

Global Brands without Ads? Starbucks in Taipei: Insights in High Level Customer Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Starbucks' high-quality coffee from different regions has attracted Taipei's customers' and commingled with their lifestyles. The current study examines a survey of 400 Starbucks' consumers' level of satisfaction and the relationship of the brand to lifestyle. The findings suggest that conducting business at Starbucks is a unique lifestyle for highly satisfied customers and makes them feel distinctive. In contrast, two important prediction variables for general customer satisfaction are chatting with friends and feelings of sophistication.

Keywords: consumer culture, customer satisfaction, global branding, lifestyle

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INTRODUCTION

According to the recent Interbrand's Best Global Brands 2006 report, Starbucks ranks 91st among the top 100 global brands. The once local, small-scale coffee-bean roasting and sales operation in Seattle, Washington's Pike Place fish market in the 1970s, currently boasts a 2006 estimated brand value of \$3,099, 000,000. Starbucks is one of the top three gainers in positive change of brand value – 20% growth over 2005 figures. In pondering this impressive performance, only recently has Starbucks begun to use sizable amounts of their marketing communications budget on traditional measured paid advertising. Yesterday's conventional wisdom would assume that it would be impossible to build a global brand without heavily depending on traditional measured media from the brand's initial national launch.

As challenges to traditional advertising revenues continue to shift to other forms of promotion in the media mix, these shifts, both domestically and globally, are being driven by consumer-centric needs and insights. The current study examines a sample of consumers drawn from five Starbucks locations in Taipei to determine their satisfaction with the brand. The rationale for specifically focusing on high level customer satisfaction is to acquire deeper insights for Starbucks' success in establishing a strong brand relationship with customers in a global setting (McEwen 2005).

William J. McEwen's *Married to the Brand: Why Consumers Bond with Some Brands for Life* (2005) begins with his introduction to the book with the following: "Marty has an important relationship – but it isn't just with his older brother, who lives in the same neighborhood. It's with Starbucks" (p. 1). The author continues to tell about Marty's experience with Starbucks. McEwen writes, "Products alone can't support a passionate brand relationship, nor will low prices, great advertising, stunning packaging, or a superb location. They must all work together, since it is the total brand experience, and not just one isolated element, that determine the health of a brand marriage. For a healthy brand marriage, the company's brand promise must be kept on every subsequent date and at every brand touchpoint" (p. 10).

By 1999, Starbucks operated 281 stores abroad. Through rapid expansion, Starbucks opened 1,500 new stores in 31 markets outside North America. Starbucks changed the lifestyle of Americans, made the café a major scene on streets, and offered the working

class a “the third place” besides their home and place of work (Schultz & Yang, 1998). As Starbucks expanded outside the United States, the chain looked to Asia as a vast and unexploited coffee market. From Beijing to Bangkok, Starbucks converted tea-lovers into coffee fans. Starbucks entered the Taipei market in 1998. In contrast to traditional Chinese tea drinking, Starbucks created a distinctive symbolic brand code for middle class and young adult consumers. However, Starbucks seldom uses traditional advertising media in Taiwan.

The birth of Starbucks people (Lin, 2002) suggests an inner consumer culture (Tsai, 2000). The special relationship between Starbucks and its customers also suggests that there may be some specific characteristics attracting Starbucks people. What are these characteristics? What are the Starbucks customers’ lifestyles from the consumption experience? Why do people spend US\$3 or \$4 at Starbucks for a simple cup of coffee? What need does Starbucks satisfy in their consumers?

Customer satisfaction has been valued as an important brand relationship outcome. Starbucks has created values of building long-term relationships by embracing the concept of customer satisfaction (Michelli, 2006). More than simply taste, it is customers’ lifestyles and consumer culture permeating in the converting process that Starbucks has capitalized on. In order to better understand how Starbucks build relationships with customers, customer satisfaction, lifestyles and consumer culture are crucial factors to consider. More academic research, which investigate Starbucks consumer behavior from the perspectives of customer satisfaction and lifestyles, is needed to explore these two concepts with consumer culture quantitatively. Hence, the main purpose of the current study is to examine the associations between customer satisfaction, lifestyles and consumer culture to gain insights from highly satisfied customers as to how Starbucks builds the global brand and relationships without high levels of traditional media expenditures in Taipei.

The current study examines the results of a survey of 400 respondents conducted in various locations in Taipei to gain greater understanding of the characteristics of highly satisfied Starbucks customers. The paper begins with a review of literature on customer satisfaction, lifestyles, and consumer culture. A discussion of survey methodology and questionnaire design is presented, followed by the findings of the study. Sections discussing the conclusions, limitation, and suggestions for future research conclude the paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

McCracken (1990) analyzed Williams' (1982) perspectives about the apparent consumer revolution in Europe. He argues that changes in tastes and preferences are the major cause of changes in consumer culture. From this perspective, it promotes consumers to a prominent place; meanwhile, the contribution of Williams's research lies in the consumption essence behind consumer behavior. Williams (1982) observed the inter-effects of various kinds of lifestyles. The appearance of consumerism was earlier than capitalism, thus he focuses on the cultural analyses of economic behavior. He is deeply convinced that the cultural meanings of consumption are derived from goods, for consuming goods brought about transformation in Western society.

