Imitation brand

[The Influencing factors to Chinese consumers purchasing behavior]
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Abstract

China is regarded as a leading exporter of imitated goods to the world. In recent years, the product of imitation brand begins to emerge and become popular in the domestic market. However, what factors influence consumers’ buying behavior to the products of imitation brand? In this study, we explore eight factors that would influence a consumer’s decision towards the imitated product. The factors are appearance, price, brand similarity, innovation, function, advertisement, supporting native brand and exaggerate image. Meanwhile, statistical software, SPSS, has been adopted to test the correlation and frequencies among the eight factors and other sub-factors such as gender, age and income.

Key words: imitated brand, consumer behavior, factors, correlation, frequency
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1. Introduction

The introduction chapter consists of a background of the subject that will be researched followed by a problem discussion and formulation, which, in turn, is followed by the purpose of this study along with delimitations and definitions.

1.1 Brand importance

With the development of business management, more and more companies focus their business strategies in brand. The majority of previous literature and research about brand have proved that it is vital to company success. Kotler (1984, pp.482) gave a definition of brand: “a name, term, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, which is intended to signify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.”

Simultaneously, with the improvements in manufacturing and distribution, consumers face an ever greater choice, and some form of supplier identification becomes a necessary part of information in the process of purchase selection. However, the modern brand has outgrown the timeworn conception of product differentiation (Arnold, 1992). Nowadays, more and more companies realize that brand has been the core of a firm’s development. Brands can enable consumers to efficiently encode their function and emotional values in their minds (Franzen and Bouwman, 2001). For many companies, therefore, the brand name, and what it represents, is one of their most crucial assets because it is the foundation for their competitive advantage and their future profits (Kim, 1993). Strong brands encourage customer loyalty, the potential to charge premium prices, and considerable brand power to support new product and service launches. Companies necessarily have to understand thoroughly what their customer beliefs, behaviors, product or service attributes are, and who are their competitors (Ghodeswar, 2008).

Brand image means perceptions about a brand which is reflected by the brand associations held in the consumer’s memory (Keller, 1993). Even if relating the measurement of brand image directly to the product appears an appropriate way to
determine what is in the consumer’s mind, it should be recognized that often products are marketed by brand strategy, which could lead to a more general brand image (Martinez and Chernatony, 2004). Keller (1993) argues that direct associations are regarded as aspects of the product, and the brand within multidimensional brand images. It is therefore reasonable to consider a method for measuring the dimensions of a brand image that can be applied in various product categories and various brands (Aaker, 1996).

Since the prices of most imitation products are lower than the prices of original brands, consumers are willing to buy the lower priced products of imitation brand, which may offer greater value if the products imitate as well as the original brand (Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999). As a result, not only their brand equity may be irreparably damaged by changing consumers’ attitudes about the uniqueness of the original brand, but also the original brand manufacturers might suffer loss of sales (Zaichkowsky and Simpson, 1996).

1.2 Emergency of imitation brand

In an ideal world, brand marketers always want a complete control over the usufruct of their brand names and other brand identifiers. However, despite some government institutions expanding trademark law coverage, trademark fair use still allows third parties to use another’s brand identifiers without permission (Petty, 2008).

In 1966 Levitt pointed out that the majority of so-called “new” products are completely innovatory imitations. It is the products which do not lead to different consumption patterns, but are mere re-creations of existing goods with few modifications (Gatignon and Robertson, 1991). Brand imitation is considered as a profitable marketing strategy based on the use of similarity (design, brand name, slogan, advertising, etc.) so that a brand can be easy to accept by consumers (Astous and Gargouri, 2001). Because it is similar to the original brand that it intends to imitate, the consumers mistakenly believe it is the original brand's properties (quality,
function, design, origin, etc.) and such generalizations have a significant influence on brand attitude and purchase (Zaichkowsky, 1995).

Imitation brands also can be called “knockoffs” or imitators. Although they are not the same as the original, they are similar in many aspects, such as appearance, name, meaning or intent to an acknowledged and widely known product or service (Lai and Zaichkowsky, 1998). The French leisurewear designer Lacoste and the Italian chain Benetton confronted same problem. In Hong Kong, the Crocodile company and Bossini company both borrow ideas heavily from mentioned famous brand (Lan, P., Gerard, P. and Leung H.C., 2001).

The basis of imitation is that consumers conclude the similarity between external physical characteristics to infer similarity of product quality or function (Ward, Loken, Ross, and Hasapopoulous, 1986; Zaichkowsky and Simpson, 1996). Due to the price of most imitated products being lower than the original brands, consumers are willing to choose the lower priced imitation instead of original brands, which may bring greater value if each facet of product is as good as the original brand it imitates (Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999). Cordell, Wongtada, and Kieschnick (1996) contend, if price is considered as the exclusive factor leading consumers to buy imitated products, the lower income groups should be more likely to buy them. However, Bush, Bloch and Dawson (1989) found that a high percentage of affluent consumers are inclined to be consumers of imitation brand. Lai and Zaichkowsky (1999) argue that the consumer may be satisfied with the imitation brand after realizing that it was not the original brand, and switch brand preferences to imitation brands.

1.3 The situation of Chinese imitation brand

The imitation and piracy activities have shown a spectacular increase in global and advocates attributing this demand especially to the growing economies, such as Eastern Europe and Asia (Shultz and Saporito, 1996). The reasons for the current focus on this issue are that Western IPR (Institute of Pacific Relations) companies are
very interested in taking their products to the new Asian markets because of the potential profits and expansion (Lai and Zaichkowski, 1999). Furthermore, most international companies also preferred to locate in the China because of the low cost of labor.

In 2005 USTR’s (United States Trade Representative) compiled a special report, the counterfeiting goods by mainland Chinese companies carrying American trademarks, which include well-known examples, remains a major problem, and China is also regarded as the leading exporter of counterfeited goods to the world. In the later report of USTR (2008), approximately 410,000 different items, mostly small consumer goods, are reportedly sold out of the China small commodities market in Yiwu.

A variety of industries have regarded the market as a center for wholesaling of infringing goods. However, with the improvement of quality counterfeits, now it is difficult for them to enforce the laws (Lan, P., Gerard, P. and Leung H.C., 2001). According to Lai and Zaichkowski’s research (1999), four mainly different categories of infringing occur in China, which are respectively counterfeiting, piracy, imitation brands, and a large “gray” area.

1.4 The phenomenon of Shanzhai

In recent years, more and more imitation brands appeared in China owing to the Chinese special markets’ environment. Simultaneously, some new elements began to be added to imitation brand with the development of local culture. People call some imitation brands – Shanzhai phenomenon brands. However, even the Shanzhai phenomenon appears in 1994 year, it was until in 2008 that the phenomenon of Shanzhai got its own name. Shanzhai is a local Cantonese word which means fast imitation and manufacture for the civilians (Simple Chinese Dictionary [on-line])). The popularity of Shanzhai phenomenon generates from the context that the whole society reduces the confidence of named brands (Yang, 2008).

These Shanzhai phenomenon brands have following traits (Du, 2008):
Lin (2008) pointed out that imitator of Shanzhai phenomenon has the ability to minimize the cost to meet the needs of consumers who prefer low-end products.

Generally speaking, Shanzhai is similar to piracy, cloning and imitation. It is an industrial phenomenon from the private sector which has a real-named registration. The main method of its marketing entrance is that it starts from small workshops, and then follows a quick imitation of name brand, which is involved in cell phones, rides, DVDs, cameras, clothes, shoes, etc.

However, nowadays, more and more people start to focus on the Shanzhai phenomenon (Lin, 2008). The situation is that Shanzhai is popular in China, and the demand has become increasingly high, even though people realize they are Shangzhai products before they buy them.

1.5 Problem discussion

Since the prices of most imitation products are lower than the prices of original brands, consumers are willing to buy the lower priced products of imitation brand, which may offer greater value if the products imitate as well as the original brand (Collins-Dodd and Zaichkowsky, 1999). Cordell et al. (1996) say that, if price is considered as the exclusive factor leading consumers to buy counterfeit products, the lower income groups should be more likely to buy them. However, Bush, Bloch and Dawson (1989) found that a high percentage of affluent consumers are inclined to be counterfeit-prone consumers. In fact, with the appearance of more imitation brands, they found the price of some imitation brands are close to the original brands. It seems that some other factors have encouraged consumers to buy imitation brands.
Lai and Zaichkowsky (1999) argue that the consumer may be satisfied with the imitator brand after realizing that it was not the original brand, and switch brand preferences to imitation brands. It indicates that the imitation brands actually have the opportunities to win their own consumers. Undeniably, it is a disaster for lots of international companies which are developing Chinese markets. However, it is a good opportunity for those Chinese imitator brands to develop markets. Hence, it is interesting to investigate whether other factors influence consumers’ buying except price factor.

1.6 Problem formulation

According to the problem discussion the question we pose is:

*What factors influence Chinese consumer behavior to buy the products of imitation brand?*

1.7 Purpose

The objective of this study is to explore the reason of consumers buying products of imitation brand. As mentioned before, the phenomenon of Shanzhai brands attracts almost everyone’s attention in China. Consequently, that is the most credible reason for us to study it.

1.8 Delimitation

This study is limited to investigate why Chinese consumers buy products of imitation brand. This selection of consumers delimits this study to only investigate Chinese consumers instead of consumers from other countries. This implies that other products of original brand to the consumer are not investigated.

