THE ROLE OF CONSUMER DECISION STYLE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIGH CONTEXT CULTURE, LOW CONTEXT CULTURE AND STATUS SIGNAL

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ABSTRACT

Consumers are willing to purchase on luxury products and brands; consequently, consumers tend to desire high-status products in an effort to demonstrate their preferred status to others. Base on different culture influence, individual differently made decision on status signal of buying behavior. The objectives of this paper are; 1) to examine the influence of culture toward consumer status of signal buying behavior; 2) to examine the moderating effect of three dimensions of consumer decision style (e.g. perfectionist, brand conscious and price conscious style) on the relationship between culture and status signal buying behavior; 3) to propose research propositions. This paper investigates whether consumer in high context culture is more likely increasing on buying behavior of status signal luxury product than consumer in low context culture. Furthermore, consumer decision style of brand conscious styles are more likely increasing on buying behavior of status signal luxury product while price conscious and perfectionist style is less likely buying behavior of status signal luxury product in high context culture. In additional, consumer decision style of brand conscious styles are more likely increasing on buying behavior of status signal luxury product while price conscious and perfectionist style is less likely buying behavior of status signal luxury product in low context culture. In final section of this paper, the theoretical and managerial implication are presented and the suggestions of further study are provided.

Keywords: Status signal, high context culture, low context culture, consumer style

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1. Introduction

Once consumers buy the product, they make decision from the internal and external factors. Culture is one of the external factors that effect on consumer decision. The general terms of "high context" and "low context" (popularized by Edward Hall) are used to describe broad-brush cultural differences between societies. According to Edward Hall theory, high and low context culture effect on status signal. The different culture effect on consumer status signal. The consumer decision style effect to high context and low context culture. Consumer decision style has long traditional in marketing and consumer behavior research (Correia et al.2011). Consumer decision making style refers to how a person reacts to overall purchase decision. This issue proposes the moderator of consumer style influence the culture and status signal. Status signal that is the reason for the consumer decision to buy products symbolizes the status. To study the factor influencing on status signal, it is necessary to understand what factors influence on consumer decision to buy for status signal. This study aims firstly to examine the relationship among high context culture, low context culture and status signal; secondly, to examine the moderator effect of consumer style on high context culture, low context culture to status signal.

1.1 Research Questions

1. How does the high context culture consumer buying behaviour demonstrate status signal?
2. How does the low context culture consumer buying behaviour demonstrate status signal?
3. How does the consumer decision style affect on high context culture and low context culture on buying product to demonstrate status signal?

Conceptual framework
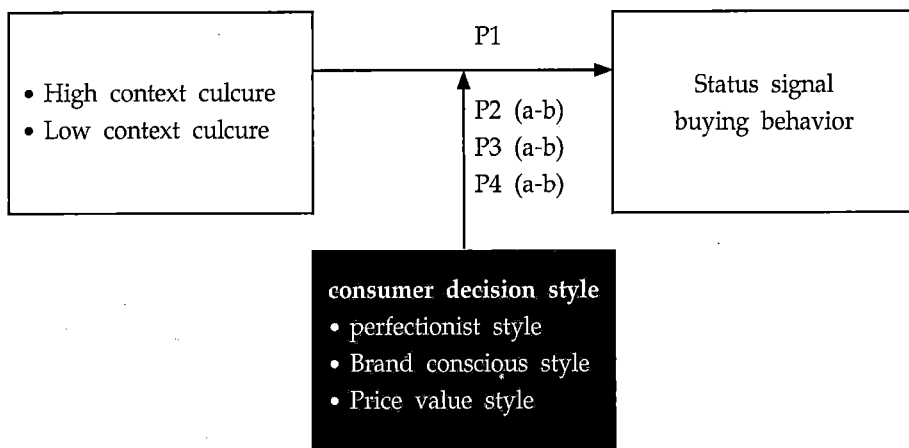
2. Literature review

2.1 Status signal

The status of consumption is important as it is related to the motivation for the reason for the consumers to buy products or brands (Heaney et al., 2005).

Recent developments in growth theory have gotten the attention of consumers, the consumer products and brand position for the status of them (Eastman et al., 1999; Goldsmith et al., 1996a).

