese consumers are playing an increasingly important role in the global luxury goods market. Chinese female consumers are young females (20-40) and middle aged females (40-50) who are often serving their family as housewives. According to the graphs showed below, the wealth of the Chinese households is booming from 1.6 million US dollars in 2008 to 4.4 million US dollars in 2015 along with the potential future purchasing force.
Chinese cities are grouped into 4 tiers according to the level of total consumption and its potential future growth according to 2008 McKinsey survey of wealthy Chinese consumers according to McKinsey Quarterly (2009).

1.1.3.4 Chinese Dama

Chinese Dama represents a special group of people. In the past, Chinese Dama mainly represented the wife of one’s father’s brother. According to the Chinese dictionary, Chinese Dama represents middle-aged great and grand females with children and it is a respective title for those females. And Chinese Dama represents a large group of Chinese females. However, the meaning of this word now is different compared to the meaning in the past. Today Chinese Dama is not a title as respectful as it was in the past.

Chinese Dama is well known for Chinese people. Although there is no specific definition about Chinese Dama but everyone knows this word and it refers to the group of middle aged females approximately between 40 and 60 in today’s China. As we mentioned above in Chinese female consumers, old females are a big group of people with tremendous purchasing power. They are older women in a family, who are usually considered to be housewives out of work even if there is no reference that we could find to support this meaning.

1.2 Problem area

Although much research on Chinese luxury consumption has been done and some of it mentions the consumers in Chinese fashion luxury market, it did not figure out the clear consumer segments in Chinese luxury consumption market which means it is still unclear who actually purchase fashion luxuries in China and to which groups these consumers belong. Moreover, although Chinese female luxury consumers have been investigated before, none of the investigation has noticed the middle aged female luxury consumers group here named Chinese Dama. Therefore, research gaps are still existing. Just some articles and news about “Chinese Dama” have been published, as we mentioned above, no research and no
recognition of this group is available. Chinese fashion luxury consumers become younger and younger. Conversely, “Chinese Dama” seems totally opposite to this trend. The reasons why they buy luxury goods are still ambiguous and indefinite. Their attitudes and motivations towards buying fashion luxury goods are the key reasons to investigate this special consuming group and also the reasons why they are interested in consuming fashion luxury products.

1.3 Purpose of the research

The consuming power of Chinese Dama keeps rising but there is still not enough attention put on this special consuming group yet. What is more, there seem to no authoritative scholars who have made research about this group of people and there is no established definition of this group yet. We realized it is difficult for us to define this group properly since the meaning of Chinese Dama changed with the development of the society which is mentioned above and that group contains a large number of Chinese females with many different and unique features.

The purpose of our research is to find out the reasons why do this group of people buy fashion luxuries. We want to identify this special fashion luxury consuming group. In order to get the most accurate information, we have gone to some luxury markets to interview some Chinese fashion luxury consuming females. Hopefully, the findings in our thesis can inspire some fashion luxury companies to notice this new purchasing power and could come up with better sale and product strategies on Chinese Dama.

1.4 Research questions

Our purpose is to obtain a deeper understanding of who the Chinese Dama are and comprehend the reasons why they are eager to purchase fashion luxuries. So the questions of our research are:

Who are the “Chinese Dama” on consuming fashion luxury goods?

Why do the “Chinese Dama” consume fashion luxury goods?

1.5 Delimitation

This research is about middle aged Chinese female luxury consumers and we focus on fashion luxury brands. So the brands we choose mainly are famous international fashion luxury brands which sell fashion clothes and accessories such as Chanel, Louis Vuitton and Gucci. So we purposely excluded some luxury brands which produce other types of luxuries, for instance, luxury cars. Although the Chinese female luxury consumers are of many different types, we focus on the Chinese Dama who are middle aged females and the reasons why they are eager to buy fashion luxuries.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction.
This chapter presents the definition of luxury goods and the basic knowledge about “Chinese Dama” and the general background of Chinese luxury marketing and consumers. It also explains the purpose, research questions and delimitation of our investigation.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework
This chapter presents chosen concepts based on a review of literature within the limits of the topic. The theories serve as a foundation for supporting the subject of the thesis which will be compared by the answers from the empirical results.

Chapter 3: Method
In this chapter, the method of how the study was conducted is presented. It also describes the process of how to identify the target group. Moreover, it also explains how to design the interview questions and analyze the responses from the interviewees.

Chapter 4: Result and Analysis
This chapter presents the result of our interviews in relation to the research question. Also, the collection of data is presented. These results, with the theories, contribute to the construction of the analysis. The findings in the analysis are the basis for a further discussion within the chosen subject.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion
From the analysis presented in chapter 4, a discussion about the answers to the research questions are compiled in relation to the industry in general. This chapter then leads on to the conclusions of the study and also to suggestions of further research.
2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter describes concepts based on a review of literature relevant to this research. These concepts are the keys to the analysis.

2.1 Attitudes Towards Luxury Products

Attitudes towards purchasing luxury fashion goods are positively related to the purchase intent of luxury fashion goods.

2.1.1 Brand awareness

Brand awareness is the extent of brand recognition by consumers, which means to what extent consumers know and accept a special brand, in our case especially on the fashion luxury market. It is always defined as the percentage of the target market owned by this special brand. The primary goal for all fashion luxury companies is making advertisements to make its brands more popular and famous in the early months or years of a product's introduction.

Brand awareness includes brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition refers to the ability of the consumers to view differently this brand from others which they used to purchase. This does not mean that consumers have to identify the brand name. Instead, it often means that consumers can identify a certain brand after viewing its visual packaging images or the trade mark of the brand. Brand recall refers to the ability of the consumers to correctly generate and retrieve the brand in their memory according to Keller, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013).

In China, consumers treat products from luxury brands as symbols of their social status, esteem and good taste. This is also an important symbol of group identity according to Johansson, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013). Luxury goods consumers in China know the existing brands very well.

Brand awareness is one of the important concepts for us to investigate regarding the attitudes of the Chinese fashion luxury consumers.

2.1.2 Materialism

Richins & Dawson, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013) defined materialism as “the importance a person places on possessions and their acquisition as a necessary or desirable form of conduct to reach desired end states, including happiness”. Materialism is also conceptualized as “a set of attitudes which regard possessions as symbols of success, where possessions occupy a central part of life, which include holding the belief that more possessions lead to more happiness” according to Chan & Prendergast, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013).

At the highest level of materialism, people think such possessions are the essence of a person’s life and will be satisfied or dissatisfied due to these possessions according to Belk, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013).
According to Richins & Dawson, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013), materialism is understood based on three aspects: acquisition centrality, the role of acquisition in happiness and the role of possessions in defining success.

Previous literature according to Darian, Kamineni, Mason & Prendergast & Wong, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013) has explained the increase of consumption of luxury goods in terms of the relationship between materialism and brand consumption. However, little research has focused on materialism in relation to purchasing luxury fashion products in China.

Previous research findings indicate that materialism is one of the positive factors that set a reputation profile. Materialists enhance their social status by consuming products publicly and possessing visible wealth, which can be seen as fashion luxury products according to Liao and Wang (2009). Due to that needs of possessions keep raising worldwide, the degree of materialism is increasing. Correspondingly the consumption of fashion luxury products increases rapidly according to Liao and Wang (2009).

2.1.3 Social comparison

According to the social comparison theory by Festinger, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013), individuals want to evaluate themselves by comparing with others. Especially when they cannot find objects to assess themselves, they will find a way to evaluate their abilities or opinions by comparing with others. An individual is driven to follow and decrease the discrepancies to people with higher abilities or higher social status (ibid.). Social comparison can be defined as the endless awareness of acquiring self-knowledge and being involved in self-reflection of being a human. Schiffman & Kanuk, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013) indicated that individuals could also make downward comparisons with people slightly worse or lower than themselves as well as upward comparisons on idols such as politicians, movie stars, singers, etc. A research study conducted on Japanese consumers indicated that consumers who intend to compare themselves with people better and higher than themselves have a positive relationship with a higher demand for possessions worldwide and higher purchasing intention according to Ogden & Venkat, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013).