Hence, what we focus on in this dissertation is purchasing behavior of Chinese consumers to imitation brand. It will be concentrated in consumer behavior and brand equity when we discuss and analyze why consumers buy imitated products.
2. Theoretical framework

A literature framework will be presented in this part of the paper by using earlier research and literature about consumer behavior, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and brand equity.

2.1 Consumer behavior model

The consumer’s culture

- Social class influence
- Age, gender, and household
- Social influences
- Regional, ethnic and religious influences
- Psychographics

The psychological core

- Motivation, ability and opportunity
- Exposure, attention and perception
- Knowing and understanding
- Attitude formation
- Memory and retrieval

The process of making decisions

- Problem recognition and information search
- Judgment and decision making
- Post-decision processes

Consumer behavior outcomes

- Symbolic consumer behavior
- Adoption of, resistance to, and diffusion of innovation

Figure 2.1 The model of consumer behavior (Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001, pp.13)
As a marketer, it is necessary to understand why the consumers buy your products and services. The consumer behavior actually explain what, when and how of consumers buying behavior. Kotler, Armstrong, Wong and Saunders (2008, pp. 238) define consumer behavior as: “the buying behavior or final consumers-individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal consumption.”

Hoyer and Macinnis (2001) create a model to explain what are consumer behavior and the factors which influence consumer behavior. In this model, Hoyer and Macinnis (2001, pp. 13) indicate that consumer behavior encompasses four domains (see figure 2.1): (1) the psychological core, (2) the process of making decisions (3) the consumer’s culture, and (4) consumer behavior outcomes.

2.1.1 The psychological core: internal consumer processes

Before consumers can make decisions, the basis of decision is to have some source of knowledge or information. This source is the psychological core (Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001). As the figure 2.1 shows, this part includes five aspects as follows:

- The definition of a motivation Pittman (1998) gives is the activation of internal desires, needs and concerns which energize behavior in a particular direction aimed at satisfaction of the motivational issues that gave rise to the increased energy. Specifically speaking, motivation is assumed to affect both attention to and the interpretation of information. This current research of motivation is not different significantly from definitions used when motivational research was at its early stage, as is witnessed in Young’s (1961) argument, in which motivation serves to energize and direct behavior. According to Pittman (1998), behaviors about motivations include the development of cognitive structures, the processing of information and more public actions.

“Motivation, ability, and opportunity to make acquisition, usage or disposition decisions are key factors that affect whether consumers will pay attention to and perceive information, what
information they notice, how they form attitudes, and what they remember” (Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001, pp. 53).

- Kotler et al. (2008, pp.258) define perception as: “the process by which people select, organize and interpret information to form a meaningful picture of the word”. Exposure simply refers to the process by which the consumers enter physical contact with a stimulus. Attention is the process of our mental activity being dedicated in a stimulus. (Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001).

- As Alba and Hutchinson (1987) point out that consumer knowledge should be considered as a polyhedral structure. These different types of product-related experience lead to different aspects of knowledge, and these different aspects of knowledge have different influence on product evaluations and buying behavior, relying on the specific situation and task at present.

Hoyer and Macinnis (2001) think knowledge here can be interpreted as two domains, which is respectively knowledge content and knowledge structure. Knowledge content reflects the information we have already learned. Knowledge structure means the way knowledge is organized. Prior knowledge is what we already know.

- People have different kinds of attitudes to food, music, human, clothes and everything else. Hoyer and Macinnis (2001, pp. 132) define an attitude as: “an overall evaluation that expresses how much we like or dislike an object, issue, person, or action”. Attitudes set people into a frame of mind that they like or dislike things, move towards or away from them (Kotler et al. 2008).

- Consumer memory is a huge personal database of knowledge about everything we perceived (Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001). In fact, people’s memory keeps their prior knowledge.

“People can store and remember information such as what brands or services we have used in the past; features of these products or services; how, where, when, and why we bought them; their price; how,
Also, people’s memory is not perfect and we are almost certain to forget (Schacter, 1999). Hence, information retrieval from memory probably goes wrong from time to time, and many times memory recall involves distortion. Previous research and literature indicated that memory and recognition can be greatly affected by the environmental context (Wyer and Srull, 1986).

2.1.2 The process of making decisions

It can be found from many previous researches that the majority of companies’ research consumer buying decisions in order to answer questions about what consumers buy, where they buy, how and how much they buy, when they buy and why they buy (Kotler at el. 2008).

About the process of making decision Hoyer and Macinnis (2001, pp. 197) think a: “Consumer must first realize they have a problem to solve before they can begin the process of making a decision about it. They must then collect information to help make this decision”.

Therefore, the process consists of problem recognition and information search, judgment and decision making, and post decision process.

Hoyer and Macinnis (2001, pp. 197) propose

“Generally, the consumer decision process starts when the consumer recognizes a consumption problem which needs to be solved. Formally defined, problem recognition is the perceived difference between an ideal and an actual state. The ideal state is the way consumers would like a situation to be. The actual state is the real situation as we perceive it now. After problem recognition has been stimulated, the consumer will usually begin the decision process to solve the particular problem”.

Searching information is the one way to solve this problem. It can be regarded as two
kinds on the basis of the sources, and they are internal search and external search (Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001). Hoyer and Macinnis (2001) point out that nearly all decisions making involve some forms of memory processing. Hence, it implies that people’s memory is the main source of internal search. Furthermore, consumers can be involved in external search from outside sources, such as dealers, trusted friends or relatives, published sources, advertisement, the Internet, or the product package.

Hoyer and Macinnis (2001) indicate that consumers may sometimes feel uncertain whether right or wrong after they make a decision about acquisition consumption, or disposition. Consumers want to make sure whether they should have bought a jeans or short other than the one they buy. Post-decision dissonance is inclined to occur when more than one alternative is attractive, and the decision is important and difficult to make. Furthermore, post-decision dissonance can affect consumer behavior due to creating anxiety that the consumer would like to reduce, especially when motivation, ability, and opportunity are high (Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001).

2.1.3 The consumer’s culture

As one of the most abstract components which influence human behavior, culture has been described and defined in many aspects. What the culture is involved in includes social, family, religion, education, status, communication, and technology (Chanlat and Bedard, 1991; Culpan, 1991; Ferraro, 1990; Hall and Hall, 1987, 1990). Kotler et al. (2008, pp.240) define culture as: “the most basic cause of a person’s wants and behavior”.

It can bring a powerful effect on all kinds of human behavior. In Hoyer and Macinnis’s (2001), the model consumer’s culture is made up of five parts as follow:

- Regional, ethnic, and religious

About region Hoyer and Macinnis’s (2001, pp. 303) argue that “Residents in one part of the country can develop patterns of behavior that differ from those in another area
because people tend to work and live in the same area”. Members of ethnic groups share a same heritage, set of beliefs, religion, and experiences which are isolated to others society (ibid).

Religion is regarded as a major culture variable and has significance because of its apparent influence on marketing strategy (Doole and Lowe, 2004). The best example is the Muslem, who have some limitation to their diet because of their religion.

- **Social class**

Social classes are society’s relatively permanent and ordered divisions whose members share similar values, interests and behaviors (Kotler, et al. 2008).

Almost all societies have a social class hierarchy. Among that the status of people are different, some people get higher status than others. Hoyer and Macinnis (2001, pp.331) indicate that

> “These social classes consist of identifiable groups of individuals whose behaviors and lifestyles differ from those of members of the other classes. Members of a particular social class tend to share similar values and behavior patterns”.

- **Age, gender, and household**

Age, gender and household can be viewed as the personal factors. In much research marketers or investigators usually classify consumers by age. The primary reason is that people of the same age are going through similar life experiences and therefore share many common viewpoints (ibid).

Gender differences also can affect consumer behavior. Valuable research studies have shown that men are more likely to exhibit “objective” and “logical” traits and appear to be task-oriented (Rosenkrantz, Bee, Vogel, and Broverman, 1968; Minton and Schneider, 1980; Sargent, 1981). By contrast, women are inclined to be more relational and emotional (Pease, 2003; Deaux, 1985). Men and women also have different points in terms of consumer traits, information-processing styles,
decision-making styles, and consumption patterns (Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001).

- Social

The social factor also will influence a consumer’s behavior. Kotler et al. (2008) think the patterns of social mainly include small groups, family, and social roles and status. Hoyer and Macinnis (2001, pp. 387) urge that “sometimes information and pressures, which we call social influences, are strong because the information source is very credible; at other times they are strong simply because the source can communicate information widely”.

- Psychographics: values, personality and lifestyles

Psychographic has been increasingly used in different industries, such as professional service consultations (Mitchell, 1994), alcoholic beverages (Lesch, Siu, Leonard, 1991), apparel marketing (Richards and Sturman, 1977) and credit cards (Plummer, 1971). Together, psychographics is made up of value, personality, and lifestyle (Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001).

People’s values exist in an organized value system, where some are more important than others. Personality includes behaviors, tendencies, and personal dispositions which make people different from another one (ibid). Products can be regarded as the building blocks of lifestyles (Solomom, 1999). Lin (2002, pp. 250) pointed out that “customers define their lifestyles by the consumption choices they make in a variety of product categories”.

2.1.4 Consumer behavior outcomes

As the figure 2.1 indicates, the psychological core, decision-making process, and the consumer’s culture affect consumer behavior outcomes, especially in the symbolic use of products and the diffusion of ideas, products, or services through a market. Hoyer and Macinnis (2001, pp.474) propose that
“some products used as conscious or unconscious badges that designate the various social categories of which we are members. Products and rituals hold symbolic significance when we undergo role transitions; serve as symbols by connecting us to people, places, and times that have been important to us; and are symbols of our individuality and uniqueness. The combined symbolic uses of products and rituals affect our self-concepts”.