Table 1 Literature review

Author	Year	Definitions
Hyman	1942	A person who possesses status means someone that is highly ranked on some characteristics (e.g., wealth, intelligence, or attractiveness) that is considered important to others.
Ridgeway and Walker	1995	Status as "one's standing in a social hierarchy as determined by respect, deference and social influence."
Eastman et al	1999	The motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products conferring and symbolizing status for both individual and surrounding people..."
O'Cass and Frost	2002	"the process of gaining status or social prestige from the acquisition and consumption of goods that the individual and significant others perceive to be high in status
Brekke	2003	a person's position related to others within a society

Status or social stratification is widespread in many aspects of modern society. Ridgeway and Walker (1995) define status as "one's standing in a social hierarchy as determined by respect, deference and social influence." Status is the foundation of an ancient society; everyone has a "position" in the social hierarchy. Historically, this place was attained either through birth (e.g., born into nobility or an upper class in the caste system) or by ordainment (e.g., knighted by the King). Status is based on the success of the individual, which makes often about great wealth. The perception of the public about the value of the rich and the poor is a state that is not the result of a rigged system. A reliable connection between merit and success the world. Money brought a new moral quality - good paying jobs are secure primarily by the intelligence and ability. The rich were not just wealthier, they were "better;" they merited their success. Such as greater wealth becomes the marks of the society (de Botton 2004).

Consumers have an incentive to buy luxury-brand products for a variety of different reasons. However, the status is often viewed as a factor in the decision to consume luxury-brand ones (Griskevicius et al. 2007; Han, Nunes, and Dréze 2010; Kuksov and Xie 2012; Nelissen and Meijers 2011; Rucker and Galinsky 2008, 2009; Veblen 1899). Since symbols of status tend to buy luxury brands to signal their status to others (Han, Nunes, and Dréze 2010; Veblen, 1899). From the perspective of the evolution to wear luxury brands can add status (Saad 2007) and the ability to attract and retain prospective friends (Griskevicius et al. 2007), people are in a state of low energy or a view that sees the world in terms of revenue potential in the future, they expressed a desire for more of a luxury brand to restore a sense of status (Mandel, Petrova and Cialdini 2006; Rucker and Galinsky 2008, 2009). Not surprisingly, the company focuses on the luxury status of these incentives by promoting their products using images and references related to status. In addition, the status is defined as a person's position related to others within a society. (Brekke 2003). A person has the status of a person with high position in some manner, such as wealth, intelligence, or attractiveness considered important to other people (Hyman 1942).The status is generally accompanied by respect, power and right use (French and Raven 1959; Nelissen and Meijers 2011). As a result, consumers who wear luxury brands are prestige and social capital increase, which will result in a number of social benefits. (Han, Nunes, and Drze 2010; Nelissen and Meijers 2011; Veblen 1899). For example, people wearing luxury brands are likely to be considered having a good job gaining higher money from other people, and often more effective in getting people to comply with their requests

than people who do not wear the product status. (Nelissen and Meijers 2011).The status is driven, important for humans because people enjoy the benefits of social status and raw materials. Research study shows that individuals with high status are assessed higher, permitted to allocate more and more resources. (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Therefore, the status signal is defined as ritual and the behavior of people using to demonstrate their social needs in the community. On the personal level, Noumea, rich may choose to send a signal to her status through various strategies. (Glazer and Konarld, 1996). Status signal is discussed in difference disciple, particularly in psychology, sociology, behavioral economics and biology. On the human level, the rich world may choose to increase the signal of her social status through diversity. She can use as a symbol of luxury consumption clear her wealth in the game status as well as people who may buy luxury goods to symbolize their wealth and status. From the definitions and characteristics of status, signal consumer use the luxury consumption used to symbolize their wealth and status such as the dimension of status signal to purchase luxury-goods behavior and consume luxury goods.

2.2 High context culture and low context culture

The conceptual of the cultural may differ from one discipline to write and school to another. Kroeber and Kluckohn (1963) found more than 170 different definitions of culture in literature (Beugelsdijk & Maseland, 2011). Although there are many definitions of culture are just some of them have been accepted and applied in literature. These definitions are summarized briefly below. In 1750s, culture first gained the meaning of "a person's life style" and Tylor's definition of culture became the most referred one in that period (Nisanc, 2012, 1281). Donmezler (1990) summarized the Tylor's and Gitter's culture definition in literature as follows; Tylor defined culture as ""a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Gitter defined culture as "life style, format created by man". Everyone

develops their own ideas and unique example of action in time and sample abstract in the format of these cultures. (Donmezler, 1990). There are differences both between and within the culture, and the cultural diversity of these plays an important role in life. Cultural diversity can be observed, especially in the modern society in which people with different occupations, and people living in large groups (Ozkalp, 1998). Aktan and Coban (2012) included the concepts of "value" and "artifact" in their definition of culture and defined culture as "a whole of values and artifacts made by man". Culture is a dynamic concept, and it is all a complex of beliefs and values containing everything about life. (Nisanc, 2012, 1281).