Individuals are influenced easier by others if they often interact with them according to Moschis &Churchill & Achenreiner, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013). According to Chan & Prendergast, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013), the worldly possessions of individuals could be positively affected by such factors as peer communication, normative peer influence and motivation to view advertisements, social comparison with friends and social comparison with media figures. Consumers want to enhance their desirable status that luxury goods represent and impress others by possessing and purchasing fashion luxury products.

2.1.4 Fashion involvement

Involvement refers to the degree to which a consumer considers a particular purchase decision and perceives it to be important to him/herself according to Schiffman & Kanuk, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013). Durgee, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013) defined fashion involvement as how relevant an individual thought of fashion based on their innate needs, values, and interests. According to Tigert, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013), fashion involvement is made up of five dimensions of fashion adoption-related behavior: fashion innovativeness and time of
purchase, fashion interpersonal communication, fashion interest, fashion knowledgeability and fashion awareness and reaction to changing fashion trends. That is, compared to the low fashion involved consumers, high fashion involved consumers are easier influenced by the power conveyed by fashion information. They are more interested in fashion and know much about fashion, design, styles and try to follow the trend as closely as they can.

Attitudes of the Chinese luxury consumer are regarded as an evaluation of the degree to which people like fashion luxuries according to Finlay et al, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013). Attitude towards a behavior is a direct factor to the behavioral intention during the decision-making process of the consumers.

Positive attitudes of the consumers can lead to a positive purchase intent which has been supported by numerous empirical studies across different products and services. For example, Bellman et al, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013) found that fashion accessories purchase intent is significantly affected by the attitudes of young people. There is a positive relationship between purchase intent and attitude according to Yoo & Lee, cited by Zhang & Kim (2013). In Zhang & Kim’s (2013) study, it is found that consumers’ attitude positively affects their purchase intention of luxury brands among Chinese.

2.2 Motivations of the Consumers: Influences of Traditional Chinese Culture

2.2.1 Saving face

Luxury consumption is affected by culture (Wang, Sun & Song 2011). According to Wong & Ahuvia, cited by Wang, Sun & Song (2011), there are many factors influencing Asians’ luxury consumption, such as Confucian collectivism, individual or group needs, values of being modest and thrifty. Logically speaking, Chinese luxury consumers pay more attention to external social needs than on internal individual needs. Wong & Ahuvia (ibid.) further argues that Asians regard symbolic value more important than hedonic value of luxuries, especially on the aspect of public consuming. For example, there is a considerable number of consumers who have brand loyalty, such as Apple consumers. Many of them do not care about the performance of the PC but the Apple brand.

According to The Kathmandu Post (2012), the concept of face in Chinese culture is extremely important. It includes many meanings, such as self-esteem, reputation and social status. Hu (1994) considers that face has two forms: one stand is “confidence of society in the integrity of the ego’s moral character, the loss of which makes it impossible for him to function properly within the community”, another one is “for the kind of prestige life, through success and ostentation” according to The Kathmandu Post (2012). It is a good way for Chinese consumers to gain face by purchasing luxury goods. We can call face vanity, but it is important to most Chinese consumers. Not losing face is what Chinese consumers consider first in public.

“Saving face” is defined as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” according to Goffman, cited by Wang, Sun & Song (2011). It could be an important potential motive that makes Asian consumers have strong appetite to buy luxuries, although they may have low average

2.2.2 “Guanxi”

According to The Kathmandu Post (2012), relationships are closely connected to face, gifting is one way to gain face. It is considered as another motive for Chinese purchasing luxuries. According to Ger & Belk (1996), Asians buy more luxury goods as gifts for family members. They hold the view that purchasing luxury brands can reflect their wealth and status and gain respect from others. What’s more, gifting can create “guanxi” in Chinese society. Wang, Sun & Song (2011) explains “guanxi” as “interpersonal ties, play a key role in various walks of Chinese day-to-day lives”. And according to Yau et al, cited by Wang, Sun & Song (2011), the concept of Guanxi has the same meaning as “relationship” in English, but actually it means more than “relationship”. We can separate the two Chinese characters “Guanxi” into “guan” and “xi” and “guan” means “relating”, “xi” means “bonding”. According to Wang, cited by Wang, Sun & Song (2011), Chinese regard Guanxi as a system of social support. And gifting is the way to initiate and maintain this system working. According to Bond & Hwang, cited by Wang, Sun & Song (2011), Chinese culture emphasizes harmonious interpersonal relationships. Exchanging gifts and favors can create and maintain a good “guanxi”. Chinese consumers consider that they can get more “face” from buying luxuries for gifts and maintain a better relationship with others. For example, Rolex watches are perfect gifts used by business people to get “guanxi” with their partners.

2.2.3 Following and imitating

According to Xu and Wang (2011), Chinese consumers get easier influenced by others, and then follow them. Many consumers see what their friends and colleagues wear or take their recommendation to buy fashion luxuries that they are actually not very fond of. In psychology, this is herd mentality, which means people always involuntarily do the same as others around them, because of the pressure from the group they belong to. These consumers do not want to be different from people around them. We can regard this as the influence of the group. And this may be one of the reasons why more and more young consumers pay thousands of RMB or more to buy a luxury bag.

In addition, idol effects can also cause imitating. More and more pop stars and athletic stars are appearing in advertisements. Sellers use celebrities’ influence to attract customers. When consumers see the advertisements, they may imagine themselves. They will be honored to wear things like their idols. Of course, following and imitating idols can make idolatrized groups feel satisfied.

2.2.4 Pursuing self-realization

According to Xu and Wang (2011), there is no doubt that luxury goods are of good-quality. It meets the Chinese traditional view that the more money it costs, the better quality. So high-
income groups who want to pay attention to their life quality and also want to be identified by others, are willing to buy luxury goods and choose luxury consumption to be a kind of lifestyle. Many consumers become richer and think they deserve to own luxuries. In another word, luxuries can meet their needs and it can also reflect their taste of luxuries. They regard this as the symbol of a high level in the society. Luxuries not only satisfy their material needs but also spiritual ones.
3. Method

This chapter describes the methodology for our research and why we choose qualitative interviewing. What’s more, the process of how to identify the target group is presented in this chapter. Also, this chapter explains how to design the interview questions and analyze the results of the interviews.

3.1 Method used to research the problem

3.1.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Most obviously, qualitative research tends to be concerned with words rather than numbers according to Bryman & Bell (2011).

We develop our research by using a qualitative research method due to that the focus of our research is attempting to comprehend what the attitudes and motivations about consuming fashion luxury brands are of a special group of people called “Chinese Dama”. The research data we planned to collect are the answers of “Chinese Dama” to our interview questions which are all in the transcripts of the interviews except the questions about their basic identity information. And we embody a view of social reality which is the phenomenon about the fierce consumption of "Chinese Dama" as a constantly shifting emergent property of individual’s creation. Due to the fact that there is no numbers or statistics in our research, the qualitative research strategy is more proper than quantitative research strategy according to Bryman & Bell (2011). We focus on the special group of people “Chinese Dama” so that we not only need to identify interviewees whether they belong to this group of people or not, but also obtain the most accurate answers from our interviewees to enhance the validity and reliability of our research.

3.1.2 Qualitative interview

The purpose of our research is to identify the attitudes and motivations of the group called “Chinese Dama”. The qualitative interview on “Chinese Dama” about the views towards fashion luxury brands is acknowledged to be the most appropriate research method. Our plan was to go to the shopping malls, where integrated fashion luxury shops are located, to interview as many “Chinese Dama” as we could.

