

# **The semiotics of luxury mobility in Chinese culture and the implications for the design and branding of international corporations**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to others' work.

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## **Abstract**

British luxury automotive (ILA) corporations have not, as yet, fully grasped the cultural preferences of the Chinese consumer. Branding is an inescapable part of modern design, consumption, global markets, and indeed culture. It creates and sustains competitive advantages for firms and finally delivers profits. This research is conducted by understanding the cultural meaning of “luxury mobility” in China via semiotics. The research objectives are to investigate this phenomenon from a semiotic perspective and explain how the cultural meanings of “luxury mobility” and consumer preferences of automobiles are connected in China. This research chooses semiotics as the primary analysis method as semiotics’ emergent role, a study of the sign, in the design and branding field. This research will identify the syntagmatic structure of mobility and useful paradigm of luxury artefacts associated with mobility in China through semiotics analysis. Finally, the study will develop the semiotics-based practical guidelines for ILA corporations’ design and branding strategies seeking to either break into or improve their existing position in the Chinese automotive market.

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>AP</b>	Animal-powered
<b>B2B</b>	Business-to-business
<b>ELC</b>	Entry-level luxury or compact executive cars
<b>ILA</b>	International luxury automotive
<b>ILC</b>	International luxury car
<b>HCD</b>	Human-Centred Design
<b>HP</b>	Human-powered
<b>HPV</b>	Human-powered vehicles
<b>MBB</b>	MBB refers to three famous companies in the consulting industry: McKinsey, BCG, and Bain.
<b>MCD</b>	Meaning-centred design
<b>MLC</b>	Mid-size luxury, or executive cars
<b>PRC</b>	The People’s Republic of China
<b>ROC</b>	The Republic of China
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>SUV</b>	Sport utility vehicle
<b>HEV</b>	Hybrid electric vehicle
<b>HLC</b>	High-end luxury/full-size luxury cars
<b>VS</b>	Versus

# Chapter I Introduction

This chapter presents an overall outline of the research, including the research background, the research gap, the research questions, and a description of the thesis structure. To establish the research problem, Chapter I presents an overview of the Chinese automobile market's introduction. This research develops the statement that British luxury automotive brands need to increase their market competitiveness in the Chinese market. This overview encouraged the researcher to conduct a research investigation to identify the cultural drivers<sup>1</sup> of "luxury mobility" in China.

## 1.1 Research background

This research develops the statement that for a British ILA (International luxury automotive) brand, China is now a vital part of its global growth. China's sales play a significant role in deciding its overall strength in the worldwide market. The evidence that corroborates this statement is as follow:

1. China is the second-largest market for luxury products since 2011 (e.g., automobiles, jewellery, and fashion) in the world (Bain & Company, 2011; 2012; 2013).
2. China is a fast-growing and significant market for automobiles in the world. For instance, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT, 2015) argues that China is the second-largest market for British-build cars (see Table 1.1.1.and Table 1.1.2).

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<sup>1</sup> Cultural drivers refer to the motivation of peoples' behaviour in a given culture.

Table 1.1.1: UK-built automobiles export volumes by region 2015

	2014	2009	% change
<b>EU28</b>	634,168	535,908	18.3
<b>Asia</b>	220,682	60,804	262.9
<b>America</b>	151,472	94,716	59.9
<b>Other Europe</b>	136,516	52,861	158.3
<b>Australasia</b>	25,565	11,072	130.9
<b>Africa</b>	21,067	13,450	-17.6

(Source: SMMT, 2015)

Table 1.1.2: UK-built automobile top 10 Asian export markets

	2014	2009	% change
<b>China</b>	137,410	19,417	607.7
<b>Japan</b>	16,625	12,195	36.3
<b>South Korea</b>	13,337	2,315	476.1
<b>Untired Arab Emirates</b>	9,619	2,590	274.3
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	3,138	787	298.7
<b>Taiwan</b>	3,105	543	471.8
<b>India</b>	2,836	309	817.8
<b>Kuwait</b>	2,548	1,259	102.4
<b>Hong Kong</b>	2,362	551	328.7

(Source: SMMT, 2015)

3. China is the second-largest market for premium and luxury automobiles. In 2012, sales of premium and luxury automobiles in China reached 1.25 million, and this number occupied 9% of the overall Chinese automotive sales in China (McKinsey & Company, 2013, p.4).