Innovations mean consumers think products, services, ideas, or attributes is new in a market. The characters of innovations are functional, symbolic, or hedonic. They also vary due to the degree of behavioral changing their adoption requires (ibid).

An individual consumer or household purchasing an innovation can be seen as adaption. The counteraction is an aspiration not to buy the innovation, even enduring pressure to do so. The diffusion can be interpreted as the percentage of the population that has adopted an innovation at a specific facet in time, which reflects the group’s consumer behavior within a market (ibid).

2.2 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

In 1943 Abraham Maslow proposed a famous theory about psychology in his paper “A Theory of Human Motivation”. Before that, researchers just focused respectively on such factors as biology, achievement, or power to explain what energizes, directs, and sustains human behavior. However, Maslow posited that a hierarchy of human needs is based on two groups: deficiency needs and growth needs. Within the deficiency needs, each lower need has to be satisfied before enter the next higher level. When each of these needs has been satisfied, the individual is going to remove the deficiency, if a deficiency is detected in future (Huitt, 2004). Here, this model is mainly to make a complement to motivation theory.
According to the figure 2.2, deficiency needs can be divided into four levels:

**Figure 2.2 Maslow's hierarchy of needs**

Source: (http://meerasinha.files.wordpress.com/2009/01/800px-maslows_hierarchy_of_needs.svg.png)

- **Physiological**
  The needs that are usually taken as the starting point for a motivation theory are the so-called physiological drives (Stephens, 2000). For example, a person who is lacking food, money, and love would most probably be eager to food more strongly than for anything else.

- **Safety**
  If the physiological needs have been relatively satisfied, new set of needs emerge which may be categorized roughly as the safety needs (ibid). These needs are related to people's longing for a predictable, orderly world, where everything is under control.

- **Belongingness / love**
  The belongingness or love needs of the individual reflects a wide range of needs from a sense of affiliation (group membership, clubs, churches, work affiliations, etc.) to friendship and love of parents, spouses and children (Seeley, 1988).

- **Esteem**
All people want to get a stable, firmly based, high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect, or self-esteem, and for the respect of others (Stephens, 2000). The esteem needs represent an individual’s aspiration for a sense of self-confidence. This may reflect internal feelings of strength, achievement, independence, or external desires of reputation, prestige, recognition, attention and so on (Seeley, 1988).

- **Self-actualization**

Even if people reach all these needs, we may still often expect that a new discontent and restlessness will soon occur, unless the individual has an inward vocation. Self-actualization indicates, in the most general terms, the desire to realize one’s entire potential needs (ibid).

### 2.3 Brand equity

Krishnan and Hartline (2001) think the importance of brand equity is because of the quality-laden informational content, which occurs when consumers process information about a particular product. Brand equity has led to many published studies to explore the importance of it in marketing.

Brand equity can be examined from two different perspectives – financial and customer based (Lassar, Mittal and Sharma, 1995). The first perspective of brand equity is about the financial asset value it creates to the business franchise (Farquhar, Han, and Ijiri 1991; Simon and Sullivan, 1992). Another perspective imply customer-based in that consumer response to a brand name which is evaluated (Keller, 1993; Shocker, Srivastava and Rueckert, 1994). Aaker (1996, pp.8) indicates that “brand equity is a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand’s name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and that firm’s customers”. The major asset categories are:

- **Brand name awareness**

- **Brand loyalty**
Perceived quality

Brand associations

2.3.1 Brand awareness

Brand awareness can be interpreted as the consumer’s ability to recognize a brand under different conditions (Keller, 2003). It implies that awareness refers to the strength of a brand’s presence in the consumer’s mind. Aaker (1996) divided brand awareness into three levels:

- **Brand recognition: familiarity and linking**

  Brand recognition assumes previous impression to a brand. Consumers will possibly correctly identify the brand as being previously seen or heard when given a cue. Consumers might recognize many brands, but only recall a small number of them, even only one brand. Hence, brand recognition is regarded as the minimum level of brand awareness. This is based on aided recall (Holden, 1993; Laurent, Kapferer and Roussel, 1995; Mariotti, 1999). Aaker (1996) argue that consumer favor for the familiar brand is not just based on their instinctive response. Consumers are aware that the company has been spending money to support the brand when they find a brand and remember that they have seen it before perhaps even several times.

- **Brand recall and the graveyard**

  Brand recall is the second level of brand awareness. It relies on unaided recall (Holden, 1993; Laurent et al., 1995; Mariotti, 1999) and relates to the consumer’s ability to search the memory for the brand when given a relevant cue (Ross and Harradine, 2004). As consumers identify brands by the name provided, brand recall implies that the brands occupy a stronger brand position in consumers’ minds. Thus the first-named brand in an unaided recall represents the highest level of brand awareness (Laurent et al., 1995; Mariotti, 1999).
Young and Rubicam Europe, under the guidance of Jim Williams, designed a “graveyard model”. In this model (figure 2.3), it can be found brands in a product level are plotted on recognition versus recall graph.

Aaker (1996, pp.15) explain this figure that “the dynamics of brands located in the upper-middle or upper-right part of the figure can be important predictors of future brand health. Movement toward the graveyard is associated with sliding sales and market share. If, however, the brand is moving away from the graveyard, sales and market share can be expected to increase.

![Figure 2.3 Recognition versus Recall: The Graveyard Model (Aaker, 1996, pp.15)](image)

Hence, the graveyard model provides evidence that recall is same importance as recognition.

- **Brand name dominance**

A good brand name not only reflects a high level of consumer brand awareness but also commands strong consumer preference (Kotler and Armstrong, 1997). McCarthy and Perreault (1987, pp. 239) pose the following standard of a brand name: “

1. short and simple;
2. easy to spell and read;
3. easy to recognize and remember;
4. pleasing when read or heard – and easy to pronounce;
5. pronounceable in only one way;
6. pronounceable in all languages (for goods to be exported);
7. always timely (does not get out of date);
8. adaptable to packaging or labeling needs;
9. legally available for use (not in use by another firm);
10. not offensive, obscene, or negative;
11. suggestive of product benefits;
12. adaptable to any advertising medium”

Generally speaking brand name dominance is where, in a recall task, most customers can only provide the name of a single brand (Aaker, 1996). Ironically, most successful company brands have to confront the problem that other firms imitated and pirated. So as to avoid losing a trademark, a company must begin taking actions to protect it at early stage, starting with the selection of the name itself (ibid).

2.3.2 Brand loyalty

The importance of brand loyalty has two points for brand asset. Firstly, the loyalties of customers largely create a brand’s value to a firm. Secondly, brand equity can be created and enhanced by loyalty as an asset encourages and justifies loyalty-building programs (Aaker, 1996).

Seetharaman, Nadzir and Gunalan (2001) indicate the brand loyalty of customers can be classified in five categories. Firstly, is “non-users” , also called “non-consumers”, which means that these customers buy a variety of products. Secondly, it is “price switchers”, that consumers always buy the cheapest products. Customers are inclined to look for the cheapest products and have a higher satisfaction. For them, a branded product is expensive and not particularly attractive. Thirdly, it is “passively loyal”. This kind of customer can change any time if a good reason comes up. The next category is “fence sitters”. These customers care about convenience and price. They like a cheaper product but must be in a convenient situation to purchase the product. Finally, “committed clients” tend to buy particular products in any place at any time.
Durand and Kannan (1999) classify brand loyalty into following four aspects to consider in their research.

- **Brand choice of consumers**

Having strong positive attitudes toward their preferred brand are true brand loyal consumers and they are relatively price insensitive in terms of brand choice (Krishnamurthi and Raj 1988). However, price insensitivity is not the only test of brand loyalty. Loyalties who are deep consumers or have high purchase level are more price sensitive than light consumers (Dillon and Gupta, 1996; Kim and Rossi, 1994). East, Harris, Willson and Hammond (1995) conclude from a survey of British supermarket shoppers that household income is the demographic variable most strongly associated with claimed brand loyalty.

Marketing actions are another key factor to influence the brand choice decisions of consumers. Using a promotion is a good way to attract consumers’ attention. Promotions, such as in-store displays and feature advertising, not only influence choice behavior of consumers but also apparently influence how consumers think about product alternatives which constitute their consideration system (Durand and Kannan, 1999).

Behavioral loyalty and behavioral non-loyalty respond asymmetrically to price adjustments in the brand choice decision (ibid). Krishnamurthi, Mazumdar, and Raj (1992) found in their research of two frequently purchased products, that behavioral loyalties show the same sensitivity to price increases and decreases. However, non-loyalties were more sensitive to price decreases than to price increases.

- **Purchase quantity**

Tellis (1988) finds behavioral brand loyalty can be seen as a significant predictor of purchase quantity. Brand loyal consumers could purchase a lot of brands they prefer.

Furthermore, Krishnamurthi and Raj (1991) find that behavioral loyal consumers are less price sensitive than behavioral non-loyal consumers in the choice decision. But
behavioral loyal consumers are more sensitive to price in the purchase quantity decision.

- **Purchase timing**

Vilcassim and Jain (1991) find that the average inter-purchase time is less than that for brand switching for repeat buying of saltine crackers. Here, inter-purchases means the time between purchases. Kim and Rossi (1994), in their research of phase behavior in the light canned tuna product category, find that consumers with low purchase frequency are far more pricing sensitive than consumers with high purchase frequency.