Hall (1959) defined culture as the way of life of the people: the sum of their learned behavior, attitude and mental culture material is often under realization; invisible mechanism controls the operation in our thoughts (Hall, 1983). In his view, we are aware of it by being exposed to different cultures. Members of the society are the cultural elements of society and act within the limits prescribed by what is culturally acceptable (Hall, 1983, 230).

Hofstede (1984) culture was defined as a program that can determine whether other members of society (Hofstede, 1984, 82). Hofstede analyzed the concept of culture in four dimensions (Hofstede, 1984). He defined cultural dimensions using these attitudes calling power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, and masculinity versus femininity. His study focused on cultural diversity and the study seemed the most comprehensive so far (Eginli & Çakır, 2011, 39).

Context

Context is defined as information that surrounds the events; it was bound with a relationship to the meaning of the event: "The culture of the world that can be compared in the level from high to low context (Hall & Hall, 1990, 6). The general agreement is "high context" and "low context"(popularized by Edward Hall 1990) are used to describe broad-brush cultural differences between societies. High context refers to the society or group of people who have a

close relationship in the long term. Many aspects of the cultural habits are not explicit as most members know what to do and what to think of the years of interaction with others. Your family might be an example of a high contextual environment

A member of the high context culture usually has a close relationship to last for a period. As a result of years to interact with others, the members know what the rules are and how to approach practice (thus the rule does not need to be stated explicitly). The high context culture difficulty to guide for those who do not understand the culture of the rule, not the written.

Table 2 Characteristics of High Context Cultures

Characteristics of High Context Cultures
Most of the methods that are not words to convey information in a meaningful conversation like eye movements, facial expressions and tone of voice
The situation, people, and non-verbal elements are more important than the actual words that are communicated.
People are comfortable standing close to each other.
The preferred way of solving problems and learning is in groups.
Members of the culture place emphasis on interpersonal relationships.
Trust must be developed before business transactions can begin

Low-context means a society in which people tend to have a lot of connections but for a shorter period of time, or for some reason. In these societies, the cultural characteristics may need to be written out clearly so that people coming into the cultural environment, as you know how it works.

For members of the cultural context, there are many relationships that are considered low for a short time, or the amount that is available for a specific reason. Then the goal of treatment is important in achieving any transactions. Rules and cultural norms need to be spelled out so that people who are not familiar with the culture could know what

to expect with. Communication is straightforward and clear, and the use of words to convey all of the messages.

Low context cultures are individualistic. This means that the success of the individual value is greater than the success of the group. Members of the low context culture are independence to one another and are expected to look out for himself with the exception of the family. Privacy and having personal space is also valued.

Table 3 Characteristics of Low Context Cultures

Characteristics of Low Context Cultures
Emphasis on logic and facts
Facts are more important than intuition in the decision-making process
Words are more important than body language
Verbal messages are explicit, direct, and concise
Tasks or goals are more important than relationships
Most knowledge is above the waterline. This means knowledge is explicit, visible and can be easily conveyed to others
Primary method of learning is by following other people's explicit directions and explanations
Decision and action focus on goal and dividing responsibility

The high context culture and low context culture are difference characteristics effect to consumer buying status signal. Rooted in the past, high context cultures are very stable, unify-end, consistent and slow to change. In high-context cultures, people tend to rely on their history, religion, relationship status and other information to determine the meaning to many events. Low context cultures typically value individualism over collectivism and group harmony. Member priority personal needs and goals rather than the needs of the group. (Triandis, Brislin & Hui, 1988; as cited in Pryor, Butler & Boehringer, 2005, 248) characterize individualism. The other salient features that tend to see the differences between the two cultures are the idea of polite contexts. In an

LC culture, it is thought to be polite to ask questions whilst in an high context, culture often seems too personal and even offensive. (Tella, 2005; see also Tella, 1996.). As a result, the different culture effect on consumer status signal. According high context culture, characteristics have primarily use non-verbal methods to relay meaningful information in conversations, such as facial expressions, eye movement, and tone of voice, the situation, people. In addition, non-verbal elements are more important than the actual words that are communicated, people are comfortable standing close to each other, the preferred way of solving problems and learning is in groups. Members of the culture place emphasis on interpersonal relationships and trust must be developed before business transactions begin so that the high context culture buying decision status signal. Thus, the proposition is following:

Proposition 1: Consumer in high context culture is more likely increasing on buying behavior of status signal luxury product than consumer in low context culture.