As a result, ILA brands are competing fiercely in China. By the end of 2010, nineteen ILA brands are battling for the Chinese market's supremacy. Each of these brands is keen to enhance its share of the profitable Chinese market. Gasgoo.com (2012) develop the claim that the overall percentage of the 2010 Chinese luxury automotive market among German, Japanese, British, American, and Italian brands are: 79.08%, 10.16%, 3.75%, 2.53%, and 0.12%. The competitiveness of British ILA brands is insufficient, compared with the German and Japanese ILA brands (e.g., Jaguar VS Audi or Lexus, see Table 1.1.3 and 1.1.4).

Table 1.1.3: 2010 Luxury car sales in China 2012

Sales rank of origins countries	The origins countries of brands	Sales of origins countries	Market share of origins countries	Sales rank of brands	Brand	Sales of brands 2010
1	Germany	572,859	79.08%	1	Audi	236,294
				2	BMW	165,248
				3	Mercedes	157,366
				8	Porsche	13,922
				19	Maybach	29
2	Japan	73,627	10.16%	4	Lexus	57,981
				9	Infiniti	10,598
				10	Acura	5,048
3	Sweden	31,588	4.36%	5	Volvo	31,588
4	UK	27,157	3.75%	6	Land Rover	23,128
				11	Jaguar	3,052
				12	Bentley	642
				15	Rolls-Royce	287
				18	Aston Martin	48



5	USA	18,314	2.53%	7	Cadillac	18,188
				16	Lincoln	126
6	Italy	845	0.12%	13	Maserati	459
				14	Ferrari	295
				17	Lamborghini	91
<b>Total</b>		<b>724,390</b>		<b>19</b>		<b>724,390</b>

(Source: Gasgoo.com, 2012)

Table 1.1.4: J.D Power Band Rating 2018 in the worldwide market<sup>2</sup>

	Quality overall	Performance and design overall	Dependability	Sales satisfaction	Custom service
<b>BMW</b>	★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★	★★
<b>Jaguar</b>	★★	★★★★★	★★	★★	★★
<b>Lexus</b>	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★
<b>Mercedes-Benz</b>	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★
<b>Audi</b>	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★
<b>Infiniti</b>	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★
<b>Acura</b>	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★

Among the Best	Better than most	About average	The rest
★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★

(Source: J.D Power, 2018)

The reliable quantitative data from Bain & Company, McKinsey & Company, SMMT, and Gasgoo.com supported previous discussions. Bain & Company and McKinsey & Company are the “Big Three” management consulting firms

<sup>2</sup> Totally 5 stars. 5 stars refer to important, and one star refers to unimportant.

(also known as MBB)<sup>3</sup>. The outstanding reputation and performance of MBB are generally recognised in the consulting industry (The Economist, 2013; Turauskis, 2014, for more specific, see Szczerba, 2014). The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) is a British organisation that holds a stable position in the automotive industry. Gasgoo.com is a leading Chinese B2B<sup>4</sup> online platform in China. Their news channel is one of the most influential online media in the Chinese automotive industry. In conclusion, this research believes that British ILC brands need to improve their market competitiveness in the Chinese ILA market.

## **1.2 Why design and branding?**

With the rapid technological development (e.g., Mechanisation), it becomes much more expensive to create a distinct competitive advantage for intentional corporations through the factors of price and quality (Martin, 2009; Manning, 2010). In this situation, design and branding offer an additional dimension for consumers to measure the brand's value and offerings. Therefore, the discussion of ILA brands' design and branding strategies in this research is valuable as they offer a practical approach to enhance an ILA brand's market competitiveness.

### **1.2.1 Design**

Design refers to intellectual activities associated with creation and construction, which are applied widely to different industries. The design spans many activities and sub-disciplines, such as graphic design, communication design, interior design, and textile design. As expounded by John Heskett's statement:

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<sup>3</sup> MBB refers to three famous companies in the consulting industry: McKinsey, BCG, and Bain.

<sup>4</sup> B2B refers to business-to-business.

“Design is when designers design a design to produce a design” (Heskett, 2001, p.18). The definition of design becomes more complicated at the macroscopic level: the Nobel laureate, American political scientist, economist and sociologist, Herbert Alexander Simon (1916-2001) describes the design as a process that improves the current state (Simon, 1998). Boom (2015) suggests that contemporary design discipline emphasises the aesthetic, functional, financial, and innovative dimensions of both the design object and design process. Pushed by social and technological development, design now emphasises its strategic role in various industries such as marketing and engineering.