The structured interview is one of a variety of forms of research interviews, but it is the one that is most commonly employed in survey research. The goal of structured interview is for the interviewing of respondents to be standardized so that differences between interviews in any research project are minimized according to Bryman & Bell, (2011). We used semi-structured interviews. We have a series of questions that are in general form. But it was possible to vary the sequence of questions. The reason why we choose this type of interview is that it gives us more space to ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies. Because of the limitations in our research in terms of time and finance issues, we planned to go to shopping malls in Munich to interview “Chinese Dama” by semi-structured interviews with open questions which means we did not use answering options as
in questionnaires. Instead we asked “Chinese Dama” about their attitudes towards special aspects on fashion luxury brands. They could answer our interview questions freely without any pressure.

3.1.3 Sampling

Considering the difficulties for us to reach “Chinese Dama” since we are doing this research in Sweden we used the snowball sampling method to collect data that we need. According to Bryman & Bell (2011), snowball sampling is not random, due to there is no way of knowing the precise extent of the population from which it would be drawn. Christmas is the perfect time for us to make an investigation overseas since there are numbers of “Chinese Dama” traveling overseas, especially in Europe, during this period of time each year. So we found many “Chinese Dama” added up to their friends. There were eight “Chinese Dama” who were willing to take our interview and to give us their attitudes and views towards fashion luxury brands.

3.1.4 Qualitative content analysis

When performing a qualitative research, analysis is the process were one uses the data we collected to identify themes and construct hypotheses to further on show support for these themes and hypotheses. In a qualitative research the researcher does not try to prove a hypothesis as in a quantitative research, instead it tries to show that the hypothesis is plausible. The analysis usually occurs at the end of the research; however, in a qualitative research it is actually an ongoing process that starts when the research begins according to Bouma & Atkinson, cited by Bryman & Bell (2011).

Because data deriving from qualitative interviews typically take the form of a large corpus of unstructured textual material, they are not straightforward to analyze. Since it was a qualitative content analysis and not quantitative, the emphasis was not on quantifying the data, but rather to understand the underlying meaning. So for example when we asked “Chinese Dama” about their consumption of fashion luxuries, we did not ask how many luxury shoes or bags they used to buy each year. We asked them which fashion brand is the first choice to them and which type of products of this brand they purchased mostly and why they purchased those brands. We are interested in the reason why they are so eager to purchase fashion luxuries.

3.1.5 Trustworthiness

Reliability and validity are two important criteria used when establishing and assessing the quality and limitations of a research. However, many qualitative researchers have discussed the relevance of these criteria when concerning a qualitative research according to Bryman & Bell (2011).

Reliability is concerned with the questions of whether the results of a study are repeatable. This term is commonly used in relation to the question of whether or not the measures that are devised for concepts in business and management according to Bryman & Bell (2011). According to Christensen et al, cited by Bryman & Bell (2011), the very notion of reliability
within a qualitative research is impossible, due to the fact that reliability has something to do with the degree of repetition. Since the researched phenomenon was studied during a specific timeframe, moreover, the interviews were not exactly the same when we made our interviews. We asked our interviewees questions not only according to our interview questions but also based on what they told us about their views of fashion luxuries. It is very important for us to know the true opinion of our interviewees so that we choose to ask different questions individually. As a result, it would be impossible for us or anyone else to repeat the research and get the exact same results due to the fact that the reality that is being studied is always under constant change.

Validity is divided into two definitions. Internal validity deals with the credibility of the research, if the results match reality. It is concerned with the question of whether a conclusion incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables. External validity has to do with the extent to which the results of the research can be generalized beyond the research setting according to Christensen et al, cited by Bryman & Bell (2011).

When performing a qualitative research achieving statistical generalization is not possible, however a researcher can instead focus on to what degree the results are applicable to other cases according to Christensen et al, cited by Bryman & Bell 2011). We have tried to increase the credibility in our research by being systematic in the collection of data as well as being transparent through the research process. We have also tried to be as critical as possible towards all of the sources that are available to us, especially the articles used as preparation for our research. We have tried our best to search for our target interviewees to enhance the validity of our research. Due to the fact that we searched for our interviewees in front of the fashion luxury shops, so the customers were more likely to belong to the special group of people “Chinese Dama” with experiences in terms of buying fashion luxuries.

3.2 Interviews

3.2.1 Preparation of the interviews

As it was difficult to find the Chinese Dama to interview, so implementing the interviews at the right time was very important. Fortunately, Christmas was coming, and during this festival, there are numerous retailers offering big discounts to attract consumers. In addition, it is a perfect opportunity for Chinese consumers to purchase fashion luxuries as gifts and send them to their relatives for celebration of Chinese Spring Festival, which is the most important festival lasting for one month after Christmas. Also, many overseas Chinese would purchase a lot before they return to China. So it would be easier for us to find more “Chinese Dama” to interview during Christmas.

We booked the tickets to Munich and we focused on the places where we may have possibility to catch Chinese Dama, like the fashion luxury shops and airports in Gothenburg and Munich, where people can purchase fashion luxuries without paying value-added tax which may appeal to many fashion luxury consumers. Because there are many duty free shops in airports, these shops are favored by many customers. In order to persuade them to participate in our investigation, we decided to give some gifts to them like buying them a cup of coffee and a cake or other small accessories in the airports.
3.2.2 Interview questions design

We developed eight questions to obtain the basic information of our interviewees to get basic information about Chinese Dama and the feedback of them to comprehend why they are eager on purchasing the fashion luxuries.

Based on features of Chinese Dama such as education and disposable money, source and amount, we evaluate this special group of people by the first four questions (see appendix).

There are some standards we implemented to determine if our interviewees are Chinese Dama or not. First of all, Chinese Dama are all females in Chinese culture which means we are supposed to ensure that all of our interviewees are females that can be identified easily from their appearances. Age is also a crucial factor which will determine if they are Chinese Dama or not due to the fact that Chinese Dama represents a special Chinese generation. If their ages are between 40 and 60 approximately we regard them as Chinese Dama. Education is another important factor that will provide us with much acknowledge about this group of people. So it is helpful for us to comprehend who are Chinese Dama and give them a maybe more precise definition.

However, questions from five to eight are open-ended to allow the respondents to answer without presented or implied choices and we avoid leading questions to allow people to answer in their own terms, voicing their own views, values and experiences according to Bryman & Bell (2011). Instead we let the informant lead, we did not begin the interview right away. After friendly greeting and explanations about our research we started the interviews. We listened and expressed interest in what the informant told us and we remained neutral which means we did not either approve or disapprove. During the interviews we kept encouraging our interviewees to expand their answers in order to get more information about their attitudes and motivations and we let interviewee’s answers determine the interview direction and it was more like a friendly conversation.
4. Results and Analysis

This chapter presents the results of our interview and analyzes the results applying the theories in chapter 2.

Our interviews took place in Freistaat Bayern Munich, Germany. We interviewed 6 “Chinese Dama”. Three of the interviews were at Munich Franz Josef Strauss International Airport. Another one was in Munich Marienplatz. And the last one was in Munich Hofbrauhaus, which is one of the most famous beer restaurants. And the last one we met in Gothenburg airport when we came back from Munich.

From the data we collected we can identify several different attitudes and motivations of Chinese Dama towards consuming fashion luxuries. Moreover, we can not only find the attitudes and motivations discovered by other scholars in the theoretical framework part, brand awareness for instance, but also some new results which are interesting.

4.1. Answers and analysis of answers

In this part, we present and analyze our findings. We introduce and analyze answers of our interviewees individually. Based on the answers of them we chose to ask them different questions, moreover, the full transcripts about the questions we asked and the answers of our interviewees are presented in appendix. It is important to emphasize that the names of our interviewees are all fake names that we gave them to protect their private information.