Marketing action can encourage consumers to speed-up the timing of their purchases (Gupta, 1988; Vilcassim and Jain, 1991). In addition to that Gupta (1988) pointed out that average inter-purchase time is one of the most important predictors of purchase time.

- **Consumption rate**

Durand and Kannan (1999) propose that some research on consumption is now just beginning to develop; the present research shows marketing actions have the possibility to accelerate consumption. However, accelerating consumption by the way of marketing action depends on the degree to which the goods possess.

### 2.3.3 Perceived quality

Perceived quality is defined as the consumer's judgment about goods’ (services’) overall excellence or superiority (Zeithaml, 1988; Aaker and Jacobson, 1994). Sethuraman and Cole (1997) found that perceived quality explains a considerable portion of the differentia in the price premium consumers are willing to pay for national brands. In other words, the strong brands add value to consumers' purchase evaluations. About this point, Aaker (1996) explains that perceived quality can raise the status of a brand asset. The reasons are
Among all brand associations, only perceived quality has been shown to drive financial performance.

Perceived quality is often a major (if not the principal) strategic thrust of a business.

Perceived quality is linked to, and often drives, other aspects of how a brand is perceived.

Although the quality is a perception of the consumer, it is not easy to create. The precondition is that the quality claim has substance in order to achieve that. However, Aaker (1996, pp.20) points out that “generating high quality requires an understanding of what quality means to customer segments, as well as a supportive culture and a quality improvement process that will enable the organization to deliver quality products and services”.

### 2.3.4 Brand associations

Keller (1998) defines brand associations as informational node linked to the brand node in memory that contains the meaning of the brand for consumers. Brand associations are important, not only to marketers but also to consumers. Marketers apply brand associations to differentiate, position, and extend brands, to create positive attitudes, and to suggest attributes or benefits of purchasing or using a specific brand. Consumers process, organize, and retrieve information in memory and to aid them in making purchase decisions by brand associations (Aaker, 1991).

Rio, Vazquez and Iglesias (2001) pose a way to distinguish between brand associations by their level of abstraction, which depends on how much information is summarized or included in the association. Keller (1998) classifies brand associations into three major categories: attributes, benefits and attitudes. Here attributes are interpreted as descriptive features that characterize a brand, such as what a consumer thinks the brand is or has and what is involved with its purchase or consumption. Benefits are the personal value consumers attach to the brand attributes, like what the
Brand can do for them. Brand attitude is defined as consumers' overall evaluation of a brand whether good or bad (Mitchell and Olson, 1981).
3. Methodology

In this chapter, a study of methodology will be discussed. In order to meet the purpose and obtain a clear and deep idea of questions presented in introduction, a questionnaire has been adopted for quantitative research. We will explain how we can select the methodology, and how we collect the data. We will also explain how we analyze the data.

3.1 Research Strategy

As the research methods, quantitative research and qualitative research are widely used to collect the data. As the qualitative research, attitudes, behavior and experiences are crucial, but there are only a small proportion of people that will join in the research; however, it is easy to keep in touch with these groups (Sanchez, 2006). Comparatively, for the quantitative research, usually, a large-scale survey is made in the research which generates the statistics. However, even though quantitative research is available to a large sum of people, the contact with those people cannot reach the degree of qualitative research (ibid).

However, there is another research method, namely the mixing of qualitative and quantitative methods. Jick (1979) quoted the view of Denzin (1978) that there is a triangulation working in mixing qualitative and quantitative methods which could be viewed as complementary, rather than as competitive approaches.

In this study, the choice of methodology is a quantitative research, which is adopted to provide a deeper insight into the consumer behavior. By using the quantitative method, the study can be highly concentrated on the consumer behavior towards the imitated brand. In a questionnaire designed for quantitative research, the responses are gathered in a standardized way. It is more objective, certainly more than interviews, and it is relatively quick to collect the information. This methodology will also help to develop the research, test theories and make an explanation on the researched phenomenon in a new approach (Bryman, 2002; Jacobsen, 2002).
3.2 Research Approach

Two kinds of research approaches have always been discussed widely: deductive theory and inductive theory. “Deductive theory represents the commonest view of the nature of the relationship between theory and research”. (Bryman and Bell, 2007 pp. 11)

Deductive approach normally starts from selecting theory and hypotheses and following on with making a deduction, through which there forms a process of collecting data (ibid). Bryman and Bell (2007) gives a clear figure of the process of deduction (please see figure 3.1)

![Diagram of the process of deduction]

**Figure 3.1 the process of deduction (Bryman and Bell, 2007 pp. 11)**

An inductive theory starts from observation and follows with generating theory or hypothesis. Comparing with deductive theory, the process of inductive theory seems to be a part of deduction (ibid). However, researchers find a common phenomenon during the general strategy named iterative. Bryman and Bell (2007) give the relative explanation:
“Once the phase is of theoretical reflection on the data has been made researcher may want to collect further data to establish the conditions in which a theory will and will not hold. It involves a weaving back and forth between data and theory.” (Bryman and Bell, 2007 pp. 14)

In our study, deductive theory has been adopted to support the data collection. Here, the selected theory is consumer behavior. Our aim is to gather the data on how consumers view the imitated brand. The details of data will be shown in the following chapter.

3.3 Type of Research

Questionnaires need respondents to complete them. It is regarded as one of the main instruments for gathering data using a social survey design (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Here, the questionnaire is applied to the type of this research. The advantages of the self-completion questionnaire mainly include four points:

- **Cheaper to administer**

Sometimes the researchers will meet the problem as the study sample is geographically widely dispersed. The administrators have to pay the fees for that. However, the emergency of self-completion questionnaire provides a cheaper way for administer (ibid).

- **Quick to administer**

There are two ways to send out the self-completion questionnaires, which are either by post or distributed in a large numbers simultaneously (ibid).

- **No interviewer variability**

Self-completion questionnaires do not meet the problem that interviewers ask questions in different methods (ibid).

- **Convenience for respondents**
It is convenient and easy to answer the self-completion questionnaires for respondents since they can finish questions in different ways (ibid).

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection is a way to gather the information from different aspects. There are four ways of collecting quantitative data: interviews, questionnaires, tests/measurements and observation. However, researchers such as Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) focused on the questionnaires, because questionnaire design as a quantitative research tool, can illustrate the general issues.

In this study, a self-completion questionnaire has been adopted for collecting primary data. The questionnaires have been sent on-line. The reason why the on-line research has been adopted lies in:

(1) The location – both of the two authors are in Sweden, so it is difficult to make a questionnaire on the spot.

(2) The time - there is limited time to collect the data. Putting the questionnaire on-line is a convenient and effective way to gather the data within a short time.

(3) The cost - compared with the questionnaire on the spot, the cost of on-line questionnaire is zero. There is no need to pay extra money for the printing and traffic expenditure. Of course, there is no need to set aside some money for the people who distribute the questionnaire on the spot.

A special professional website named ASKFORM has been selected to distribute questionnaire. The website of ASKFORM is http://www.askform.cn/28044-38004.aspx . 15 questions in a Chinese version have been posted on the website. (Please see the links you can also find the English version in the appendix). The hyperlink of this questionnaire website is given to another three famous local website in Shanghai in order to attract more respondents to participate.

Askform will collect data and perform the statistical calculations automatically.

(Please see the following figure 3.2)

![Diagram of questionnaire distribution and collection](image)

**Figure 3.2 process of questionnaire distribution and collection**

The English version is different from the Chinese version because Chinese has the habit of selecting the choice as A, B, C or D. The information we collected from the questionnaire shows in following figure 3.3. In this figure the types of information are interpreted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>items</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>the influence among eight factors:</td>
<td>appearance, price, brand similarity, function, innovation, advertisement, exaggerate image, support native brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>factors and gender:</td>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>factors and age:</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>factors and income:</td>
<td>income per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>factors and industry:</td>
<td>student, doctor, manager, worker, secretary, engineer and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>income and age:</td>
<td>age and income per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>income and expenditure:</td>
<td>income per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>income and willing</td>
<td>income per month and willing of buying the imitated brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>income and expenditure</td>
<td>Income and expenditure per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>imitated product, slogan and trademark</td>
<td>slogan and trademark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>quality of the imitated product</td>
<td>quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>the own brand</td>
<td>Own brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>the information source</td>
<td>newspaper, friend, internet and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>distinction of the imitated product</td>
<td>distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>purchasing channel</td>
<td>supermarket, shop, internet, others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.3 types of information from questionnaire
3.5 Sampling

3.5.1 Probability Sample

In this section, we will explore the probability and its different types. Below we are quoting the definition of sampling.

“Sampling is a process of selecting a smaller group of people who have basically the same characteristics and preferences as the total group from which it is drawn.” (Wrenn, Loudon and Stevens, 2001 pp. 175)

There are two kinds of sampling: probability sample and non-probability.

However, even in the probability sample, there are still four types of probability of sample: simple random sample, systematic sample, stratified random sample and multi-stage cluster sampling. Figure 3.4 lists the features of these four types of probability sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of probability sample</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple random sample</td>
<td>Each item in a population has the equal chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic sample</td>
<td>A gap or interval between selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratified sample</td>
<td>The population is divided into groups called strata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-stage sample</td>
<td>Selecting a sample with each chosen cluster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.4 Types of Probability Sample

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

In this study, selected probability sample means we use simple random selection in
view of collecting the data widely from each unit of population. Since the topic of the study focused on the consumer behavior in Shanghai, the population sample has been selected to be the Shanghainese (those who live in Shanghai of China) and who surfed the internet from April 12, 2009 to April 27, 2009. Our research focuses on the whole range of local Shanghainese, it is needless to make a division within the population because any kind of cluster will cause the data to be missing. Moreover, uncorrected division will influence the research result. Since there are a large number of imitated brands in Shanghai, imitated brands such as sports goods brands are facing the highest frequency of being imitated compared to other imitated brands. To this extent, we select imitated sporting brands as our research point.