However, the isolated discussion of creating a brand’s competitive advantage through design (e.g., packaging, graphic design, or visual identity) is not as important as previous research proposed. Design arguably plays a secondary role in forming a brand compared with the management (Johansson and Holm, 2006; Manning, 2010). Besides, Boom puts forward that due to the closer relationship with the production, the significance of design for society is then-marginal (Boom, 2015). A successful international brand that owns powerful market competitiveness is supported by its effective cross-sector collaborations (Bryson. et al., 2006). Thus, this research’s discussion combines ILA brands’ design and branding strategies in the Chinese market.

### 1.2.2 Branding

The English word “brand” probably arose in the Middle Ages. Riezebos (2002) argues that etymology tells us that it is a degenerate of the old Norse word brand, which refers to cattle's branding. The Vikings may have spread the word brand in England, which was eventually incorporated into the daily language. Previous studies define a brand as “simply a product or a service which can be distinguished from its competitors” (Murphy, 1990; Hankinson and Cowking, 1996). According to AMA’s definition:

*A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiate them from competitors (America Marketing Association, 1960).*

Current research appears to validate the view that a brand refers to the product or service of a particular business, which is distinguished by its name and presentation (Aaker, 1991; Schultz and Barnes, 2000). For a corporation, a brand is a set of intangible assets: it creates value not only for the brand itself but also for consumers. Therefore, any manufacturer can produce a touch-screen smartphone, but only Apple Inc. can build the iPhone. Besides, branding is an inescapable part of modern design, consumption, and global markets. Branding as an approach that creates and sustains competitive advantages for firms, and finally delivers the profits (Murphy, 1990; Boom, 2015).

Traditionally, branding is often considered a part of brand management. Most organisations have placed much more emphasis and management attention on the functional areas of advertising, visual identity design, and public relations than on brand loyalty and brand equity. In the past 20 years, its strategic role has been recognised both in theory and in practice.

Branding is an essential approach for businesses and corporations because it emphasises providing and satisfying consumers' requirements in a profitable way (Schultz and Barnes, 2000). For instances, advertising is an extensively used branding method for promoting brand awareness<sup>5</sup> of a brand. However, an advanced branding strategy is to build an impressive and accurate brand image<sup>6</sup>, which refers to a particular association of a brand in people's minds (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1998; Riezebos, 2002; Kapferer 2004). Each successful

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<sup>5</sup> Brand awareness will be discussed in detail in Section 6.2 brand equity.

<sup>6</sup> Brand image will be discussed in detail in Section 6.2 brand equity.

brand has its unique brand image that its competitors can never imitate. BMW has been Mercedes-Benz's market opponent for the last 80 years. Both of them experienced World War I, World War II, and the changes of the government. Both of them come from Germany and focus on the high-end market. However, BMW's brand personality is entirely different from Mercedes-Benz's. The consumer will never mix BMW and Mercedes-Benz up because they are unique brands that provide enough information to be identified.

### **1.3 Research gap**

By the evidence currently available, it seems fair to suggest that the cultural driver is an underlying determinant of consumer behaviour (Henry, 1976; McCorta and Malhotrab, 1993; Mooij, 2011). British ILA brands should identify the cultural drivers of "luxury mobility" in China. This study aims to develop practical design and branding strategies based on Chinese ILA consumers' cultural drivers.

The available evidence suggests that culture is precious for a corporation to study because it is the framework of human social interaction (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1945; Linton, 1947). For an international business that targets cross-cultural markets, a set of unified design and branding strategies cannot maximise their market competitiveness in each regional market (Ferraro, 1990). Therefore, under the premise that following the overall brand aim and concept, an international brand could apply a particular design and branding strategies according to the regional market's culture (Hofstede 1984, Ferraro, 1990).

Semiotic analysis is a useful and practical approach for this research. From a semiotic perspective, culture plays a role in generating meanings through signs (Sapir 1956; Mick, 1986). Thus, any consumer behaviour (and its drivers) in a

given culture can hold some meaning. Meaning refers to the signified meanings generated from signs and their “sign vehicle” (which will be detailed described in Chapter II). By understanding the cultural or semiotic meaning of “luxury mobility” in China, British ILA corporations could improve their current design and branding strategies. Finally, British ILA corporations could improve their market competitiveness in the Chinese market.