Consumer satisfaction derived from consumption is another perspective in the study. "By implication, advertising is a crucial means for global brands to feature the idea that consumers all over the world consume a particular brand might invest the brand with the cultural meaning of being a conduit to feeling at one with consumer culture" (Alden et al., 1999, p. 77). Therefore, three aspects of literature reviewed below will discuss customer satisfaction, lifestyles, and consumer culture, respectively.

Customer Satisfaction

It is important to focus on the growing prominence of the cultural aspect in consumption and not merely regard consumption as derived from needs or production. The satisfaction obtained from a product depends upon brand differentiation within conditions of consumer culture. The concentration is on the different ways in which people use commodities to create social identity or distinction. This has led to an increasing interest in conceptualizing issues of desire and pleasure, the emotional and aesthetic satisfactions derived from consumer experiences, in the case of the current study, from Starbucks' brand experiences.

Starbucks creates a homogeneous space throughout their stores worldwide. Its unified decoration, standardized commodity, similar atmosphere attach the coffee image with its own style. Evans and Laskin (1994) identify the benefits of a satisfied customer as the following: "repeat purchases, referrals of other customers, positive word-of-mouth, and the lower costs associated with serving existing customers compared with attracting

new ones” (p. 442). Therefore, from customers’ viewpoint satisfaction can be viewed as an outcome of a consumption activity or experience (Parker and Mathews, 2001).

In the early 1990s, the process of delivering high-quality goods and services, which influences customer satisfaction, has been elaborated by many researchers (Anderson et al., 1994). Zeithaml (1988, p. 3) defines perceived quality as “the consumer’s judgment about the product’s overall excellence or superiority”. Some studies indicated that perceived quality has a direct influence on customer satisfaction, and positive quality experience will lead to customer satisfaction and vice versa (Kristensen et al., 1999, p. S605; Churchill and Suprenant, 1982); Anderson and Sullivan (1993) conclude that perceived quality has a larger impact on customer satisfaction than other traditional influencing factors (i.e., expectation).

Churchill and Suprenant (1982) suggest that “Conceptually, satisfaction is an outcome of purchase; operationally, satisfaction is similar to attitude in that it can be assessed as the sum of the satisfaction with the various attributes of the products or service” (p. 493). Similarly, Sureshchandar et al. (2002) suggest customer satisfaction is multi-faceted and five factors comprise customer satisfaction: (1) core service or service product; (2) human element of service delivery; (3) systematization of service delivery: non-human element; (4) tangibles of service-servicescapes; and (5) social responsibility (p. 366-367). To meet the current study needs, the researchers will focus only on the first four factors to examine the characteristics of highly satisfied Starbucks customers in Taipei.

Lifestyles

In 1963 Lazer gave lifestyles the most commonly adopted definition: “Lifestyles refer to a distinctive mode of living in its aggregate and broadest sense, it embodies the patterns that develop and emerge from the dynamics of living in a society” (p. 146). He also identifies that consumers’ purchase decisions and market reactions are determined by lifestyle patterns. Lifestyles potentially provide a mass-mediated environment through which people symbolically represent identity and difference. The way in which “Starbucks people” consume coffee and the ambience of the space creates differences, emphasizing the ways they consume may cause a personal lifestyle. Also, Hoyer and MacInnis (2007) indicated that “what people do in their spare time is often a good indicator of their lifestyles” (p. 383).

Douglas & Isherwood (1979) suggest that people consume goods in a way to express their social class. In such a way of consumption, the image of products becomes crucial. Consumers have to express their social status through the images of commodities. They recognize the images of commodities to make sure “they are what they consume”; this also is referred to symbolic consumption. If Starbucks is consumed as image and symbols, then what customers get from consumption is experience. Naylor and Kleiser (2002) refer to lifestyles as experientialism (Smith and Lutz, 1996), especially for people who like to collect experiences (p. 345). Experientialism in Smith and Lutz (1996) is defined as a set of beliefs about the importance of experiences that contain three dimensions: centrality (experiences central to one’s life), happiness (experiences essential to happiness), and success (experiences reflecting success) (p. 311).

Lawson and Todd (2002) give lifestyles another understanding by reflecting “the pattern of attitudes and behaviors that are in some way consistent across an individual’s life, or a particular domain of their life” (p. 295). When it comes to coffee, there’s no doubt that experience breeds lifestyles and lifestyles breeds experience. Coffee consumption is highly dependent on lifestyles, leisure and consumer experiences. “The associations of goods may be utilized and renegotiated to emphasize differences in lifestyles which demarcate social relationships” (Featherstone, 1990, p. 8). The rise in coffee consumption as a lifestyle statement in the context of experience enables deeper insights into lifestyles’ impact on the purchase and consumption behaviors of consumers.