1. Interviewee Wang

The first interviewee we found in Munich airport comes from Henan which is a middle province of China. We decided to interview her because we found she was carrying a Gucci handbag and asked about the price of the tax free products. We waited and we came to say hello after she paid for her scarf. We started the conversation with small talk and finally asked her if we could have an interview since we were working on our thesis and it might only take 10 minutes and we guaranteed her that we would not leak any private information of her. After a short hesitation she agreed.

We asked about her basic information and she told us she came from Henan province which is the place one of us comes from so we got to know each other within a short time since we come from the same place. She told us her age, her source of money, money she spent on fashion luxuries per year and her education level. When we asked her highest level of education she was a little embarrassed and she said “I was only graduated from middle school.” She told us she like Gucci and Chanel most of all brands because those two brands are famous and high quality. Famous is an important factor when we analyzed the attitudes of Chinese Dama which could mean she potentially make a strong social comparison according to Moschis and Churchill (1999), cited by Zhang & Kim (2013). Social comparison refers to that individuals are influenced easier by others if they often interact with them. If a brand is famous, like Gucci and Chanel, it is well-known and popular for most fashion luxury consumers. What is more, it also reflects brand awareness, which refers to the ability of consumer to differentiate this brand from others, which he or she use to purchase. Since she also mentioned high quality, it could mean she had bought products of other brands before and was not satisfied with those products compared with luxuries of Gucci and Chanel. Then when we asked her why she bought those fashion luxuries she said “I only buy those luxuries..."
for myself and my daughter likes them very much, she is a big girl now, I buy her those
luxuries as birthday presents or new-year gifts.” Her answer was really representative since
she mentioned gifts and presents twice so that the main reason for her to purchase fashion
luxuries is for gifts. Fashion luxuries to her are more than social comparison. When we asked
her about what fashion luxuries means to her, she said “I think I will be more attractive when
I wear them”. It could mean that she would get self-realization by wearing those fashion
luxuries and could be identified by others to become real her. She wanted to be unique and
attractive which is a process to pursue self-realization. Moreover, she would gain self-
confidence and good comments on herself through the fashion luxuries she purchased, which
means she values face in a high degree as she answered our last question which is what will
fashion luxuries bring to you. What is really interesting is that we ended up with a direct
question that is “do you mind being called Chinese Dama?” She said “definitely” and seemed
being offended with a loud voice. We were surprised because we thought she was supposed to
be a Chinese Dama without doubt. After we finished our interview we gave her a small
pendant as a gift to thank her for being so cooperating. She was optimistic during the whole
interview and showed us why she consumed so much to purchase fashion luxuries. To sum,
the main reasons for her to buy fashion luxuries are strong social comparison, brand
awareness and gifting.

2. Interviewee Liu

We met interviewee Liu when we finally got our luggage in Munich airport. She was also
waiting for her luggage and we noticed a middle aged woman with an expensive LV bag. We
thought she was the perfect interviewee for us to do our research. Before she left, we went
and asked if we could have an interview with her. She seemed like impatient and told us her
friends were waiting for her outside. We explained why we wanted to interview her and what
she meant to us and our thesis, plus it would not take her too much time. She finally agreed
but did not want it to last too long.

The conversation between us was very helpful for us since Mrs. Liu is actually a talkative
woman with a warm heart. We asked her the questions about her basic information and she
told us that she came from Fujian province was 53 years old with a middle school degree. She
had made some investments and her husband was a business man so she could afford
traveling overseas and buy the fashion luxuries she wanted. She had no favorite brand which
means brand awareness is not important for her when she purchased fashion luxuries. She
bought those fashion goods not only for herself but also for her whole family including her
daughter and husband, even her friends and other relatives. It was really impressive that she
bought those luxuries for her whole family which meant purchasing decisions she made was
important to those brands that wanted to attract more consumers and made more profit. What
is more, she was very eager to buy fashion luxuries to her family and relatives which meant
she possibly would send some goods to them as gifts. It was exactly one of the motivations
that Chinese Dama would like to purchase fashion luxuries. She also mentioned she wanted to
be the spot in front of others which meant she would like to buy those goods for good taste
and comments made by others to earn a better social status. It was in accordance with
materialism which is one of the attitudes Chinese Dama possessed when they buy fashion
luxury goods. Next when we asked her “what does the purchase of fashion goods mean to
you?” her answer shocked us deeply. She said “Yeah exactly, what I brought to them are real
fashion goods and are cheaper than what is sold in China”. She told us she could make profit
by bringing those goods to her friends. In other words, she could make extra money by
purchasing and reselling those fashion goods to others in China which is totally new to us which neither scientific research or news articles have shown before as the reason why Chinese Dama purchased fashion goods like these. Chinese Dama would purchase these fashion luxuries and resell to their friends and relatives at a proper price and make money through it, which is also a kind of potential motivation for them towards purchasing fashion luxuries. So what she said indicated another reason why Chinese Dama purchase fashion goods, that is earning extra money by purchasing and reselling fashion goods to others. It was our first time to get to know this motivation of Chinese Dama on buying luxury goods. It is really interesting that we ended up with the direct question “do you mind being called Chinese Dama”. She did not answer directly but asked us instead, “Do I look like one?” and smiled at us. We were so surprised because we thought she was supposed to be a Chinese Dama without doubt. What is more, she refused to be identified with Chinese Dama just like the first interviewee did. After we finished our second interview, we would like to give her a small gift but she would not take it. But she was very helpful to recommend us to her friends. We were very pleased for that, since it was a perfect way to find more target interviewees. Due to some reasons, only one of her friends accepted our interview, which was the next interviewee, Mrs. Zhang. In conclusion, the main reasons for her to buy fashion luxuries are materialism, gifting and reselling.

3. Interviewee Zhang

Mrs. Zhang was buying luxury perfume in a tax free shop at Munich airport when we met her. As we mentioned above, Mrs Zhang was the only one who accepted our interview among all those Mrs Liu’s friends at the airport. It was by coincidence we noticed that she was talking with her friends in Chinese. We just asked if it was possible for us to ask her some questions about fashion luxury. She was willing to help us since we were introduced by her friend. So we collected much helpful information through her.

She was a 53-year-old lady from Zhejiang province. She was not well educated, had only achieved a high school degree and went to work after her graduation. She was no longer working since 3 years ago. As a fashion luxury consumer, she did not have any favorite fashion brands and answered this question with some hesitation which surprised us a lot. And she chose what she wanted to buy only based on her daughter’s advice. Besides that, the other thing she mentioned was the price which is the other reason for her to choose luxury brands. She said “they are cheaper than those in China”. So that it was not about brand awareness since she had no favorite brands. However, brand awareness refers to the ability of the consumers to differentiate one brand from others and which is usually purchased. It was clear that she had no such ability to view differently. When we asked her about the reason why she bought fashion luxuries. She said “I buy them for my daughter when she has no time to travel. She has a shop on Taobao (Online shop), we sell them on it”. Her answer surprised us very much because she bought all those fashion goods only for making profit by reselling them to others who actually want them. What is different from her friend Mrs. Liu is that she even has an online shop to sell those luxuries she bought from overseas. They even would not wear or use what they have bought so none of the attitudes and motivations mentioned above could explain the reasons why she bought fashion luxuries. Moreover, she could not answer what fashion luxuries mean to her even with a couple of minutes’ consideration. The next question we asked her was about the things that fashion luxuries would bring to her. She gave us a very straight answer that was money which could possibly explain why she could not answer the last question because what she was thinking about when she bought luxuries was money. So
she only had one motivation on buying luxuries, to earn extra money by reselling to others online. As for the last question, she did not think she is a Chinese Dama. Moreover, she said “it is not polite”, which can prove that the meaning of Chinese Dama have changed along with the development of the society and culture.