However, it recognised that the potential research gaps lie in investigating the cultural meaning of a category (e.g., automobiles, watch, alcohol, or mobile phones) in China. The available evidence seems to suggest that a sign may generate different meanings in different periods and cultural contexts (Luna and Gupta, 2001). For instance, Aslam (2006) suggests that the general cultural meaning of colour is much more complicated and multifaceted than previous research indicated (e.g., the colour study of Adams and Osgood in 1973). Moreover, after the Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the Chinese economic reform (1978-1992), consumers have redefined the cultural meanings for numerous phenomena and objects such as diet, sex, and fashion in China (Farrer, 2002; Lu, 2004). Thus, this research will investigate the cultural meanings of personal “luxury mobility” in China via semiotic analysis.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

The primary research questions in this research are:

1. What are the cultural meanings of “luxury mobility” in Chinese culture?
2. Furthermore, how do these cultural meanings inform design and branding strategy for the ILA brand in the Chinese market?

The secondary research questions in this research are:

1. What are the denotative meanings of “luxury mobility” in Chinese culture?
2. What are the connotative meanings of “luxury mobility” in Chinese culture?
3. What are the myth meanings of “luxury mobility” in Chinese culture?
4. How these meanings of “luxury mobility” are connected with consumers’ preferences, attitudes, and choices in China?

### **1.5 Aim and objectives of the research**

The aim of this research to investigate the cultural meanings of “luxury mobility” in China via semiotics.

The research objective 1 is to explain how the cultural meanings of “luxury mobility” and consumers’ attitudes, preferences, and choices are connected in China. The research will deconstruct in a broader sense and mainly focus on the discussions of design and brand strategies for ILA corporations. Therefore, this research will identify the syntagmatic structure of mobility and useful paradigm of luxury artefacts associated with mobility in China.

The research objective 2 is to develop a set of semiotics-based practical guidelines for the design and branding strategies of ILA corporations who are seeking to either break into or improve their existing position in the Chinese automotive market.

## **1.6 Thesis structure**

This thesis is structured into seven chapters, which includes this introductory section.

Chapter II contains the literature review concerned with establishing the broad principles of culture, semiotics, luxury goods, and mobility. The author split this chapter into four sections. The first section is a comprehensive review of the definition of culture in anthropology and sociology. Secondly, Chapter II will discuss an overview of the semiotics framework. Thirdly, this chapter will discuss the definition of luxury goods, and the last second will discuss the definition of mobility.

Chapter III starts with a broad review of the methodological considerations associated with contemporary social-studies and design research. Qualitative methods are preferable, where an existing pool of knowledge in the research area does not exist. This research will use qualitative research methods.

Furthermore, the researcher select interview as it is the most appropriate qualitative data collection method for this study. Interviews are beneficial for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. This chapter will then introduce the interview design for this study, including participant selection and interview design. Finally, this chapter will introduce decomposed charts as the Interview analysis method (An example is shown in Appendix III).

Chapter IV seeks to uncover the myth meaning of luxury mobility in Chinese culture. Myth meaning is a critical concept in semiotics that refers to the geographical, historical, political, sociological, and psychological association of a sign (Barthes, 1987). This chapter will explore luxury mobility in Chinese culture by reviewing Chinese history and ancient literature.



This chapter includes three sub-sections. The first section is a comprehensive review of Chinese traditional cultural values, especially the dominant ideology in ancient China, Confucianism. Then this chapter discussed the Yufu system and its influence on Chinese culture and Chinese two classic luxury mobility: the two-wheel carriage and Jiao. The third section discussed Chinese modern cultural values, cultural divers for luxury goods consumption, and the myth meaning of luxury mobility.

Chapter V argues that cultural meanings of luxury mobility in China are essential for ILA brands to understand Chinese ILC consumers, and both must be understood during their ILC purchasing process. From February 2016 to April 2016, 30 interviews were finished in four different cities in China. This chapter analyses what are the important and unimportant factors for these participants during their ILC purchasing process. Through the analysis of their “positioning chart,” this chapter discussed the denotative and connotative cultural meanings of luxury mobility in China. With the result in Chapter IV, this chapter uncovers China's cultural meanings of luxury mobility in China.

Chapter VI start with briefly introduced the history and the definition of a brand: a brand is a navigation picture in classical time for illiterate people; in the Middle Age, a brand is trademarks that represent high-quality goods. Then Chapter VI discussed branding play a significant marketing role because it could create “brand equity.” The element of brand equity includes brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand image. A powerful brand image means a better-perceived quality for the consumer and better brand loyalty. Finally, this chapter will propose five semiotics-based practical guidelines for the design and branding strategies of ILA corporations who are seeking to either break into or improve their existing position in the Chinese automotive market.