There are many ways to define and classify lifestyles. Most common core categories of lifestyles can be divided into: (1) social activity; (2) interests; (3) opinions-- AIO scales (Wells and Tigert, 1971; Wang, 1990). In the current research, based on AIO and the meaning of experience to lifestyles and the significance of lifestyles to coffee consumption, lifestyle is operationalized as stated by Kucukemiroglu et al. (2005): “Lifestyle is how one lives, it is the total image one has of him or her self which is a result of how one was socialized in his or her culture. It includes the products one buys, how one uses them, how one thinks about them and how one feels about them” (p. 212).

Consumer Culture

Consumer culture is the ideological infrastructure that undergirds what and how people consume and sets the ground rules for marketers’ branding activities (Holt, 2002, p. 80). Arnold and Thompson (2005) provide a 20-year overview of consumer culture

theory. They refer consumer culture as “a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationship between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings” (p. 868). Based on Kozinets (2001), Arnold and Thompson (2005) imply that consumer culture conceptualizes “an interconnected system of commercially produced images, texts, and objects that group use—through the construction of overlapping and even conflicting practices, identities, and meanings” (p. 869).

Jensen (2000) argues that in consumer culture, the meaning of consumption can be produced, traded, and transferred by symbols in commodities (pp. 115-125). When consumers purchase a product, what they consume is actually a hope, a dream or image represented of social meanings. As Popcorn & Marigold (2001, p. 70) illustrated in the “Consumer Society”, the meaning of life becomes the purchase of commodities. Consumers satisfy their needs through the process of consumption. The mediated discourse of consumer culture provides a symbolic language or even a global language for consumers to think about their needs (Zukin and Maguire, 2004, p. 187). Actually, Starbucks are not only sites where commodities were exchanged, but they entail the display of exotic and strange commodities from various parts of the world in a festive atmosphere (Featherstone, 1990, p. 15).

Zukin and Maguire (2004) suggest that “consumer culture certainly provides a universal toolkit, a material and symbolic repertoire, for expressing identities” (p.189). “In this aesthetic commodity world, the commodity offered spectacular imagery and an immersion in the space. It also enhanced the role of consumer culture in societies, increasingly centers of not only everyday consumption, but also of a wider range of symbolic goods and experiences produced by the commerce system.” (Featherstone, 1990, p. 16). More than any other factor, consumer culture is the primary determinant of consumers’ lifestyles, and to satisfy the needs that consumers acquire through the purchase and use of products. Featherstone (1990) maintained that “at the same time the consumer culture uses images, signs and symbolic goods which summon up dreamlike perceptions, aesthetic immersion, desires and fantasies, which suggest emotional fulfillment in pleasing oneself” (p. 16).

In the current research, the construct of consumer culture will serve to explore “how consumers actively rework and transform symbolic meanings encoded in brands, retail settings or material goods to manifest their particular personal and social circumstances and further their identity and lifestyle goals” (Arnold and Thompson, 2005, p. 871). The

success of Starbucks may be due to the brand's ability to generate meanings from culture and from the customers themselves to have several functions, viewed as core categories in this study. Hoyer and MacInnis (2007) identified these core categories as: (1) emblematic function: "meaning derived from culture allows us to use products to symbolize our membership in various social groups" (p. 453); (2) role acquisition function: "in addition to serving as emblems of group membership, offerings can help us feel more comfortable in new roles" (p. 456); (3) expressiveness function: "as a symbol, a product has the potential to say something about our uniqueness" (p. 461); (4) symbols and self-concept: "how the identity we seek would be realized in its ideal form" (p. 462).

Based on the previous literature review discussed, the research questions are generated as follows:

What are the characteristics and lifestyles of highly satisfied Starbucks consumers in Taipei? How are highly satisfied consumers differentiated from other respondents?

What is the consumer culture of highly satisfied Starbucks consumers in Taipei? In what way do they differ from other respondents?

What are the relationships between customer satisfaction, lifestyles and consumer culture in Taipei?

METHODOLOGY

Based on Bourdieu (1984), which used survey data to analyze French consumers' possessions and preferences in displaying good taste and establishing distinction (Zukin and Maguire, 2004, p. 181), the researchers in the current study felt that survey research would also be the optimal methodological tool to examine the relationship between customer satisfaction, lifestyles and consumer culture. The researchers collected survey data about Starbucks consumers' demographics, customer satisfaction, lifestyles, and consumer culture. The identifying characteristics of the survey method are to investigate problems in realistic settings and to collect a large amount of data (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000).

A convenience sampling method was applied in choosing the respondents of the research. Five representative locations of Starbucks in Taipei were selected from more than 50 locations throughout the city. Each randomly selected location represented one of

the Chinese Five elements. Starbucks adapted the traditional Chinese Five Elements into the style of store designs (Schultz & Yang, 1998). Starbucks' uniform design makes the element of wood a yellow-colored oriented decor, the element of fire a red-colored oriented decor, the element of metal a beige-colored oriented decor, the element of water a blue-colored oriented decor, and the element of earth a green-colored oriented decor.