3.5.2 Sample Size

A big question rises here that how large should be a sample size. The answer to this question is not really straight forward because it depends on a number of factors that contribute towards the sample size. In this section, we will discuss about those factors that helps in deciding the sample size.

- **Absolute and relative sample size**

  “one of the most basic consideration, and one that is possibly the most surprising, is that, contrary to what you might have expected, it is absolute size of a sample that is important, not its relative size. It means that increasing the size of a sample increases the likely precision of a sample” (Bryman and Bell, 2007 pp. 194)

- **Time and cost**

  Time and cost is also relevant to the sampling. Bryman and Bell (2007) suggests that the relationship between precision and sample size is positive correlation. However, time and cost still have a great affect on the sample size. Bryman and Bell (2007) said that it more and more becomes an uneconomic proposition to try to make a much smaller increment of precision.
Non-response

“The non-response rate is the percentage of a sample which disagrees to participate” (Bryman and Bell, 2007 pp. 196). Bryman and Bell (2007) also advise that the tendency of refusing to participate is growing.

Heterogeneity of the population

Heterogeneity and homogeneity of the population are also the factors that should be considered. As Bryman and Bell described:

“When a sample is very Heterogeneity, like a sample of a whole country or city, the population is likely to be highly varied. When it is relatively homogeneous, such as members of a company or of an occupation, the amount of variation is less.” (Bryman and Bell, 2007 pp. 196)

The description above indicated that a greater heterogeneity is better than homogeneity of the population.

In this study, we select on-line questionnaire. The reason is that it is easier to do the questions online than on the spot, so that there will be less non-response rate. We select the sample from the whole city, which matches the advantage of heterogeneity of the population.

We estimate at most 20% rate of non-response so that the sample size is 250. We have received 256 copies of response including 12 copies of invalid response. 244 copies of response have been adopted. The reason is that it is easier to do the questions online than on spot, so that there will be less non-response rate. We select the sample from the whole city which matches the heterogeneity of the population.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is a procedure where data can be collected and presented as the first step. After that a mathematical technique would be used to explain the statistical result. In
this study, we select SPSS as our statistics software to analyze the collected data. Using SPSS is was possible to:

- Count the answers given to each question
- Make a bar chart to display the factors which would influence the consumer decision on the imitated brand product
- Test the significance and correlate of factors

3.7 Research Criteria

In this study, we collect the primary data. Criteria such as validity and reliability have been used and followed in this study.

“Although the terms reliability and validity seem to be almost like synonyms, they have quite different meanings in relation to the evaluation of measures of concepts.” (Bryman and Bell, 2007 pp. 162)

3.7.1 Validity

Validity refers to the fact that how the collected data is true in accordance with the actual figure. Verifying the data against the successful validation is a five-step process and here we will debate on those points, which coin the term validity. Bryman and Bell quoted the word validity as: “Validity refers to the issue of whether or not an indicator (or set of indicators) that is devised to gauge a concept really measures that concept” (Bryman and Bell, 2007 pp. 165).

There are five ways to establish the validity: face validity, concurrent validity, and predictive validity, construct validity and convergent validity. In this research, concurrent validity has been considered to establish the validity. In the questionnaire design, we questioned the future of the imitated brand to those who has already bought the imitated brand products. However, we also pose the same question to those who have never bought such products for the purpose of gaining a general idea of the future of the imitated brand among the population sample which is in accordance with
the concurrent validity (ibid).

### 3.7.2 Reliability

The valid collected data pose the question of Reliability in a practice. Bryman and Bell, defined Reliability as “Reliability refers to the consistency of measure of concept.” (Bryman and Bell, 2007 pp.163)

Three important factors would influence reliability: stability, internal reliability and inter-observer consistency.

- **Stability** is used to check whether a measure is stable as the time passes away (ibid). In this research, a closed questionnaire design as a measure has been put onto the internet for a week. Since the phenomenon of imitated brand has existed for at least two years, consumers have already been accustomed to this situation which leads to the consistency of the response.

- **Internal reliability** is “Whether or not the indicators that make up the scale or index are consistent.” (Bryman and Bell, 2007 pp. 163)

In this study, respondents are asked to use same symbol “√” to mark the choice in the same webpage. The website makes sure that the questions would be coincident with their initial form.

- **Inter-observer consistency** weighs the degree to which there is a consistency of decision between one or more observers (ibid). In this study, both of the observers have come to an agreement that through all the process of methodology, a wide discussion should be taken before the decision has been make. To this extent, it meets the required level of inter-observer consistency.
4. Empirical data and analysis

In this chapter, we will list what we get from SPSS after data collecting of questionnaire on-line. The empirical data will be presented in form of graphs, crosstab and correlation table. By this data results we will explain the question mentioned in the introduction that why the Chinese consumers buy the imitated brand products? Moreover, the reasons why these results are generated will also be talked about at the same time. Last but not least, we will discuss the implication for the imitated brand.

4.1 The overall results of questionnaire

In the part of data collection the goal amount of questionnaires we planned is 250 copies. By April 27th, we had finally received 256 copies of the questionnaires. Among them there are 12 useless questionnaires because the 12 copies are our pretest. We made some modifications after adopting a few suggestions of these people. Hence, the final amounts of questionnaires we collect are 244 copies.

Overall, according to the figure 4.1 participants who take part in this questionnaire are 127 male and 117 female. The distance between male and female is not big in this figure. It can be found that the distribution of age show a step shape, increasing from “under 18 years old” to “over 35 years old” in figure 4.2. Compared with three other groups, the age group “under 18 years old” has an obvious gap. Because we cannot show each occupation in the questionnaire, we just show limited main kinds of job. Hence, there are many people who made the choice of “other”. However, we also can find the majority of participants are students from figure 4.3. Anyway, these data provide a lot of cues to later analysis.
Figure 4.1 The proportion of Gender

Figure 4.2 The Frequency of Age
4.2 Layout of analysis

There are large amounts of information in the empirical data. Hence, in order to analyze it well and be easy to understand study for readers, the main process of analysis is according to following step:

1. **First step**

The problem we pose in this study is why the Chinese consumers buy products of imitation brand. Also, we design the question about what factors will influence your decision of buying imitated brand products. Here, the factors mainly include eight points which showed in figure 4.4. Hence, we will examine the results that participants choose among these eight factors. It can directly give the relative answer.
why people buy imitated products.

**Figure 4.4 the eight influenced factors**

- **Second step**
  After getting the results what factors influence consumer behavior, the next is to explore what caused their choice. According to the gender, age, income and industry as potential personal factors, whether having correlation between each other will be discussed. The figure 4.5 illustrates procedure.

**Figure 4.5 the correlation between age, gender, income, industry and factors**
- **Third step**

  This step is to examine the correlation among age, income and expenditure. The objective of this step is to establish the traits of participants.

  ![Figure 4.6 the correlation among between age, gender, income and industry](image)

- **The fourth step**

  Other collected data to complement previous analysis will be discussed. Here the other collected data are not crucial factors. But these data can be useful to future research.
4.3 Analysis

4.3.1 The influencing factors

In the questionnaire, we have designed eight multiple choice questions. Here, we consider them as eight factors that would be related to the consumers when they are purchasing the imitated brand products. We can find the result in figure 4.7 that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appearance of Imitated product</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand similarity</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price of imitated product</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation of imitated product</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function of imitated product</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement of imitation brand</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support native brand</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exaggerated image</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>313.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

According to the frequencies, the top three factors that consumers would consider are appearance of imitated products, brand similarity and price of imitated products which respectively share 15.9% within the total frequencies. Even though the frequencies of factors as innovation of the imitated product and advertisement of the imitated brand are a little bit lower than the top three factors, they still occupy a certain proportion of the percentage. The number of responses of factors as supporting native brand, exaggerated image and function of imitated products decrease progressively, and the lowest one got the 7.0% frequency only.
People’s values exist in an organized value system, where they think some are more important than others (Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001). Here, the reason for many people choosing appearance, brand similarity and price is because consumers think these three factors are more important than others. Furthermore, people have different kinds of attitudes to food, music, human, clothes and everything else. Hoyer and Macinnis (2001, pp. 132) define an attitude “an overall evaluation that expresses how much we like or dislike an object, issue, person, or action”. It is possibility that people choose these factors due to their different attitudes to brands.

Thinking of Maslow’s (1943) “A Theory of Human Motivation”, consumers who are in the lower ranking have the will to enjoy the corresponding ranking treatment which directly leads the consumer to be in pursuit of the hylic wants. In premise of being lacking in the money, these consumers’ happiness indices will be lower than others. The cost on the hylic wants is usually beyond the actual state in this ranking. Money is a big problem which stops them to achieve their willing. The named brands products are usually expensive so that such ranking that the consumer mentioned above are not available to reach. However, a lower price together with a similar brand product can catch their eyes and meet their hylic wants, even though the imitated brands are little different from the original brands. They are enjoying themselves just like they have the same product as the upper rankings have. Therefore, a lot of people consider price as one of important factors when they buy imitation brand products. On the other hand, it is this point to make people buy products of similar brand. Simultaneously behavioral loyalty and behavioral non-loyalty respond asymmetrically to price adjust in the brand choice decision (Durand and Kannan, 1999).