4. Interviewee Li

Interviewee Li was also in a tax free shop at the Airport. She was with her daughter, they were sitting in the waiting area. We saw her and her daughter with nice bags. So, we went to say hello to them, and gave them the chocolate bars. We asked if we could have an interview for our thesis. Her daughter asked if we were studying in Germany, and she said she was studying in Germany. We said we are studying Sweden. The mother agreed to be interviewed, and told us we could call her Mrs. Li.

This interview was very successful. Mrs. Li looked very young although she was 51 years old. She told us that she was born in Shanghai and we said we were fellows, then the interview seemed easier. She told us she came to Germany to see her daughter. Her daughter also talked with us. She said that she had studied in Germany for 2 years and asked where we studied. We said we studied in Sweden and came for holidays. Then we asked about Mrs. Li’s education level. She said it was just an associate degree. Before we started next question, she talked a lot about her school time. She said when she graduated from school she could have chosen to go to college. However, she lived in the countryside and had two brothers and the family needed support. So she went to a factory. And we asked “If you have a second chance to choose, what would you do?” She answered immediately: “I would go to university”. And she said “You guys are lucky!” We all laughed. We moved on to the next question and asked about her job and her income. She said she was retired, but she had some stock investment. After these basic questions, we came to the luxuries. When she was asked how much money she spent on luxuries per year, she did not answer and thought for a while, said it should be more than 50,000 RMB. So we guessed that her stock investment should be very good. Next question was about her favorite brand and why. She said she liked many brands, Dior and Gucci were her favorite ones. She showed us the bag she carried and it was a nice Gucci bag. She said she preferred the fashion design and they looked delicate. What’s more, she did not need to care about the quality. This reflected that Mrs. Li had brand awareness, but we did not know how much she had. Because these were the main factors of the brands like Gucci. And the reason why she bought them was about her daughter. She said when her daughter came back home two years ago, she found that she looked very beautiful and modern with these luxuries. Her daughter smiled. She laughed and said “Of course, I want that, too”. We could see that her daughter was a young consumer. There is no doubt that Mrs. Li was affected by her daughter. It could be following and imitating. We also wanted to know whether Dama could be easily affected by young consumers. Her daughter dominated the meaning of luxuries again. Mrs. Li said that her daughter studied overseas and sometimes she just felt that they had nothing to say. But now, they had the same interest in fashion. It was good they went shopping together. We said “It is like narrowing the age gap?” Mrs. Li said “Yes, that is what I mean”. This was self-realization. We said “You are a nice mother. The last question, what do these luxuries bring to you?” Mrs. Li said fashion. She explained that when she was as young as her daughter, she had no condition to wear things like her. But now they had a richer life to enjoy. What is more, she wanted to be young. At last we asked “Do you mind us to call you Dama?” She laughed “I do not look like 50, right?” We said it was just a question and
gave them chocolate bars. So the main reasons that she bought fashion luxuries are brand awareness, following and imitating and self-realization.

5. Interviewee Chen

Interviewee Chen was in Marienplatz buying Lancôme lotion with her husband. They came out and stayed outside the Apple experience store to use internet. So, we went to give them chocolate bars and asked if we could make an interview. We said it’s our thesis, and we need to know some personal information, but we promised these will be only in our thesis. They said ok. She told us we could call her Mrs. Chen. Her husband works in Germany. She applied for an annual leave to spend Christmas together in Germany.

This interview was the special one, because interviewee Chen was different from other interviewees. She was 48 years old, born in Heilongjiang. It is one of the coldest and driest provinces in northern China. We hesitated if she was a Chinese Dama, because she said she had a bachelor’s degree. Obviously it was different from others. But it was not easy to find an interviewee, so we decided to continue. As expected, she had her own wage. Mrs. Chen was calm and we could feel that she was a special one. She told us she spent about 20,000 to 30,000 RMB per year on luxuries. We asked about her favorite brands and why. She answered Lancôme and Dior, because of the smell of these two brands. She added that she prefer the better effect and these two brands are smooth for sensitive skin. From her answer we could see that she had a higher brand awareness. We asked “You only buy skin care products?” Mrs. Chen said yes. We asked the next question “What do these products mean to you?” She just simply answered that these products can keep her facial skin whitening and looks younger. Heilongjiang province is dry and cold. The reason she bought was self-realization. We said “Yes, you look very young”. And what do you think these products bring to you?” She thought for a while and said they brought her a better skin and confidence when she was working. And finally we asked “Do you mind us to call you Dama?” She smiled and said “Lol, yes, I am not young now.” She was the first one that accepted to be called Dama. But we did not know whether it was her original idea, or she just had a sense of humor? But from Mrs. Chen we thought that could these Dama be high educated? We gave her and her husband our gifts. So, the reason that she bought fashion luxuries is simply self-realization.

6. Interviewee Wu

Interviewee Wu was in Hofbrauhaus (a famous local beer restaurant). Because it was before Christmas, there were so many people to have lunch, so we needed to queue. Mrs. Wu was with a travel group, we saw she was carrying an LV bag. When we got our seats, she was behind us. We heard they could not understand the menu, because it was written in German. Luckily, we got one friend of us whose second language is German with us in Hofbrauhaus. So, we helped them to order the dishes. Before the dishes came, we went and asked her if we could make an interview. And she said of course. We said we needed to know some personal information, but we promised these will only be in our thesis. She said fine.

Mrs. Wu was thankful and our interview was relaxed. She was 46 years old and born in Shanxi. This is a province famous for its coal reserves. She just had an associate degree, but she seemed not to care about it too much. Then we asked if she was working and her capital
source. She said she did not work now, only stayed at home and took care of her son. She told us that her husband had his own business and her main income is from conducting financial transactions. And her income could be high, because she told us that she spent about 50,000 RMB on fashion luxuries per year. We pointed at her bag and said “It was a nice bag, do you have some favorite brands, why do you like them?” She answered that she preferred Chanel and LV, because of the classic and fashion design. She might have brand awareness, but we could not judge if it was high or low, because these were also the features of fashion luxuries. We asked the reason why she bought them and she answered that the new styles were launched every season, when she got the money, she just want to buy them. She thought she needed to keep up with trends. Then we asked what she thought these luxuries mean to her. But she seemed not understand well and said “Fashion?” We said “Yes, of course. Anything else?” She thought for a while and said that they could make her younger. And she added that her friends also liked these, they often shop together. Now, we could easily see that she was affected by her friends and she mentioned she wanted to catch up trends. So, following and imitating could be one of the reasons. The last question we asked was about what these luxuries brought to her. She just said fashion again, and she added “Just like my friends, I do not want to look older than them. You know women always want to look good”. Then she laughed. We could see that she wanted to gain confidence among her friends. So, saving face could be another reason. At last, we asked if we could call her Dama. She just laughed and said she did not like this name and said “You can call me “Ayi (Aunty)”. So the reasons why she bought fashion luxuries could be brand awareness, saving face, following and imitating.

4.2 Analysis summary

After we collected and analyzed the answers of our interviewees, we wanted to make two comparisons.

First, we wanted to compare their answers with each other transversely, because we would like to see the differences about attitudes and motivations between them. Then, based on the features in chapter 2, we could get a deeper understanding of their attitudes and motivations toward consuming fashion luxury goods. Moreover, this would help us to know the differences of their preferences, even maybe their lifestyles.

The other one is to compare their attitudes and motivations with findings in literature referred to in chapter 2. This vertical comparison could help us to see the differences and commons between “Chinese Dama” and other consumers, for instance young consumers. It would help us to distinguish them and get a deeper understanding about “Chinese Dama”.