Chapter VII concludes the thesis by describing how the research questions and objectives were fulfilled, detailing the extent to which the thesis contributes to the broader school of knowledge, providing recommendations for future work in the area, and presenting limitations to the work that has been completed.

## Chapter II Literature review

Before approaching to uncover the cultural meaning of luxury mobility in China, this study needs to understand what is culture, semiotics, luxury goods and mobility, and Mianzi in Chinese culture. Thus, the literature review must provide a theoretical framework outlining the culture, semiotics theory, luxury goods, mobility, and discuss the definition of Mianzi in Chinese culture. Chapter II Literature review is structured as follows:

2.1 What is culture? - This section introduced the etymology of culture, the difference between culture and civilisation. Then this section discussed the definition of culture in anthropology and sociology.

2.2 Semiotics theory overview - This section introduced the models of the sign, the structure of the sign, the levels of meaning. Then this section introduced the code in semiotics theory.

2.3 What is mobility? - This section introduced two elements of mobility, the development of land mobility. Then this section brief introduced Moto car.

2.4 Mianzi in Chinese culture - This section introduced one of the essential cultural values in Chinese culture - Mianzi.

2.4 Summary - This section is a summary of the literature review chapter.

### 2.1 What is culture?

#### 2.1.1 The etymology of culture

Since the term culture embodies many concepts, this study must clarify the etymology and definition of culture. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC-43 BC) is considered the first to use the term “Cultura” in his *Tusculanae Disputationes*<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Also called *Tusculanae Disputationes* (English: *Tusculanes* or *Tusculan Disputations*),

Cicero (1813) used the expression “Cultura animi” as a metaphor to describe the idea of the “philosophical soul.” He maintains the development of the philosophical soul is the highest spiritual development of humanity. In the 17th century, German jurist, political philosopher Samuel Pufendorf (1632-1694) had challenged Cicero’s conclusions, arguing that the “philosophical soul” is not the spiritual perfection of human development. Samuel Pufendorf used the term “Cultura” to refer to:

*Culture then does not refer to a special education attaining a natural potential of the soul according to teleological conceptions like Cicero’s. It rather refers to how human beings overcome their original barbarism, and through artifice, become fully human (Velkley 2002, p.15).*

For both Cicero and Pufendorf, “Cultura” means the process of human spiritual development (or refinement) to overcome primitive human barbarism. The ideal result of this development is civilised (an opposite of barbarity). As discussed above, in Latin and Middle English (1066 to the late 15th century), the term “Cultura” had not yet acquired the modern anthropological meaning. Having defined what “Cultura” means, the study now moved on to discuss the definition of culture in the 18th century. During the Age of Enlightenment<sup>8</sup>, German philosopher, one of the central Enlightenment thinkers Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) used the German term “Bildung” to describe self-cultivation and explained what Enlightenment is (Kant, 1784)<sup>9</sup>.

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which is a series of books written by Marcus Tullius Cicero. Cicero was a Roman politician, lawyer, and philosopher.

<sup>8</sup> The Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason (in French: Le Siècle des Lumières; and in German: Aufklärung) was an intellectual and philosophical movement in Europe during the 18th century.

<sup>9</sup> German: [ˈbɪldʊŋ]. Meaning: education, formation. Wherein philosophy and education are linked in a

According to a definition provided by Albion (1905), “Bildung” meant education and educated in English. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) gives a further explanation of “Bildung.” He described “Bildung” is an intelligible identity, destiny, and experience shared by the individuals who are in the same ethnic group. Meanwhile, France Enlightenment philosophers such as Voltaire (1694-1778), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), and Vauvenargues (1712-1778) also developed the concept of the French term “Culture.”

Unlike Cicero and Pufendorf, France philosophers had argued “Culture” means the state or the result of human development (or refinement) of the mind, rather than the process. For France philosophers, “Culture” means an elite or ideal refinement of the human thought, taste (e.g., art, music), mind (e.g., manners, ethics, knowledge). The definition of the concept “Bildung” and “Culture” are very similar during the Age of Enlightenment.

Besides, following Johann Gottfried Herder, German scholars such as Prussian philosopher Wilhelm Humboldt (1767-1835) given a further definition of culture (German: Kultur) during the Romantic era<sup>10</sup>. German scholars started to use the term “Kultur” to refers to the distinct “worldview” (German: Weltanschauung) held by each ethnic group (Bruford, 1975).

In the 19th century, following Enlightenment and Romanticism in Europe,

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manner that refers to a process of both personal and cultural maturation.