2.3 Consumer decision style

In the past, literature has been identified three ways to characterize consumer decision-making styles: the consumer typology approach, the psychographics/ lifestyle approach, and the consumer characteristics approach (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Classification methods to categorize consumers consumer group or category related to retail sales support (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980; Darden & Ashton, 1974: Darden & Reynolds, 1971). Such studies typically focus on a specific product or product group retail market common (Westbrook & Black, 1985).

Psycho graphic / lifestyle approach that identifies other hundred aspects related to consumer behavior based on personality traits or general needs and values related to the interests of the consumer or lifestyle activity (Lastovicka, 1982; Wells, 1974). Finally, the method of characteristics of consumer focused orientation to thoughts and emotions have on consumer buying decisions (Westbrook & Black, 1985). This approach holds the assumption that consumers possess cognitive and affective orientations to determine their consumer decision-making styles (Fan & Xiao, 1998; Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

The decision model of consumers is defined as the way a person responds to the overall purchasing decision. The definitions of decisions of consumers were varied in the literature. Broadly speaking, three alternative frameworks have been proposed: the psychographic/lifestyle approach, which identifies hundreds of characteristics related to consumer behavior; the consumer typology approach, which classifies consumers into several types; and the consumer characteristics approach (Sproles and Kendall, 1986; Kwan et al., 2008), which focuses on different cognitive dimensions of consumer decision making.

When studied on consumer's decision process, many studies have concluded that consumers had different characteristics, or a rule in a decision when faced with a choice in the market (Dollinger & Danis, 1998), and pointed out that the external factors such as culture, may affect the way that consumers have the development of the way consumer styles. (Canabal, 2002). According to research done by Elizabeth Sproles and George Sproles (1990) in the Journal of Consumer Affairs, there is a significant link between peoples learning styles and their "consumer styles".

Table 4 Decision-making Traits

Decision-making Traits	Description
Perfectionist consumer style	A consumer that searches carefully and systematically for the best quality in products through serious analysis and through both active and observation oriented learning. These types of consumers are highly goal oriented.
Brand conscious	Price equals quality consumer tends to be oriented toward buying the more expensive, well-known brands tend to find choosing known brands an expedient strategy that replaces thinking and learning in their consumer choices
Novelty and fashion conscious	A consumer seems to find new and innovative products and gains excitement from seeking out new things. This consumer tends to not be concerned with the implications or consequences of purchasing new or innovative products and services.
Recreational, hedonistic consciousness	A consumer finds shopping a pleasant activity and engages in it because I t's fun. This consumer engages in shopping as a social experience or because they like to be involved in their shopping.
Price value	A consumer tends to focus on sales and lower prices balancing against quality. This consumer tends to focus on active, fact acquisition. This consumer tends to shop the market in-depth and do
Impulsiveness	A consumer buys at the spur of the moment and is unconcerned with how much is spent. This consumer does not want to be bothered with new information or learning about products or services.
Confused-by-over choice	A consumer perceives too many brands and stores and experiences information overload in the market. This person is overly detailed and fact oriented in their consumer process and becomes mentally overloaded, especially in a complex multi-choice market.
Habitual, brand loyal	A consumer repetitively chooses the same brands and stores. This consumer engages in a serious learning process to find products and services that provide them with positive experiences and then stick with them.

According to the definition characteristics of eight consumers style, this paper chose three consumer styles, that is, moderators, perfectionist consumer style, brand conscious style and price value style. The author chose these three consumer styles because the characteristics of three consumer styles according to buying decision to status signal. Hence, three consumer style effects to buying decision status signal.