After we analyzed our data, we find that the ages of our interviewees are between 46-53 years old. Except for interviewee Chen, all interviewees have a lower educational level. They cannot speak fluent English. Moreover, based on what we noticed, they get into trouble when they have to speak English instead of Chinese. They can only express themselves by some really simple English words with a strong accent which is really hard for foreigners to understand and they are dependent on others, for instance their husbands and children. Although they spend much money on luxuries, most of them do not have a fixed job. All of their husbands and children have jobs with high salary, and their families owned many deposits based on the answers of our interviewees.
Interviewee Chen is the special one. She has a higher education level and she bought fashion luxuries by using her own wage. We should have not counted her as a “Chinese Dama”. But she is the only one that did not mind to be called a Dama. Maybe she just has a sense of humor, but she can represent the consumers with a higher brand awareness and have self-realization as the only motivation.

Most of Chinese Dama in our investigation purchase goods of fashion luxury brands for saving face, self-realization, following and imitating. Except interviewee Zhang, all prefer fashion luxury brands with special design style and high quality which means “Chinese Dama” have brand awareness, they do not know much about their favorite brands but they know which brands the public may like, such as Gucci and LV, which are very famous international fashion luxury brands. So Chinese Dama have the attitudes and motivation towards purchasing fashion luxuries which are very similar with other fashion luxury consumers.

However, two of them (Interviewee Liu and Zhang) have no favorite brands. They purchase fashion luxuries and then they resell those luxuries to others. The first reason for them to do so is the Chinese taxation of fashion luxury. The other one is some fashion luxuries with special design and style are only sold overseas which means it is not possible to buy these special fashion luxuries in China. So besides what previous scholars have discovered including saving face and gifts, the new motivation for Chinese Dama to buy fashion luxuries is reselling those fashion luxuries to others who really want to own them and thereby making profits by it.

From the result of our research, we see that the reasons for Chinese Dama to purchase fashion luxuries could be a single one. For instance, Mrs. Zhang purchased fashion luxuries only because she wants to resell it to others for profit, she does not know the peculiarities or history of those brands. She even does not wear or use them so the reason why she purchase fashion luxuries is only for reselling to make money. However, the reasons could also be several and varied, which means when a Chinese Dama purchase fashion luxuries, she may hold several attitudes and motivations at the same time. For example, Mrs. Liu who introduced us to Mrs. Zhang has several different reasons when she purchases fashion luxuries. As the reasons of her friend, Mrs. Zhang, she also resells fashion luxuries to her friends and relatives to make extra money. But - she also wears what she bought to pursue self-realization and she shows signs of materialism and social comparison. There are still some differences in their motivations and attitudes towards purchasing fashion luxuries between interviewees Liu and Zhang. Interviewee Liu has motivations like saving face and gifting and making profits is just one motivation of them. What is more, the second interviewee has a stronger brand awareness. However, interviewee Zhang is only one who purchases these fashion luxuries to sell and make profits. She even did not care about what the luxuries she has bought mean to her. The only motivation is to make profits.

To sum, we not only discovered that Chinese Dama not only have the attitudes and motivations mentioned in the literature reviewing part such as saving face, pursuing self-realization, following and imitating but also the new motivation for some members of this special group which is making profits through purchasing and reselling fashion luxuries to others.
5. Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter we will summarize and discuss the findings of the analysis. Moreover, we will present the answers to the research questions and our discussion including our empirical finding and prediction of this special consuming group and also give some suggestions on future investigation.

5.1 Conclusion

Chinese consumers are going to transform from a niche emerging market to a core target for global luxury brands within a few years. Therefore it is important for fashion companies and their marketers to understand what influences Chinese consumers’ purchasing behaviors and particularly future customers which in this case are older or middle aged Chinese women.

The findings of our research can provide information for marketers in the luxury market, which concludes that Chinese Dama have different types of attitudes and motivations including those found by other scholars and the new motivations and attitudes that were discovered in our investigation towards purchasing fashion luxuries. We not only confirm the common knowledge about Chinese Dama which is universally known in China but also obtain a better understanding of Chinese Dama of today. As we set up two research questions, we will present our conclusion based on the answers of our research questions.

The first research question we set up was:

*Who are the “Chinese Dama” consuming fashion luxury goods?*

We set about this research through a qualitative approach because the focus was on attempting to get a deeper understanding about this group of people and find out who they are. It is difficult to define them as no one has developed this definition even no scientific research have been done on this special group of people before, which increases the difficulty of defining this group of people. Moreover, based on the meaning of this word “Chinese Dama” we found in Chinese dictionary, this word is no longer used in it is original meaning which meant the great and grandmothers and was used to describe the wife of one’s father’s brother. And it is supposed to be a title with full respect but it is really strange that only one of our interviewees do not mind to be called Chinese Dama, which means that the meaning of this word have changed. However, the influence of this group of people on fashion luxuries has grown incredibly fast with the development of today’s society and this nation.

What we called “Chinese Dama” represents such a group of women who are deeply influenced by Chinese tradition, they are willing to serve the household, burden with housework and care about the daily expenses in the developing society. They save every penny of their money and earn money as much as they can by every possible way like making investments. In this case, purchase and resell fashion luxuries while traveling overseas is a good way to earn extra money and make investments. Most of them are between 40 and 60 with a low education level.
Most of “Chinese Dama” are identified purchasing fashion luxuries just because of following and imitating which refers to the old style “socializing”. “Chinese Dama” are easily influenced by their friends and their children. They follow them not only to make investments but also the lifestyles and entertainments.

The education level of “Chinese Dama” is not high. Most of them have never had a chance to get into the college. When middle aged Chinese Dama purchased fashion luxuries most of them are not familiar with the culture, design and features of the brands they select. Some of them have strong brand awareness because the brands they choose are recommended by their friends and children, moreover, the quality and popularity of the luxury brands are better compared with the brands they chose before. The second research question we set up was:

Why do “Chinese Dama” consume fashion luxury goods?

After we analyzed the answers of our interviewees, we not only found the attitudes and motivations of our interviewees which were discovered by other scholars but also discovered new motivations for them to purchase fashion luxuries.

Motivations and attitudes have a big influence on customers buying decisions. When a person feels there is a need for something, they often get motivated to satisfy that need. The needs can either be conscious or unconscious. As a result, an unconscious buying behavior will take place. When analyzing the results from the investigation, one of the main reasons for the respondents to buy luxury goods was the high quality of the luxuries. They have strong brand awareness and have their favorite brands. Four of our interviewees have high brand awareness. They prefer fashion design and high quality products.

Some of the respondents also stated that it would make them feel better and show their good taste that they would reward themselves with luxury goods, which means that they feel good and want to get a better comparison with others by wearing fashion luxuries. This is exactly what social comparison is. From the motivations that Chinese Dama potentially have when consuming fashion luxuries, it is also a way to save face. “Saving face” defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact which is a very important factor when we analyzed the motivations they have. It makes Asian consumers have strong appetite to buy luxuries.

Materialism is another explanatory reason for people to buy fashion luxuries. Materialism is also conceptualized as a set of attitudes which regard possessions as symbols of success, which means possessions occupy a central part of life and include holding the belief that more possessions lead to more happiness. From the answers we can see that five of the interviewees do not have fixed job, but all of them have a good capital source, their husbands have a significant income, and they all have deposits to invest, as from conducting financial transactions, stock investment. So they do not need to care about the economic situation, just to satisfy their needs that is to show others they are successful even if they do not have any jobs they can purchase luxuries which is a symbol of success.

What is more, guanxi is a crucial factor for Chinese Dama to purchase fashion luxuries. Four of the interviewees mentioned they want to buy luxuries and bring them back to their friends and relatives. Asians buy more luxury goods as gifts for family members. They hold the view that purchasing luxury brands can reflect their wealth and status and gain respect from others. Moreover, gifting can create “guanxi” in Chinese society. And we made our data collection during Christmas, which is the biggest festival in western culture. In order to attract customers
they usually offer huge discounts to their customers. So many Chinese Dama purchase more fashion luxuries during this festival and send to their relatives as gifts.