Appearance and advertisement of imitated products are other factors that consumers might consider. Obviously, some people think appearance is more important than other factors; good appearance always attracts the human eye, no matter whether it is an imitated brand or not. If its advertisement is an effective way to spread the imitated brand information, it can easily reach everyone and everywhere. Consumers are likely
to get the information involuntary, advertising would influence them easily.

Innovation on the imitated brand can be considered as the product of the social development. According to Pittman (1998), behaviors about motivations include the development of cognitive structures, the processing of information and more public actions. More and more educated people are emerging in the society; they are equipped with a degree of knowledge and they have the ability to receive the new things and new technology. Innovation has a relatively high frequency because this factor meets the demand of a growing group in the rank.

Supporting native brands, exaggerated image are of low frequencies which show that when the consumers are purchasing, they are prone to thinking about the real-life products which can meet their needs quickly, efficiently and directly. There is an uncertainty on the function of imitated products, which is also the reason to explain why it has the low frequency. That is, there is a specific scale of imitation brands which need a function such as IT. It might be the limitation in the study that we require the respondents to imagine an imitated brand from a sports product before they start the answer, so that the feedback from the function is not sufficient and might influence the result.

4.3.2 The correlation between personal information and influencing factors

- Gender and influencing factors

Hoyer and Macinnis (2001) pointed out that lots of aspects differ when people are purchasing. The proportion of respondents between male and female is approximation to the same (male: female=1:0.93) in figure 4.1. The figure 4.8 shows the frequency between gender and factors.

The frequencies, in which male is higher than female are mainly concentrating on the factors as function, innovation and brand similarity, respectively reach 24%, 59% and 52%. These factors are of masculine. Among these three factors, the value of frequency shows clearly that brand similarity and innovation are respectively twice
higher than the function’s. The reason why there is a great gap from innovation, brand similarity to function is not only due to the limitation of the questionnaire, which is mentioned above, but also due to males’ character of risk-taking and their hankering for status in the society in China.

### Figure 4.8 Factors*Gender Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$Factors^a$</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance of Imitated product</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Gender</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand similarity</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Gender</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price of imitated product</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Gender</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation of imitated product</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Gender</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function of imitated product</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Gender</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement of imitation brand</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Gender</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support native brand</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Gender</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exaggerated image</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Gender</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Men are more likely to exhibit “objective” and “logical” traits and appear to be task-oriented (Rosenkrantz et al., 1968; Minton and Schneider, 1980; Sargent, 1981). By contrast, women are inclined to be more relational and emotional (Pease and Pease, 2003; Deaux, 1985). Men and women also have different points in terms of consumer
traits, information-processing styles, decision-making styles, and consumption patterns (Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001). Here, the character of risk-taking refers to trying the new things bravely and spontaneously. It is true that because of different physical structure, males are prone to accepting and applying the new things (Chua, 2000).

On the other hand, in China, males are still in the leading position on the overwhelming majority of occasions which forces them to have the conception of careerism. Those males who are ranking in the lower level of living standards can take satisfaction in the similar brand which is equal to the imitated brand here.

Comparably, females pay more attention to those feminine factors. In the figure, factors as appearance of imitated products, price of imitated product and exaggerated image differs greatly among males and females which, respectively, reach the values as 59.1%, 60.2% and 30.1%. In the case of only a few proportions (43 feedbacks) have selected exaggerated image, the frequency of female is still twice higher than males’. Females have less pressure when they are working in the society than males, which leads them to go after those outer factors. It is not a paradox that similar brand, appearance and image are all outer factors. However, similarity is also an inner factor, which is one of the core elements of imitated brands.

Why do females consider price a lot when they are purchasing the imitated brand products? It lies in the income differences. Females have less income is what they have less pressure in the society which forces them to think a lot about on the expenditure in each detail of life. It can be regarded as social class, among that the status of people are different, some people get higher status than others (Hoyer and Macinnis, 2001). In China, the social class of female is obviously lower than male.
Age and influencing factors

(Here the correlation coefficient means spearman’s rho. If the absolute value of correlation coefficient is more close to one, the relationship between two variables is much stronger. By contraries the relationship between two variables is weaker if the absolute value of correlation coefficient is more close to zero. The significance below 2-tailed means the correlation possesses statistical significance.)

As shown from Figure 4.9, several factors have the correlations with age. They are advertisement of imitation brand and supporting native brand. The correlation coefficient between age and advertisement is 0.132”, while the correlation coefficient between supporting native brand and age is 0.101”. In view of both of these two correlations coefficient are below 0.5 (∈ (0, 0.5)), they belong to weak correlation. It means that, with the growth of imitated brand consumers’ age, they will be increasingly influenced by advertisement or the elder groups would consider more about supporting native brands. However, after Spearman’s (ρ) testing, we find any correlation between age and other 6 factors are not related.
### Figure 4.9 Correlations between age and influencing factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman's rho</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Similarity</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Innovation</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Advertisement</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Image</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
<td>-0.030</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
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<td>101</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.510</td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td>0.732</td>
<td>0.568</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>-0.368</td>
<td>-0.368</td>
<td>-0.204</td>
<td>-0.368</td>
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<td>0.732</td>
<td>0.568</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.515</td>
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<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
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<td>1.000</td>
<td>-0.368</td>
<td>-0.440</td>
<td>-0.073</td>
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<td>0.732</td>
<td>0.568</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>0.068</td>
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<td>0.732</td>
<td>0.568</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>0.068</td>
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<td>0.198</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.515</td>
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<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.93</td>
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<td>0.568</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.016</td>
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<td>1.93</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**
Income and influencing factors

(Here the correlation coefficient means spearman’s rho. If the absolute value of correlation coefficient is more close to one, the relationship between two variables is much stronger. By contraries the relationship between two variables is weaker if the absolute value of correlation coefficient is more close to zero. The significance below 2-tailed means the correlation possesses statistical significance.)

Figure 4.10 pointed out that income has the correlations with a lot of factors: appearance, similarity, price, innovation, function and advertisement. By using the method of Spearman’s (p), we can get the results that:

Weak correlation

The correlation between brand similarity and income presents a weak correlation. Coefficient reaches 0.271” and the 2-tailed significance is 0 (below 0.01) which show a high significance. The same thing happened to the condition between income and innovation of imitated product and advertisement. Their respective coefficients are 0.321” and 0.370”. Both of them have the significance because the 2-tailed significances are 0 also.

These weak correlations show that the higher income level that imitated brand consumers are ranking in, the more degrees of influence on the brand similarity, innovation and advertisement that will influence their decision.

Weak negative correlation

In figure 4.10, it also presents some weak negative correlation. The correlation coefficient between appearance and income is -0.286” while the 2-tailed significance is 0 (below 0.01) which shows this weak negative correlation can bring the influence between appearance and income apparently. The price of an imitated brand product also meets the same condition as appearance meets. The Spearman’s (p) result is -0.207” and 2-tailed significance is 0 (below 0.01). The function of the imitated product also has the weak negative correlation with income, which the correlation
coefficient reaches -0.156 and 2-tailed significance is 0.031 (below 0.05).

These three groups of weak negative correlation present that factors such as price, appearance and function; on the contrary, they would not influence these imitated brand consumers whose rank is in the high income level so much.

However, we also get the result that correlation between supporting native brand, exaggerated image and income are not related.
Figure 4.10 Correlations between income and influencing factors

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Spearman's rho</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Similarity</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Innovation</th>
<th>Function</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Industry and influencing factors

Since consumers in China are in different industries, we try to find how the eight factors influence the consumers from different industries. In figure 4.11, we use dichotomy to discuss the relationship between each factor and each industry. The total number of responses here is 193 including 75 students, 9 doctors, 3 managers, 17 workers, 9 secretaries, 7 engineers and 73 people who are from other industries which have not been listed in the questionnaire. Since choice of factors are multiple, which means people from different industries have equal time to give the reply: yes or no on each factor.

Student

51/75 (68%) students considered that appearance of imitated product will influence their decision of purchasing. 46/75 (61.3%) consider price influence at the same time. Appearance and price are the top two factors and the percentage is over 50% that would be consider it to be among the most important factors to the students. The remaining factors such as similarity, innovation, function, supporting and image did not occupy a large proportion. The percentages are around 30 to 40.

Doctor

7/9 (77.8%) doctors think that appearance would influence their decision. And 6/9 (66.7%) doctors consider price influence. These two factors are the top two among the doctors’ decisions. Advertisement and exaggerated image occupied 30% to 40% while similarity, supporting native brand and innovation did not share a large proportion which is around 10% to 20%.

Manager

In the figure 4.11, it shows that managers focus on a lot of factors when they are selecting the imitated brand. Appearance, similarity, innovation, advertisement and supporting native brand reaches 66.7% respectively, which is over 50%. Moreover, 100% of managers consider the influence of price. Only 1/3 managers consider image
and function influences them. One thing should be pointed out is that only 3 managers took part in the questionnaire so that this result is not very representative.

**Worker**

Workers focus a lot on the brand similarity (64.7%) and advertisement (58.8%). Price, innovations and appearance share 40% to 50% around. Results also show that they did not consider a lot on the function, supporting and image which the percentages only respectively reach 17.6%.

**Secretary**

7/9 secretaries consider appearance and price as the influence when they are purchasing. The other six factors are around 11% to 33%.