2.4 Perfectionist consumer style or quality concision style

An important factor in the decision of consumers is quality. The quality conscious consumers searching for the best quality products by shopping carefully and systematically (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Quality conscious decision-making implies that the perception focuses on quality of hierarchical levels of quality. Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimension of power

distance deals with inequality in prestige, wealth and power. Therefore, culture and distance of high power tend to participate in decision making, pay attention to quality, style it means hierarchy and equality. Previous research has confirmed this support. For example, Chinese immigrants have been found that they were widely searching behavior more than American supermarkets in the environment due to the pursuit of quality. (Ackerman & Tellis, 2001).Thus, the perfectionist consumer style chooses buying the product from quality rather than other criteria, especially consumers in high context culture. Then, the proposition 2 as below:

Proposition 2: (a) The consumer in high context culture is less likely on buying behavior of status signal luxury product when the consumer is perfectionist style.(b) The consumer in low context culture is less likely on buying behavior of status signal luxury product when the consumer is perfectionist style.

2.5 Brand conscious decision making

Brand conscious decision-making means a consumer's direction towards the purchase of expensive and well-known brands. Hofstede's dimensions, there are two relevant dimensions for this section including individuals/decision and avoid uncertainty. The brand is a symbol of status and prestige and high-power distance culture are perceived as social status whilst prestige is also important (Hofstede, 2001). As Eastern cultures are higher power distance and collectivism which is related to the concept of ' face ' and the consumer unity society in the Eastern culture that expects to maintain the prestige and high status (Ho, 1976), and thus a higher level of brand conscious decision-making.

When following this line of argument, it would be expected that Singaporeans would be more brand conscious than Australians. However, they use of the brand to convey fashion sense for the culture individualistic. (Manrai, Lascus, Manrai & Babb, 2001). The brand is a meaningful symbol to consumers; some brands like BMW convey a sense of prestige and quality. Nevertheless, there is a meaningful relation to low prices such as Virgin airlines. The brand helps consumers in an attempt to reduce the

burden and familiar feeling. This reduces the risk involved in purchasing (Lehmenn & Winer, 1997) and attracting consumers with high uncertainty avoidance. Bao, Zhou and Su (2003) research offered support for this in their study on Chinese and American decision-making styles. Their results indicated that Chinese were less brand conscious despite being a culture that places high emphasis on 'saving face'. Hofstede's (2001) scores indicate that Australia is high in uncertainty avoidance (with a score of 51) compared to Singapore. Thus, the proposition 3 as follows below:

Proposition 3: (a) The consumers in high context culture are more likely to increase buying behavior of status signal luxury products when the consumers are considered their brand conscious style.(b) The consumers in low context culture are more likely to increase buying behavior of status signal luxury products when the consumers are considered their brand conscious style.

2.6 Price conscious decision making style

Price conscious means a buyer's "unwillingness" to pay a higher price for a product and/or "the exclusive focus" on paying low prices (Lichtenstein, Ridgway & Netemeyer, 1993, p. 235).Similar to collectivist cultural leftist, brand conscious decision that will involve the recording and the brand has been very important to maintain the prestige and status (Ho, 1976; Zhou & Nakamoto, 2001). Pointed the masculine orientation of Western cultures which places emphasis on ego goals such as careers and money (Hofstede, 2001), price-conscious decision-making means that items are bought for less and thus, more material goods can be accumulated.

Yasin (2009) explained price conscious as those that follow sales campaign and price discount. The trend of these consumers to choose products, low prices and the like to buy goods at discounted price for sale. The literature suggests that a high price for critical products status since 1) consumers are urged to impress other status and ability to pay higher prices to consumers of luxury goods is a display of wealth (Eastman et al., 1999; Husic and Cicic, 2009); and 2) price is use to position a brand as a prestige product (Truong et al, 2008; Vigneron and

Johnson, 2004). However, price alone is not enough to determine the desirability of a status brand (Han et al., 2010). Therefore, the proposition 4 as below:

Proposition 4: (a) The consumer in high context culture is less likely on buying behavior of status signal luxury product when the consumer is price conscious style.

(b) The consumer in low context culture is more likely on buying behavior status signal luxury product when the consumer is price conscious style.

3. Contribution

3.1 Theoretical Contribution

This study expands the understanding high context and low context culture of status signal on perfectionist consumer style, brand conscious and price value are moderating to status signal. These constructs are empirical investigated in this study in the future.

3.2 Managerial Contribution

This study will support marketing managers or marketing directors to consider and apply lead to the make the products differentiate for the difference consumer culture and consumer style.

4. Conclusion

This study to examine the understanding high context culture and low context culture on moderating of perfectionist consumer style, consumer conscious and price value on status signal. Regarding of moderating consumer styles influence on status signal. Furthermore, this conceptual model can apply to future direction in this consumer behavior.

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