Appendix 1 details the five Starbucks locations. Surveys were conducted with at least 80 people in each location. Respondents were selected in the study using the intercepted convenience sampling method in which random respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire inside a Starbucks location. The survey of 400 Starbucks consumers was conducted during 07/04-09/04 in Taipei with the proper institutional review board approval.

Questionnaire Design

The purpose of this study is to examine high-level satisfied customers' characteristics, lifestyles and consumer culture to gain global brand insights. A questionnaire was developed to collect the above aspects concerning this study. An English questionnaire and a Chinese version were used in this study. The Chinese version is directly translated from the English one. It employed the "back translation" (Mueller, 2004, p.241) method to make sure that two versions are exactly identical in terms of the meaning and expressions for an international study.

The questionnaire contained two major sections. The first section included: the visit frequency, the customer satisfaction, the lifestyles, and consumer culture. The second section collected consumer demographic data. After reviewing the literature on consumer culture, it was difficult to find any English version questionnaire that existed as a reference for the current study. Hence, the researcher examined Chinese literature and found some questionnaires and research findings that were used in several previous studies (Shen, 1994; Liu, 1998; Lin, 2002; Lu, 2002). Derived from literature review, the operationalization of customer satisfaction, lifestyles and consumer culture, and the detailed aspects are listed in Appendix 2. Respondents were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale.

FINDINGS

Description of Starbucks Respondents

There were 202 male (50.5%) and 198 female (49.5%) respondents, and the percentage of male to female was roughly equal (refer to Table 1). Nearly 76% of the sample was under 30 years old, and suggests that Starbucks' Taiwan consumers are younger. The respondents were highly educated. Over 60% of the consumers had a bachelor's degree and about 27% held professional degrees. Over 80% of the sample is single and about 17% is married. In regard to respondents' residency and work, 99.8% of the sample lived and worked in Taipei city. The top five occupations in the sample were as follows: (1) teacher/ professor/ student: 29.3%; (2) media/ communication: 15.8%; (3) service industry: 10.5%; (4) and (5) medical/ health service and professional/ lawyer/ engineer: both are 8.5%. On a monthly basis, over 30% of the sample's income was less than \$1,000 U.S dollars or not applicable, while about 48% had an income between \$1,000 and \$2,999 U.S dollars.

Table 1 Respondent's Demographic Profile

Demographic Profile	Category	Number	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	202	50.5
	Female	198	49.5
Age	Below 30	302	75.5
Education	Bachelor's degree	252	63.0
	Professional's degree	111	27.8
Marital Status	Not married	330	82.5
	Married	68	17.0
Occupation	Teacher/professor/student	117	29.3
	Media/communication	63	15.8
	Service industry	42	10.5
	Medical/health service	34	8.5
	Professional/lawyer/engineer	34	8.5
Income	1,000~2,999	195	48.0
	Below 1,000	125	30.0

n=400

On average, 31% of consumers usually consumed more than one cup of coffee per day in an average week at Starbucks. These consumers are considered heavy users. As for the visit frequency, the high frequency of visiting Starbucks refers to those who come to Starbucks almost everyday or 2 to 3 times on average per week or per month. Nearly forty percent (38.6%) of the total respondents reported high visit frequency.

Starbucks Experiential Characteristics

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a five-point scale, where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. The mean responses indicate that Starbucks in Taipei has the following characteristics: a wide ($M=3.63$, $SD=1.02$) and clean space ($M=4.19$, $SD=0.75$), high coffee quality ($M=3.96$, $SD=0.85$), good service ($M=4.06$, $SD=0.84$), a pleasing decoration and design ($M=4.06$, $SD=0.78$), enjoyable music ($M=3.77$, $SD=0.86$), cozy surroundings ($M=3.85$, $SD=0.87$), comfortable seating ($M=3.64$, $SD=0.95$), and a prestigious reputation ($M=4.26$, $SD=0.83$). These characteristics constitute the attraction and satisfaction for Starbucks consumers. What exists in the field of Starbucks, besides its use value, is the image meaning inside each location.

Consumers enjoy Starbucks as a good place to chat with their friends ($M=4.12$, $SD=0.85$), simply to drink a cup of coffee ($M=3.40$, $SD=1.22$), to study ($M=3.27$, $SD=1.26$), to conduct business ($M=3.10$, $SD=1.20$), to bring a date ($M=3.70$, $SD=0.96$), to stop-by when thirsty ($M=3.12$, $SD=1.16$), to relax ($M=3.33$, $SD=1.17$), and to observe people ($M=3.22$, $SD=1.29$). Conducting business seems to be a unique way of consumption existed among Taiwan's Starbucks consumers, in specific, respondents who prefer Starbucks as a place to conduct business are those male consumers ($\chi^2=13.93$, $df=2$, $p<.01$) who are above 31 years of old ($\chi^2=6.89$, $df=2$, $p<.05$). The finding also indicates that the more income respondents have, the more agreement they have toward stopping by Starbucks when thirsty ($\chi^2=14.98$, $df=8$, $p<.01$). Coffee consumption reflects lifestyle. Actually, consumption and lifestyle are two sides of societal culture, as one part of the social system. Starbucks people consume for the recognized identity; meanwhile, the identity was obtained via the realization of their lifestyle. By means of consumption, Starbucks appeals to certain groups of people to form their self-identification and tastes.