However, based on the investigation of our research, there is a new reason that “Chinese Dama” buy luxuries which is purchasing and reselling those fashion luxuries to gain extra money. It is different from the psychological reasons like saving face or social comparison. It is to buy fashion luxuries overseas in a lower price and then sell them in a higher price in Chinese mainland. There are two of our interviewees that have this motivation when buying fashion luxuries and one of them purchase fashion luxuries only to make money.

A person’s motivations and attitudes are both based on the thoughts people have about something, but also according to a consistent emotion about something after evaluating it. These motivations and attitudes are what people base their buying behavior on and works as a breaking point for either liking or disliking a product or a brand. So the reasons for Chinese Dama to purchase fashion luxuries could be a single one, however, it could also be varied which means when a Chinese Dama purchase fashion luxuries she may hold several attitudes and motivations at the same time.

5.2 Discussion

The sampling model mentioned in the methodology part is snowball sampling. At the beginning, we realized the difficulty for us to get access to those Chinese Dama who purchase fashion luxuries overseas. However, our target interviewees were easy to find when we got to Germany. They are everywhere. We only use that sampling model to find one of our interviewees, who is Mrs. Zhang, and there was no need for us to use that sampling model further to find our interviewees. It is common for Chinese Dama to go abroad and purchase fashion luxuries. So it was not hard for us to find Chinese Dama who purchase fashion luxuries overseas.

It is surprising that the rest of our interviewees hold the idea that Chinese Dama is not an acceptable title for them. However, it is a respectful name based on the original meaning of this name. They feel offended by this name. The reason why they do not like that name is mainly that they do not think they are old enough from their appearances for this name. They want to stay young and good looking as long as they can and that is exactly also what they want to achieve by wearing and using those fashion luxuries. And one of the motivations for them to buy fashion luxuries is saving face. Mrs. Liu answered: “do i look like one you call Dama?” So even though their age and other features are in accordance with the earlier meaning of the expression Chinese Dama, they do not want to admit that they are Chinese Dama already. Due to the fact that most of our interviewees did not accept this title and disliked to be called that, we should not have put such a blunt question in our interviews. Time is changing, Chinese women stay young longer today than they did in the old days. As a result, the old meaning of this title is no longer proper for modern Chinese middle aged women. In other words, the meaning of Chinese Dama is not respectful for them anymore. Most of them do not want to be called Chinese Dama. It probably represents a generation that had no access to a high level of education like college, due to the economic and political situation of China at that period of time. With the development of technology and society, more and more young females are able to go to college and obtain their own taste and knowledge of fashion luxury brands.
The whole buyer decision process starts with the consumer being in need of something and their only way of satisfying that need is to buy a product. Chinese young consumers are more likely to purchase fashion luxuries because they just want new things in contrast to Chinese Dama and what they were used to in their upbringing, where they purchased because they just needed something. And then the consumer searches for information about what could be the best product for him/her to buy to satisfy their need. It can be anything from talking to friends, reading magazines or reading recommendations on the Internet. It is more like Chinese Dama who usually ask for advice from their friends and children with better fashion taste. When it’s time for the customer to evaluate the options, it can be based on personal opinions or be affected by what others think. Then the customer will buy the product of choice, which can change due to others' opinions that differ from the customers. Just like Chinese Dama they are influenced by their friends and children while Chinese young female consumers claimed that their evaluating decisions and buying decisions were made based on their own personal opinions. They also stated that they were affected by the fact that Chinese people generally do not like to stand out among others. In this case Chinese Dama and young consumers are same.

Two of the interviewees said they were buying luxuries to make money. This is not legal so maybe other interviewees did the same but didn’t admit it. This could be a weakness of our study.

5.2.2 Prediction

As “Chinese Dama” was born in a special society background, most of them have a lower education level, do not have a job but their husbands have a significant income. They are just like the housewives, who do not need to work, but rely on their husbands. However, time is changing. This special consuming group is getting older and new consumers are coming up. These special consumers may disappear in five or ten years. Or maybe they will not disappear, but the age of them will be lower. They may have a higher education level, a fixed job, and continue buying fashion luxuries. But “Dama” will not be a proper name of them.

5.2.3 Future investigation

Our interviews were taken place in Munich, Germany, and our interviewees are “Chinese Dama” who traveled overseas. In addition, we try to segment this special consuming group, and we need more samples to find out if they have more reasons to purchase luxuries. So as we want to know deeper about their consuming behaviors, we should interview more “Chinese Dama” in China Mainland.

The new reason for “Chinese Dama” purchasing luxuries that we have found is making money. That is the behavior of “purchasing and reselling”. It was not mentioned in the presented literature, but it occurred in our research results. So, it is interesting to investigate “purchasing and reselling” furthermore.
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Appendix

1. Interview questions

In order to comprehend the attitudes and motivations of “Chinese Dama” towards buying the fashion luxury products we decide to invite them to join our interviews by asking them the interview questions.

The theory we based on to develop these interview questions is structured interview according to Bryman and Bell (2011). We develop questions from one to eleven to identify if the interviewees are Chinese Dama or not. These questions contain the special features lifestyles and consumer behavior of Chinese Dama. We need these questions to insure we reach our target group of people. We develop questions from 5 to 8 in order to comprehend the attitudes and motivations of Chinese Dama. If we are sure the interviewee belongs to our target group of people which is Chinese Dama, we will continue asking them questions from 1 to 4 to obtain their attitudes and motivations towards fashion luxury brands. Otherwise, we will just stop asking the questions from 11 to 16 and end the interview.

1. When and where did you born?
2. What is your highest level of education?
3. What is the main capital source of you?
4. How much money do you consume on fashion luxuries per year?
5. What are your favorite fashion luxury brands and why do you like those brands?
6. Why do you buy those brands?
7. What do fashion luxuries mean to you?
8. What do you think these fashion luxuries will bring to you?
9. Do u mind being called a Chinese Dama?

2. The answer of our interviewees:

1. Interviewee Wang

We: Mrs. Wang, would you mind us to ask some questions about your personal information? We promise these will be only in our thesis.

Wang: It is ok.

Q1: First one, when and where did you born?

Wang: I was born in 1965, Henan.

Q2: Ok, next question. What is your highest level of education?

Wang: Umm. I was only graduated from middle school. (She was a little embarrassed and smiling.)

Q3: (We smiled and said it doesn’t matter.) We want to know the main capital source of you?

Wang: I was born in 1965, Henan.

Q2: Ok, next question. What is your highest level of education?

Wang: Umm. I was only graduated from middle school. (She was a little embarrassed and smiling.)

Q3: (We smiled and said it doesn’t matter.) We want to know the main capital source of you?

Wang: I have my retire salary, my husband’s salary and we have some fund.

Q4: How much money do you consume on fashion luxuries per year?

Wang: (She hesitated) I am not sure, it should be around 15000-20000 RMB.

Q5: What are your favorite fashion luxury brands, why do you like them?
Wang: Chanel and Gucci. I think they are famous brands, and the quality is good. I can use them for many years. 
Q6: Haha, we agree with you. And why do you buy them? They are not cheap.
Wang: Yes, but I will choose the proper price. I only buy for myself, and my daughter likes these very much, she is a big girl now, I buy her as new year or birthday presents.
Q7: Haha, you are a nice mother. And what do fashion luxuries mean to you?
Wang: I think I will be more attractive when I wear them. I’m not young now, but they can make me look not so old. (Laughing)
Q8: Haha, you look not old at all. The last one, what do you think these fashion luxuries will bring to you?
Wang: I like my friends’ comment they always praise me when I wear something new. I think I’m more confident.
We: By the way, Mrs. Wang, would you mind us to call you “Dama”?
Wang: Do you think I’m so old? Please don’t. (Laughing)
We: Haha, not at all, just a question. Thank you very much! Have a nice holiday!
Wang: Thank you!