**Engineer**

Innovation as an influential factor reaches the top line among all the factors. 5/7 (71.4%) engineers select this factor. 4/7 (57.1%) engineers think about appearance, price, function and advertisement as influencing factors. The other factors account for around 20% to 40% as similarity and advertisement and image did not share a large proportion.

Since there are a lot of other industries which have not been listed in the questionnaire, it is very difficult to test what kind of factors that the “OTHERS” considered that would have the influence. Comparing with each industry list in the figure 4.11, we find that the number of students occupy a large proportion which indirectly gives the hint that students might play an important role on the imitated brand.
## Figure 4.11 Factors’ Industry Crosstabulation

| Factors* | Appearance | Count | Industry | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | student | doctor | manager | worker | secretary | engineer | others | Total |
| Count | 51 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 10 | 96 |
| % within Industry | 68.0% | 77.8% | 66.7% | 41.2% | 77.8% | 57.1% | 24.7% |  |
| Similarity | Count | 30 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 46 | 96 |
| % within Industry | 40.0% | 11.1% | 66.7% | 64.7% | 33.3% | 42.9% | 62.0% |  |
| Price | Count | 46 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 23 | 96 |
| % within Industry | 61.3% | 66.7% | 100.0% | 41.2% | 77.8% | 57.1% | 31.5% |  |
| Innovation | Count | 26 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 49 | 94 |
| % within Industry | 33.3% | 22.2% | 66.7% | 47.1% | 33.3% | 71.4% | 67.1% |  |
| Function | Count | 23 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 42 |
| % within Industry | 30.7% | 0.0% | 33.3% | 17.6% | 22.2% | 57.1% | 12.3% |  |
| Advertisement | Count | 23 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 48 | 93 |
| % within Industry | 30.7% | 33.3% | 66.7% | 58.8% | 33.3% | 57.1% | 65.8% |  |
| Support | Count | 21 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 44 |
| % within Industry | 26.0% | 11.1% | 66.7% | 17.6% | 11.1% | 26.6% | 19.2% |  |
| Image | Count | 23 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 43 |
| % within Industry | 30.7% | 44.4% | 33.3% | 17.6% | 11.1% | 28.6% | 12.3% |  |
| Total | Count | 75 | 9 | 3 | 17 | 9 | 7 | 73 | 193 |

*Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.
4.3.3 The correlations between age, income and expenditure

(Here the correlation coefficient means spearman’s rho. If the absolute value of correlation coefficient is more close to one, the relationship between two variables is much stronger. By contraries the relationship between two variables is weaker if the absolute value of correlation coefficient is more close to zero. The significance below 2-tailed means the correlation possesses statistical significance. And Pearson’s r is exactly the same as Spearman’s rho in terms of the outcome of calculating it.)

We test the correlation by using the method of Pearson. The result in figure 4.12 and figure 4.13 shows that the correlation between age and income reaches 0.626” which has a positive correlation. The 2-tailed significant at the 0.01 level is 0 (below 0.01) which show a great significant. The result in figure 4.14 and figure 4.15 indicates that the correlation between age and expenditure reaches 0.371” which has weak correlation. 2-tailed significance is 0 (below 0.01).

**Figure 4.12 Age * income per year Crosstabulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>under 12000 RMB</th>
<th>between 12000 and 24000 RMB</th>
<th>between 24000 and 36000 RMB</th>
<th>between 36000 and 48000 RMB</th>
<th>above 48000 RMB</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 18 years old</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 18 and 25 years old</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 25 and 35 years old</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 35 years old</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.13 Crosstab between age and income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>income per year</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>income per year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.626**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>244</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>244</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
We can get the implication that, since age has a positive correlation with income, which shows that with the growth of age, one’s income will increase. However, income also has the correlation with expenditure which shows that the growing age would influence the imitated brand expenditure per year. Moreover, people who are in same age bracket might be suffering similar life experiences. It is possible that they share a lot of common patterns (Macinnis, 2001, pp. 384). It is via communication among the similar group that the attitude towards the imitated brand would change if one of the members in the group has a certain expenditure on the imitated brand product per year. This may be one reason that Chinese consumer buys the imitated brand product.
4.3.4 Summary about other collected data

Cordell et al. (1996) and Bush et al. (1989) indicated that not only lower income groups but also higher income groups are likely to buy imitated products. In figure 4.16 it can be found most consumers are focused in sub-middle income groups. And choices “under 1000RMB”, “between 2000 and 3000RMB” respectively occupy 37.3% and 25.0% among all. However, the correlations show that the relationship between “be willing to buy imitated product” and “income” here is weak. In figure 4.17 the correlation coefficient just is 0.12 being close to zero very much.

Krishnamurthi, Mazumdar, and Raj (1992) in their research of two frequently purchased products find that behavioral loyalties show the same sensitivity to price increases and decreases. However, non-loyalties were more sensitive to price decreases than to price increases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 4.16 Income * Be willing to buy imitation product Crosstabulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 12000 RMB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 12000 and 24000 RMB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 24000 and 39000 RMB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 38000 and 49000 RMB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 48000 and 60000 RMB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above 60000 RMB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Considering the factor of Shanzhai, two questions about trademark and slogan are designed because they give prominence to traits of Shanzhai. So it is presumed that trademark and slogan can affect consumers’ interest of imitated products. As figure 4.18 shows, the correlation coefficient is 0.620 between interested in trademark and interested in imitated products. And the correlation coefficient is 0.555 between interested in slogan and interested in imitated products. These two coefficients both show comparatively strong relationship with interested in imitated products. In other words, consumers are interested in imitated products because of trademark or slogan.

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
About quality of imitated product it is an obvious result from figure 4.19 you can find. Almost all the people strongly agree and agree with worrying about quality of imitated product. Aaker (1996) point out perceived quality is one of brand association which is what consumers care about. But imitated brand leaves a bad impression to all customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agree</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>69.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undecided</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>97.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information sources of imitation brand most interviewees got known by internet. In figure 4.20 almost half of interviewees take this method to get information about imitated brand. It can be seen that internet is the quick and efficient media to publicize imitation brands. Furthermore, the internet is also a main purchasing channel for imitation brands. 18.2% and 22.4% interviewees go to shops and the internet to buy imitated products from the viewpoint of figure 4.21.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I never heard about the imitated brand products</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from newspaper</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from internet</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>70.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from friends or other people</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Implication for the imitation brand

From analysis of viewpoint, the price, appearance and similarity of imitated products as main influencing factors to buying are chosen by most participants. These factors bring a few elicitations to imitation brand and contribute to promoting the development of imitation brand.

Krishnamurthi, Mazumdar, and Raj (1992) in their research of two frequently purchased products find that behavioral loyalties show the same sensitivity to price increases and decreases. However, non-loyalties were more sensitive to price decreases than to price increases. Obviously, the majority of participants in this questionnaire are non-loyalties to original brand. Therefore, marketing actions are another key factor to influence the brand choice decisions of consumers. Using a promotion is a good way to attract consumers’ attention. Promotion such as in-store displays and feature advertising not only influence choice behavior of consumers but also apparently influence how consumers think about product alternatives which constitute their consideration system (Durand and Kannan, 1999).

Furthermore, the brand similarity is related to brand recognition. It is due to brand
recognition that consumers can associate it with the original brand when they see an imitation brand. But brand recognition is only regarded as the minimum level of brand awareness (Holden, 1993; Laurent et al., 1995; Mariotti, 1999). In fact it can be found that most consumers can distinguish imitation brand from original brand, according to questionnaire results.

Although appearance of imitated products gets the favor from most consumers, we also cannot rule out the possibility of imitating. With the strengthening of intellectual property rights in China, the product is bound to be legally restricted.

The interesting point is that the trademark and slogan with the nature of Shanzhai actually influences the consumers’ buying behavior. The exaggerated and funny image stimulates consumers’ desire to buy imitated products. The phenomenon of Shanzhai gives many opportunities to companies of imitation brands as a special marketing strategy.

However, the companies of imitation brand also face a lot of problems which need to be solved, such as product quality, future own-brand. About quality Aaker (1996) thinks that perceived quality can raise the status of a brand assert. Nevertheless, almost all people expressed worries to imitated products. So the companies of imitation brand have to establish their own brand if they want to walk further. But it is not easy to reach this stage right now because “generating high quality requires an understanding of what quality means to customer segments, as well as a supportive culture and a quality improvement process that will enable the organization to deliver quality products and services” Aaker (1996, pp.20). On the other hand, more and more companies begin to realize the importance of brand protection and strengthen the protection of their brand.
5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion and discussion

In this study, the answer to the question is from three different fields of theory: consumer behavior model, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and brand equity which respectively refer to the consumer decision, ranking of the society and brand.

In order to combine theory with practice, a questionnaire has been adopted to collect the data from several items: gender, age, income, expenditure (on the imitated products), industry, the influence factor of consumer decision, quality, the feature of imitated product and consumer’s willingness. Statistical software, SPSS, has been used to test the frequencies and correlation among these items. We got the result as:

- The influence of the factors on the consumer decision
  Consumers are not only considering the price but also consider appearance of imitated product, and brand similarity, when they are purchasing the imitated product. Moreover, advertisement and innovation also have the influence on the consumer decision to some extent. Function, supporting native brand and exaggerated image as the factors have shared a small proportion of the influence. Aaker (1991) pointed that brands should have differentiate and position to meet the consumer’s taste. However, in this study, the consumer seeks for the brand similarity, which does not conform to Aaker’s view.