Starbucks is a comprehensive symbol that draws consumers into a vivid association with the brand's characteristics—high quality, trendy, identified, connected to the world,

sophisticated, prestigious, and distinctive. Specifically speaking, those who hold a bachelor's or associate degree think that Starbucks makes them feel identified ($\chi^2=6.72$, $df=2$, $p<.05$). Respondents who are in the occupation of service/office/government most agree that Starbucks makes them identified ($\chi^2=16.72$, $df=8$, $p<.05$), while media/communication customers expressed most agreement that Starbucks makes them feel distinctive ($\chi^2=19.27$, $df=8$, $p<.05$).

Through word of mouth communication as its primary source, not mediated paid advertising messages, Starbucks became well known in tea-traditional Taiwan. As Starbucks sprang up across the island, thousands of younger adults turned to coffee. Starbucks created a homogeneous consuming field throughout the stores worldwide. Its unified decoration, standardized commodity, similar atmosphere attach the coffee image with its own style. In a word, the Starbucks' shops were created as contexts for consumption. Thus, the whole experience is consumer-centric. The branded cup passing in the crowded urban streets of Taipei, the precision of site location choice serves as outdoor advertising exposure to engage the global consumer, just as it does in the domestic market.

Characteristics and Lifestyles of Highly Satisfied Customers

Highly satisfied customers in Taipei are respondents who consume more than one cup of Starbucks coffee a day and visit Starbucks more than two times a week. They are typically male, single, with a bachelor's degree, in media/ communications business, and with incomes less than \$1,999 U.S dollars a month. They enjoy simply drink coffee at Starbucks ($\chi^2=13.57$, $df=4$, $p<.01$), and they agreed that Starbucks is a good place to study ($\chi^2=12.05$, $df=4$, $p<.05$), to conduct business ($\chi^2=32.03$, $df=4$, $p<.01$), to bring a date ($\chi^2=10.85$, $df=4$, $p<.05$), stop-by and relax ($\chi^2=48.42$, $df=4$, $p<.01$), or to sit and observe people ($\chi^2=67.24$, $df=4$, $p<.01$). They are highly satisfied with Starbucks cozy surroundings ($\chi^2=10.11$, $df=4$, $p<.05$), high brand quality ($\chi^2=12.41$, $df=4$, $p<.05$), distinctiveness ($\chi^2=27.55$, $df=4$, $p<.01$), and its prestigious reputation ($\chi^2=48.41$, $df=4$, $p<.01$).

Highly Satisfied Customers' Differences from Others

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is used to assess whether or not significance exist for all inter-related factors of customer satisfaction, lifestyles and

consumer culture when comparisons are made by highly satisfied customers versus the others. Tables 2 through 4 illustrate the results of MANOVA showing means, standard deviations, ANOVA results, standardized discriminant function coefficients, Wilk's Lambda, and other results.

In customer satisfaction, there is significant difference between highly satisfied respondents and others for the nine inter-related factors ($F=6.12$, $df=9$, $p<.01$) (Table 2). It also indicated Starbucks prestigious reputation showed the greatest disparity between highly satisfied customers and others. The second largest disparity was shown in its comfortable seating, while Starbucks wide space displayed the least disparity. Highly satisfied respondents are more likely to believe that Starbucks has comfortable seating than others. However, other respondents are more likely to strongly agree that Starbucks has prestigious reputation than those who are highly satisfied.

Table 2 MANOVA Results of Highly Satisfied Customers by Customer Satisfaction

Value Label	Mean/ std. dev.	Dependent Variables	Std. dis. coefficient	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Highly Satisfied	3.67/ .98	Wide space	.03	.22	1	.22	.21	.64
	Others							
H.S.	4.25/ .79	Clean	-.23	.64	1	.64	1.13	.29
	Others							
H.S.	3.95/ .91	High coffee quality	-.08	-.00	1	-.00	.03	.87
	Others							
H.S.	3.95/ .91	Service	.34	1.93	1	1.93	2.77	.10
	Others							
H.S.	4.09/ .78	Pleasing decoration	-.33	.17	1	.17	.28	.60
	Others							
H.S.	3.74/ .84	Music	.13	.14	1	.14	.18	.67
	Others							
H.S.	3.75/ .80	Cozy surrounding	.45	1.61	1	1.61	2.14	.14
	Others							
H.S.	3.78/ .95	Comfortable seating	-.75	3.82	1	3.82	4.28	.04*
	Others							
H.S.	3.94/ .74	Prestigious reputation	.82	17.53	1	17.53	27.35	.00*
	Others							
Wilk's Lambda	Value .88	F 6.12	Hypothesis <i>df.</i> 9.00	Error <i>df.</i> 389.00				Sig. .00*