2. Interviewee Liu

We: Ok, Mrs. Liu, we need some personal information, but we promise these will be only in our thesis.
Liu: Ok.
Q1: When and where were you born?
Liu: I was born in 1963, Fujian.
Q2: And your educational level?
Liu: Middle school degree
Q3: What is your main capital source? Do you have a job?
Liu: Eee, I am not working. My husband has business, and we make some investment.
Q4: Ok, so, how much money do you spend on fashion luxuries in one year?
Liu: I not sure actually, maybe 30000-35000 RMB.
Q5: Do you have some favorite brands? Why you buy them?
Liu: Umm, I don’t have some favorite brands, just some common brands. You know like those super popular brands.
Q6: Ok and why do you buy these luxuries?
Liu: I need to buy them for myself and my husband. And bring some special accessories to my friends and relatives. They are gonna like it and we will become more close by bring those to them. You know those ladies are really fond of those goods.
Q7: What do these products mean to you?
Liu: I can make some money as a compensation for our oversea trip. Actually it is a huge amount of money you know. I can tell you that.
Q8: The last one, what do you think these products can bring to you?
Liu: I think they are confidence and friendship when I wear those cloth, bags and shoes I am always become the spot of all the people you know that was awesome. Some extra money as well as you know.
Wait a sec, do you mean you can make money through it?
Yeah exactly, what I brought to them are real fashion good and are cheaper than what are selling in China.
all right
We: By the way, do you mind us to call you “Dama”?
Liu: Eee, please don’t.
We: Sorry, we don’t mean that, just a question. Thank you very much! Nice trip.
Liu: Thank you.

3. Interviewee Zhang

We: Mrs. Zhang, do you mind us to ask some personal questions? We promise these will be only in our thesis.
Zhang: OK.
Question 1: Mrs. Zhang, we want to know when and where were you born.
Zhang: I was born in 1963, Zhejiang.
Question 2: Ok, Mrs. Zhang, Could we know your education level?
Zhang: I went to work after finished high school.
Question 3: So, are you still working now? What are your main capital sources?
Zhang: No, I’m not working now. My husband’s business, my daughter has an on-line shop(Taobao). And we have some deposits.
Question 4: Ok, and how much did you spend on luxuries last year?
Zhang: (Did not thought too long) About 20000-30000 RMB.
Question 5: Do you have some favorite brands? Why you like them?
Zhang: (Hesitated)Umm, actually I don’t like these brands very much. My daughter tells me the brands, they are cheaper than in China.
Question 6: All right. But why you buy them?
Zhang: I buy them for my daughter when she has no time to travel. She has a shop on Taobao(On-line shop), we sell them on it.
Question 7: That’s cool. So, what do you think these fashion luxuries mean to you?
Zhang: (Thought for a long time) I don’t know what do these mean…
We: Umm, it may be some kind of role in your life.
Zhang: (Smiling) I don’t know.
Question 8: Ok, it doesn’t matter. And what do you think these goods bring to you?
Zhang: Umm, we can sell them and make some extra income.
We: That’s good. And finally, do you mind to be called “Dama”?
Zhang: Umm, I think it is not polite.
We: Ok. Thank you very much! Merry Christmas!
Zhang: Thanks, you too.

4. Interviewee Li

We: Mrs. Li, do you mind to be asked some personal questions? We promise these will be only in our thesis.
Li: That’s ok.
Question 1: When and where were you born?
Li: I was born in 1965, Shanghai.
Question 2: And your education level?
Li: Associate degree.
Question 3: Ok, are you working now? What are your capital sources?
Li: No, I’m retired. But I have stock investment.
Question 4: So, how much do you spend on fashion luxuries per year?
Li: (Thought for a while) I think it should be more than 50000 RMB.

Question 5: What are your favorite brands? Why you like them?
Li: I prefer Dior, Gucci. (Showed her bag) Because I like the fashion design and they are delicacy. Of course good quality.

Question 6: Yes, we agree with you. We want to know the reason you buy them.
Li: Because my daughter likes these and she is a big girl now, she looks more beautiful when she wears them. (Smiling) I want to be beautiful too.

Question 7: Haha, of course. And what do you think these luxuries mean to you?
Li: (Thought for a while) My daughter studies abroad, sometime I feel we have nothing to say. But these brands make us have the same topic to say. And why not to be fashion with her together. Feel good when we go out and shopping together. In order to narrow the age gap between her daughter and her.

Question 8: You are nice mother. The last question, what do these luxuries bring to you?
Li: I think they make fashion. When I was as young as my daughter, I had no condition to wear like her. But now we have a richer life, so why not enjoy it? I want to be young, like my daughter. I’m not look like a 50-year old woman. (Laughing)
We: Yes, of course. You look very young, and you two are just like sisters. (Laughing) One more question, do you mind us to call you “Dama”?
Li: I’m not that old…
We: Haha, we don’t mean that, just a question. Thank you very much! Enjoy your holiday!
Li: Thank you. Good luck.

5. Interviewee Chen

Question 1: Mrs. Chen, we want to know when and where were you born?
Chen: I was born in 1968, Heilongjiang.

Question 2: Can we know your education level?
Chen: Yes, I have a bachelor's degree.

Question 3: So, what is your main capital source?
Chen: I have my own wage.

Question 4: Ok, and how much do you consume on fashion luxuries per year?
Chen: I don’t remember clearly, maybe about 20000-30000 RMB.

Question 5: Do you have favorite brands? Why you like them?
Chen: I like Lancôme and Dior. Because I like the smell of these two brands.

Question 6: That’s the reason why you buy them?
Chen: Not only, I prefer the products, because I think they have a better effect, and smooth for sensitive skin.
We: So, you only buy skin care products?
Chen: Yes.

Question 7: What do these products mean to you?
Chen: I think they can keep my facial skin whitening and looks younger.

Question 8: Yes, you look very young. And what do you think these products bring to you?
Chen: (Thought for a while) I think they make me have a better skin, and be confident when I’m working.
We: The last question, do you mind us to call you “Dama”?
Chen: (Laughing) Yes, I’m not young now.
We: Haha, we don’t mean that, just a question. Thank you very much! Merry Christmas!
Chen: Thank you. You too.
6. Interviewee Wu

Question 1: Mrs. Wu, when and where were you born?
Wu: I was born in 1970, Shanxi.

Question 2: And what’s your education level.
Wu: Associate degree.

Question 3: Are you working now? What is the main capital source?
Wu: No, I don’t work now. I take care my son. My husband has business and my main source is conduct financial transactions.

Question 4: So, how much do you spend on fashion luxuries every year?
Wu: It’s not stable, but this year, maybe about 50000 RMB.

Question 5: Ok. Do you have some favorite brands? I saw your bag, it’s nice. Why you like them?
Wu: I like Chanel, LV. I prefer their design are and they are classic.

Question 6: Yes. And we want to know the reason you buy them?
Wu: I like shopping, when I get money, I’d like to buy some fashion goods. You know, new styles are launched every season. (Keeping up with trends)

Question 7: Yes, I see. And what do you think these luxuries mean to you?
Wu: Fashion?
We: Umm, yes of course. Anything else?
Wu: (Thought for a while) Maybe they can make me younger. My friends, they also like these, you know women all like shopping together. (Laughing)

Question 8: Haha, I know. So, what do you think these luxuries bring to you?
Wu: Umm, fashion? I want to be younger, just like my friends, you know women. (Laughing)
We: Haha, maybe I don’t know women well. (Laughing) By the way, I think you won’t like us to call you “Dama”.
Wu: Of course. You can call me “Ayi” (Aunty).
We: Haha, yes. Enjoy your meal, Ayi. Merry Christmas.
Wu: You too