- The correlation between personal information and influencing factors
  (1) Gender
  Men are focus a lot on the function, innovation and brand similarity while women pay more attention to the appearance of imitated products, price of imitated product and exaggerate image. These verify what Hoyer and Macinnis (2001) argue that men and women also have different points in terms of consumer traits, information-processing
styles, decision-making styles, and consumption patterns

(2) Age

Among the eight factors, age and advertisement have the correlation coefficient 0.132 while the correlation coefficient between supporting native brand and age is 0.101. They belong to the weak correlation. However, after Spearman’s (ρ) testing, we find any correlation between age and other 6 factors are not related.

- The correlation between income and the influencing factors

Brand similarity, innovation of imitated product and advertisement has a weak correlation with income while appearance, price of imitated brand product and function of imitated product has the weak negative correlation with income. However, the correlation between supporting native brand, exaggerated image and income are not related.

- Industry and influencing factors

Among the eight factors:

Students, secretaries and doctors consider that appearance and price will influence their decision on the imitated product. Managers think a lot when they are choosing the imitated product. The factors are price, appearance, similarity, innovation, advertisement and supporting native brand. Workers focus a lot on the brand similarity and advertisement. To engineers, the most important factor that would influence their decision is innovation. Moreover, in this study, we find that students occupy a large proportion, which indirectly gives the hint that students might play an important role on the imitated brand.

- The correlations between age, income and expenditure

The correlation between age and income has a positive correlation, and the correlation between age and expenditure has weak correlation. The correlation between income
and expenditure has a weak correlation also.

**Other results from analysis**

The correlation between willing of buying the imitated product and income is weak. The correlations between interest in trademark, slogan and imitated product are strong. The survey shows that consumers are widely worried about the quality of the imitated product. Most of the consumers strongly agree or agree with are worrying about the imitated product.

In a word, in this study we find eight factors which directly answer the question raised in the introduction part would influence consumer’s decision on buying the imitation product. Meanwhile, personal factors, such as income, gender and age have the correlation with the eight factors which will also influence the consumer’s purchasing decision. Last but not least, people from different occupations have different influencing factors.

**5.2 Limitations**

Consequentially, this study also has a few limitations which influence the outcome of research. Firstly, the objective of this article is to explore the influencing factors to Chinese consumer behavior. But, here we just investigate a city Shanghai in China. The outcome of research is difficult to represent the viewpoints of whole China. Secondly, the population of China is so huge that 244 copies of questionnaire could not reflect entire consumers’ evaluation. The number of questionnaires also affects the results of analysis by SPSS. The correlation between two variables will show relatively lower. Thirdly, the influencing factors we listed are limited. Here, we just discuss and compare eight factors. We are not sure whether other much more important factors exist.

**5.3 Further research**

The imitation brand as a fringe subject and deserves to deeper research. On the one
hand, this research can provide some suggestions about brand protection mainly for those name brand companies. On the other hand, this research also can promote the development of Chinese imitated companies and give some elicitation.

Furthermore, Shanzhai as burgeoning factors greatly stimulate progress of imitation brand. Nevertheless, we are lack of researches which are concentrated in Shanzhai. Hence, Shanzhai imitation can be considered as new research direction to complement this vacancy.
6. Reference

6.1 Literature


43. Sanchez, A., 2006, *the difference between qualitative and quantitative research*


### 6.2 Books


counterfeiting, Business Horizons


6.3 Internet


Appendix I

Nowadays, a special new word “Shanzhai” generates which is of greatly attractive. However, a Shanzhai phenomenon exists with a imitated brand entity inside. With the increasingly focus on the Shanzhai phenomenon, mysteries of such phenomenon towards imitated brand products bewilder the researchers. The imitated brands are not identical to the original; nevertheless, they are similar in substance, name, form, meaning or intent to an acknowledged and widely known product or service (Lai and Zaichkowsky 1998).

**Questionnaire** *(English Version)*

Choose **ONE** imitated brand product from **sports products** which you are familiar with or you are interested in. Keep in mind this imitated brand products as you answer the entire questionnaire. The following items involve aspects of the business relationship between you (as a consumer) and given imitated brand products (of your choice ). Please tick the number that best captures your perspective. All of the information in the questionnaire from you will be treated confidentially. Please attempt to answer all the questions.

**A. Please select one of the following rank which matches your age.**

1. Under 18 years old
2. Between 18 and 25 years old
3. Between 25 and 35 years old
4. Over 35 years old

**B. Please select one of the following rank which matches your salary per income.**

1. Under 12000 RMB
2. Between 12000 and 24000 RMB
3. Between 24000 and 36000 RMB
4. Between 36000 and 48000 RMB
5. Between 48000 and 60000 RMB
6. Above 60000 RMB
C. Please select your gender.
   1. Male
   2. Female

D. Please select your working industry
   1. Student
   2. Doctor
   3. Manager
   4. Worker
   5. Secretary
   6. Engineer
   7. Others

E. I have heard about the imitated brand products from.
   1. I never heard about the imitated brand products
   2. From newspaper
   3. From internet
   4. From friends or other people

F. I can distinguish the imitated brand products.
   1. Yes
   2. No

G. I am interested in the imitated brand products.
   Strongly agree 1
                  2
                  3
                  4
   Strongly disagree 5
H. *I am attracted by the trademark of the imitated brand products.*

Strongly agree  1
  2
  3
  4
Strongly disagree  5

I. *I am interested in the slogan of the imitated brand products.*

Strongly agree  1
  2
  3
  4
Strongly disagree  5

J. *I buy the imitated brand products from______*

1. Internet
2. Shops
3. Supermarkets
4. Others
5. I never buy such products (Those who select No. 5 please shift to question N.)

K. *I spend ____________on the imitated brand products each YEAR?*

1. Under 50 RMB
2. between 50 and 100 RMB
3. between 100 and 200 RMB
4. between 200 and 500 RMB
5. between 500 and 1000 RMB
6. Beyond 1000 RMB
L. Factors such as___________that will influence my decision of buying imitated brand products. (Multiple choices)

1. Appearance
2. Brand
3. Price
4. Innovation
5. Function
6. The location
7. Advertisement
8. Purpose of supporting the native firms

M. I am worried about the quality of the imitated brand products.

Strongly agree 1
2
3
4

Strongly disagree 5

N. I think that the imitated brand will change their brand image in the future.

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

O. I will buy the imitated brand products.

1. Yes
2. No

Thanks for your participation!
山寨现象风靡多时，然而山寨现象的本质是品牌的模仿。随着社会对该现象的日益关注，仿冒品牌在市场的运作方式吸引了很多学界目光。根据 Lai and Zaichkowsky 在 1998 年提出的观点：仿冒品牌和原有品牌存在差异，但是他们的本质，名称，形式等是相似的。

问卷
（中文版本）

请选择一个你熟悉或感兴趣的仿冒运动品牌。请您务必记住整个问卷都是基于您选择的这个品牌进行回答的。问卷将会涉及到做为消费者的您以及您所选择的仿冒品牌这两者间的关系。请选择最接近您想法的选项。请放心，我们会对您所勾选的问卷答案保密。

1. 请选择您的年龄范围:
   A. 小于 18 周岁
   B. 介于 18 至 25 周岁之间
   C. 介于 25 至 35 周岁之间
   D. 大于 35 周岁

2. 请选择您每年的收入范围
   A. 低于 12000 元
   B. 介于 12000 至 24000 元间
   C. 介于 24000 至 36000 元间
   D. 介于 36000 至 48000 元间
   E. 介于 48000 至 60000 元间
   F. 高于 60000 元

3. 请选择您的性别:
   A. 男
   B. 女

4. 请选择您的职业:
   A. 学生
   B. 医生
   C. 经理
   D. 工人
   E. 秘书
   F. 工程师
   G. 其他
5. 我是从________获悉模仿品牌的。
   A. 我不知道模仿品牌
   B. 从报纸杂志获得
   C. 从网络获得
   D. 从朋友人群中获得

6. 我可以分清仿冒品牌。
   A. 是
   B. 否

7. 我对仿冒品牌很感兴趣。
   A. 非常同意
   B. 同意
   C. 一般
   D. 不是很同意
   E. 完全不同意

8. 我认为仿冒品牌的商标很吸引人。
   A. 非常同意
   B. 同意
   C. 一般
   D. 不是很同意
   E. 完全不同意

9. 我对仿冒品牌的标语很感兴趣。
   A. 非常同意
   B. 同意
   C. 一般
   D. 不是很同意
   E. 完全不同意

10. 我是从________________购买到仿冒品牌的。
    A. 网络订购
    B. 上店
    C. 超级大卖场
    D. 其他（请填写________）
    E. 我从不购买仿冒品。（请跳至问题14进行回答）
11. 每年我在仿冒品的花费是多少？
A. 低于 50 元
B. 介于 50 至 100 元间
C. 介于 100 至 200 元间
D. 介于 200 至 500 元间
E. 介于 500 至 1000 元间
F. 高于 1000 元

12. 我觉得以下____因素会影响我对仿冒品的选择。（可多选）
A. 外表
B. 品牌
C. 价格
D. 创新
E. 功能
F. 商店位置
G. 广告
H. 支持国内小型企业

13. 我担心仿冒品的质量。
A. 非常同意
B. 同意
C. 一般
D. 不是很同意
E. 完全不同意

14. 我认为仿冒品牌在将来会有自主品牌。
A. 是
B. 否
C. 不清楚

15. 你是否愿意购买山寨品牌
A. 是
B. 否

感谢您的参与！