* $p<.05$, $N=399$, n: H.S. =124, Others=275

Lifestyles' eight inter-related factors ($\lambda=.73$) also statistically significant explained Starbucks consumers variance ($F=18.52$, $df= 8$, $p<.05$). Significant relationships existed between highly satisfied customers/ others and “study”, “conduct business”, “bring a date”, “relax” and “sit and observe people” (Table 3). The lifestyle of sitting and observing people showed the largest disparity between highly satisfied customers and others. The second largest disparity was shown in conducting business at Starbucks, while chatting with friends displayed the least disparity. Highly satisfied respondents are more likely to conduct business, bring a date, relax and sit and observe people than the others. However, other respondents are more likely to study in Starbucks than those respondents who are highly satisfied.

Table 3 MANOVA Results of Highly Satisfied Customers by Lifestyles

Value Label	Mean/ std. dev.	Dependent Variables	Std. dis. coefficient	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Highly Satisfied	4.10/ .85	Chat	.19	.00	1	.22	.08	.78
Others	4.13/ .85							
H.S.	3.44/ 1.28	Simply drink coffee	.19	.21	1	.64	.14	.71
Others	3.39/ 1.19							
H.S.	2.98/ 1.32	Study	.43	14.29	1	-.00	9.10	.00*
Others	3.39/ 1.22							
H.S.	3.59/ 1.03	Conduct Business	-.43	42.49	1	1.93	31.69	.00*
Others	2.88/ 1.21							
H.S.	3.90/ .85	Bring a date	-.26	6.91	1	.17	7.68	.01*
Others	3.61/ .99							
H.S.	3.19/ 1.19	Stop-by when thirsty	.34	1.10	1	1.10	.81	.37
Others	3.08/ 1.16							
H.S.	3.91/ .92	Relax	-.40	60.10	1	60.10	48.83	.00*
Others	3.07/ 1.18							
H.S.	3.99/ .88	Sit and observe	-.63	104.98	1	104.98	75.88	.00*
Others	2.88/ 1.29							
Wilk's Lambda	Value	F	Hypothesis	df	Error	df	Sig.	
	.73	18.52		8.00		390.00		.00*

* $p<.05$, $N=399$, n: H.S. =124, others=275

Table 4 indicates that Starbucks consumers variance is statistically significant and explained by the main effect of consumer culture ($F=6.44$, $df=7$, $p<.05$). Statistical

significance existed in the relationships between highly satisfied customers/ others and “identified”, “high brand quality” and “distinctive”. Starbucks distinctiveness showed the greatest disparity between highly satisfied customers and others, while high brand quality displayed the second largest disparity, while “identified” displayed the least disparity. Highly satisfied customers are more likely to identify with Starbucks, and to believe that Starbucks has high brand quality than the other respondents. Moreover, Starbucks makes highly satisfied customers feel more distinctive than the others.

Table 4 MANOVA Results of Highly Satisfied Customers by Consumer Culture

	Value Label	Mean/ std. dev.	Dependent Variables	Std. dis. coefficient	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Starbucks Customers	Highly Satisfied	3.85/ .81	Trendy	-.40	.16	1	.16	.23	.63
	Others	3.90/ .85							
	H.S.	3.86/ .90	Identified	.12	3.58	1	3.58	4.08	.04*
	Others	3.66/ .95							
	H.S.	3.73/ .89	Connected to the world	-.20	.00	1	.00	.04	.84
	Others	3.71/ .97							
	H.S.	3.92/ .91	High brand quality	.53	12.18	1	12.18	12.42	.00*
	Others	3.54/ 1.03							
	H.S.	3.75/ .90	Sophisticated	-.19	1.40	1	1.40	1.58	.21
	Others	3.62/ .96							
	H.S.	3.82/ .81	Prestigious	-.36	.42	1	.42	.51	.48
	Others	3.75/ .95							
	H.S.	3.79/ .87	Distinctive	.95	27.00	1	27.00	27.37	.00*
	Others	3.24/ 1.04							
Wilk's Lambda		Value	F	Hypothesis df.	Error df			Sig.	
		.90	6.44	7.00	391.00			.00*	

* $p < .05$, $N=399$, n: H.S. =124, others=275

Relationships between Customer Satisfaction, Lifestyles and Consumer Culture

In order to obtain the relationships, multiple standard regression analysis is employed to measure the linear association among variables. The independent variables are lifestyles' eight items and consumer cultures' seven items, and the dependent variable is the customer satisfaction index (constructed by adding all the nine items). Tables 5 and

6 illustrate the results of multiple regression showing unstandardized coefficients, standardized coefficients, t-ratio, R, R-square, and other results of three respectively.

According to Table 5, among the eight items, chatting with friends is the most important variable in predicting customer satisfaction, while bringing a date is the second most important predictor variable. There is statistical significance in items “chat”, “simply drink coffee”, “study” and “bring a date”, and there is moderate but statistically significant correlation between lifestyle and customer satisfaction. The more respondents think Starbucks is a good place to chat, simply drink coffee, study, and bring a date, the more customer satisfaction they have.

Table 5 Multiple Regression of Starbucks Lifestyles and Customer Satisfaction

	B	Beta	t-ratio	Sig.
Constant	22.81		15.92	.00
Chat	1.44	.25	5.27*	.00
Simply drink coffee	.67	.16	2.98*	.00
Study	.58	.15	2.98*	.00
Conduct business	-.31	-.07	-1.50	.14
Bring a date	1.21	.23	4.51*	.00
Stop-by when thirsty	-.43	-.10	-1.80	.07
Relax	.00	-.01	-.20	.84
Sit and observe	.16	.04	.74	.46

$R = .45$, $R^2 = .21$, $F(8, 391) = 12.60^*$, $N = 399$. * $p < .01$

Table 6 indicates that “sophisticated” and “trendy” are the most important two variables in predicting customer satisfaction among all seven items of consumer culture. Statistical significance was found in items “trendy”, “sophisticated”, and “distinctive”, and there is moderate but statistically significant correlation between consumer culture and customer satisfaction. It means that the more respondents think Starbucks makes them feel trendy, sophisticated and distinctive, the more customer satisfaction they will attain.

Table 6 Multiple Regression of Starbucks Consumer Culture and Customer Satisfaction

	B	Beta	t-ratio	Sig.
Constant	24.84		19.09	.00
Trendy	.83	.14	2.36*	.02
Identified	.65	.12	1.91	.06
Connected to the world	.32	.06	1.07	.29
High brand quality	.51	.10	1.55	.12
Sophisticated	.84	.16	2.70*	.01
Prestigious	.20	.04	.56	.58
Distinctive	-.58	-.12	-1.97*	.05

$R = .41$, $R^2 = .17$, $F(7, 392) = 11.40^*$, $N = 399$. * $p < .05$

CONCLUSIONS

Highly satisfied customers enjoy Starbucks' cozy surroundings and its prestigious reputation, simply drinking coffee at Starbucks. They also think Starbucks a good place to study, conduct business, bring a date, stop-by and relax, or sit and observe people. In regard to customer satisfaction, highly satisfied respondents are more likely to believe that Starbucks has comfortable seating, but less likely to believe that Starbucks has prestigious reputation than other respondents. For lifestyles, highly satisfied respondents are more likely to conduct business, bring a date, relax and sit and observe people than the others. However, other respondents are more likely to study in Starbucks than those who are highly satisfied. Moreover, in consumer culture, highly satisfied customers are more likely to identify with Starbucks, and to believe Starbucks has high brand quality than the other respondents. Starbucks also makes them feel more distinctive than the others.

For total customer satisfaction, the more respondents think Starbucks is a good place to chat, simply drink coffee, study, bring a date, relax, and sit and observe people, the more customer satisfaction they have; while the more respondents think Starbucks makes them feel trendy, identified, connected to the world, high brand quality, sophisticated, and prestigious, the more satisfied they feel.

Global Branding Insights

The purpose of the study is to obtain brand insights through examining of Starbucks highly satisfied customers in Taipei, knowing their characteristics and lifestyles, and analyzing the relationships of customer satisfaction, lifestyles and consumer culture. In consumer culture, material possessions are particularly important in defining the meaning of consumption. People in a consumer society tend to judge themselves and others in terms of their consumption lifestyles. Highly satisfied consumers appear convinced that Starbucks represents a high brand quality, and provides them with identity and distinction.

Starbucks appears to take advantage of “brand-halo” image-enhancing impact on using message elements such as logo and brand name to penetrate every aspect of highly satisfied customers’ lives: they may conduct business, relax, bring a date, sit and observe people. Starbucks makes drinking coffee as a matter of lifestyles. When successfully integrating with the local culture, Starbucks can easily get the coffee culture identity in each locality.

In general customer satisfaction, when Starbucks attempts to communicate with consumers through word of mouth, its communication works so perfectly that consumers do not notice that they are assorted by the globalization of lifestyle and taste. As Howard Schultz says, “We are not in the coffee business, serving people. We are in the people business, serving coffee.” When respondents are highly satisfied with a cup of coffee, a clean and wide space, the good service, enjoyable music, a pleasing decoration, cozy surroundings, and a prestigious reputation; Starbucks has successfully integrated into Taipei consumers’ everyday life.

Starbucks customers enjoy chatting with their friends, studying, simply drinking a cup of coffee, bringing a date, relaxing, sitting and observing people; “Starbucks people in Taipei”(Lin, 2002) represents a certain group of people who are identified with Starbucks, the high quality brand as they feel, makes themselves trendy, connected to the world, sophisticated and prestigious.

To compare highly satisfied customers and general customer satisfaction, two most important factors differentiate highly satisfied customers and others are “conducting business” and “distinctiveness”. Conducting business is the unique lifestyle for highly satisfied customers, while Starbucks makes them feel distinctive. We also need to pay attention to two most important predicting variables for general customer satisfaction,

which are “chatting with friends” and “sophisticated”. It implies that customers, no matter they are highly satisfied or not, are not purchasing coffee but buying an “experience” (McEwen, 2005, p. 2). The experience of conducting business, chatting with friends, and the experience that makes customers distinctive and sophisticated, gradually developed into exclusive lifestyles and exceptional consumer culture intertwined with irreplaceable customer satisfaction.

Schultz and Schultz (2004) state that, “Generally, branding gurus, experts, consultants, and the like still believe advertising is the key to building a brand. Invest enough money over a long enough period of time and a brand will occur” (p. 37). However, the authors also suggest that brands can be built through many ways. McEwen (2005) writes that “Brands identify, define, and express the experience of using the particular products and services with which consumers connect” (p. 15).

A cup of latte worth \$3.50 U.S. dollars, which equals to eating a simple meal for lunch in Taipei, but the value of a cup of latte, is far than the amount of the purchase. But why choose Starbucks? Numerous cafés along Taipei’s streets are readily offer similar quality at a lesser price to compete with Starbucks. In the current study, the findings suggest global brand insights far beyond mere brand differentiation, but offer the factors contributing to high level versus general customer satisfaction for Starbucks’ “brand marriage” with its customers in Taipei.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Every research has its own limitations and contributions. Due to respondents’ subjective feelings and experience about Starbucks, it may cause respondent bias toward more favorable answers in the questionnaire. And because of cultural differences, Chinese people tend to choose neutral answers as they are taught “the middle way” philosophy. It may cause quite a portion answered “neutral” opinions in the research findings.

Survey research also has its own limitations: it is often confined by the inability to put respondents’ true feelings and perceptions into words. It may deter probing into a deeper understanding of Starbucks consumption.

As for suggestions to future study, cross-cultural study of Starbucks brand building efforts in other countries for comparison between the consumers in other countries and in

the United States would be useful. Due to the highly collectivistic nature of many Asian markets, comparisons across various cultural dimensions and customer satisfaction, lifestyles and consumer culture would be fruitful. Furthermore, specific coffee knowledge can also be included in the questionnaire to provide more consumer insights as to the level of knowledge of the global coffee industry, as well as labor, environmental conditions and corporate social responsibility efforts and other dimensions of brand building.

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Appendix 1

Attributes of Chosen Starbucks

Name	Address	Attributes based on the Five Chinese Elements
Starbucks	No.50, Sec.1, Jungshiau W. Rd., Taipei, Taiwan 100.	Wood Yellow-color oriented
Starbucks	No.51, Hanjung St., Wanhua Chiu Taipei, Taiwan 108.	Fire Red-color oriented
Starbucks	No.101, Sec.2, Duenhua S. Rd., Daan Chiu, Taipei, Taiwan 106.	Metal Beige-color oriented
Starbucks	No.337, Sec.3, Nanjing E. Rd., Jungshan Chiu, Taipei, Taiwan104	Water Blue-color oriented
Starbucks	No.12, Sungshou Rd., Shinyi Chiu Taipei, Taiwan 110.	Earth Green-color oriented

Appendix 2

How the Concepts are Measured

Concept	Aspects
Customer Satisfaction	<p>A wide space</p> <p>A clean space</p> <p>High coffee quality</p> <p>Good service</p> <p>A pleasing decoration and design</p> <p>Enjoyable music</p> <p>Cozy surroundings</p> <p>Comfortable seating</p> <p>Prestigious reputation</p>
Lifestyles	<p>I like chatting with my friends.</p> <p>I simply like to drink coffee.</p> <p>I think that Starbucks is a good place to study.</p> <p>I think that Starbucks is a good place to conduct business.</p> <p>I think that Starbucks is a good place to bring a date.</p> <p>I think that Starbucks is a good place to stop when I'm thirsty.</p> <p>I think that Starbucks is a good place to stop-by and relax.</p> <p>I think that Starbucks is a good place to sit and observe people.</p>
Consumer Culture	<p>Starbucks makes me feel trendy.</p> <p>Starbucks makes me feel identified.</p> <p>Starbucks makes me feel connected to the world.</p> <p>Starbucks makes me feel a high brand quality.</p> <p>Starbucks makes me feel sophisticated.</p> <p>Starbucks makes me feel prestigious.</p> <p>Starbucks makes me feel distinctive.</p>

全球品牌無廣告？星巴克在台北： 高消費滿意度之見解

林恩盈、Marilyn Roberts *

《摘要》

星巴克高品質咖啡吸引台北消費者並融入他們的生活風格，本研究以問卷調查法試圖探討消費滿意，生活風格與消費文化間的關係。研究結果發現：在星巴克洽談生意是高消費滿意者獨特的生活風格，且在星巴克的消費令他們感到與眾不同；相對於高消費滿意者，與朋友談天和感到文化氣質則為一般消費滿意作了註解。

關鍵字：生活風格、全球品牌、消費文化、消費滿意

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