<sup>10</sup> Also, the known as Romanticism or the Romantic period, was an artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement (by the end of 18th century- the middle of the 19th century). Influenced by Industrial Revolution (from 1760 to sometime between 1820 and 1840), Enlightenment and scientific rationalisation of nature, Europe started to emphasise on individualism and the glorification of all the past.

humanists such as German anthropologist Gustav Klemm (1802-1867) and English poet Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) started to extend the concept of culture. Culture refers to the various social practice types (e.g., customs, skills, arts), attitude, value, lifestyle, and belief (e.g., religion, science).

Furthermore, they started to use culture as a measure or degree to describe the state of human mental development and refinement. The term “high culture” used here to refers to the civilised culture or the culture of the ruling class in society; the term “low culture” is used here to refers to the primitive, uncivilised culture, or the culture of ruled class in society. For example, Arnold (2006) used literary such as “acquiring culture” or “a cultured person.” Thus, according to this school of thinking, one ethnic group or nation can be more civilised or more sophisticated than another. This theory influenced the theory of cultural evolution by Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881) and the idea of Social Darwinism by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903).

On the other hand, people in the 18th century rarely used the term “Culture” alone. For example, John Henry Newman (1801-1890) used the phrase “intellectual culture” in his writing, rather than to use the word “culture” alone (Newman, 2009). Bagby (1959, p.73) points out that:

*“Culture” in this sense means any deliberate effort to develop the qualities of some object. We must always speak of “the culture of wheat” or “the culture of the arts”; we cannot speak of “culture” alone.*

### 2.1.2 Culture and civilisation

Before examining the definition of culture, it is simple to perceive that the word “Civilisation” also acquires a similar meaning. The modern word “Civilisation” was first recorded in English in 1772. The word “Civilise” originates from the old French adjective term “civil” and the Latin term “civilis,” which means

“something that relating to a citizen, citizenship or public life.” Thus, the term “civilisation” refers to “be civilised, to overcome primitive human barbarism.”

Since the middle of the 18th century, as same as “culture,” French scholars defined “civilisation” as a result rather than a process of being civilised. The usage of “culture” and “civilisation” in English and French has been confusing (e.g., Tylor, 1871; Goldenweiser, 1923). Most anthropology and sociology studies point out that during the 17th-19th centuries in French and English, culture shared the same meaning with “civilisation”, or they are synonymous (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952; Bagby, 1959; Ward, 1903). For American sociologists, culture became their preference after the 19th century.

Some sociologists attempted to discuss civilisation from the culture, such as Lester Ward (1841-1913) and Albion Small (1854-1926). As previously stated, “Kultur” in German not only refers to the refinement but also additionally relates to the worldview (whether or not refined). Thus “Kultur” and “Kulturgeschichte” (English: civilisation) are not synonymous (Ward, 1903). Thus, in German, “culture” and “civilisation” are two different concepts:

*“Civilisation is the ennobling, the increased control of the elementary human impulses by society. Culture, on the other hand, is the control of nature by science and art”. Civilisation is one side of what we call politics; culture is our whole body of technical equipment, in the way of knowledge, process, and skill for subduing and employing natural resources. It does not necessarily imply a high degree of socialisation (Albion 1905).*

German sociologist Alfred Weber (1868-1958) points out that civilisation is a whole method and mechanism to control the conditions of life; culture is modes of living and thinking in all the aspect of life, such as the way of social intercourse, aesthetics value, belief and lifestyle (Maclver, 1931). Moreover,

Australian archaeologist and philologist V. Gordon Childe (1892-1957) argues that civilisation is a particular culture (Magolda, P. M. 2000). Based on the view of Weber, Robert K. Merton (1910-2003) demonstrates that:

*Civilisation is simply a body of practical and intellectual knowledge and a collection of technical means for controlling nature. Culture comprises configurations of values, of normative principles and ideals, which are historically unique....*

*Thus, civilisation is “impersonal” and “objective.” A scientific law can be verified by determining whether the specified relations uniformly evict. The same operations will occasion the same results, no matter who performs them....*

*On the other hand, culture is thoroughly personal and subjective, simply because no fixed and clearly defined set of operations is available for determining the desired result. This basic difference between the two fields accounts for civilisation's cumulative nature and the unique (noncumulative) character of culture (Merton, 1936, 109-112).*

Thus, cultural aspects tend to be more robust to accumulate, inherit, disseminate, and be unified in evolution than civilisational elements. Besides, cultural features (e.g., worldview) can relate to the uncivilised or primitive ethnic group. Thus, the born of culture is always earlier than the born of civilisation. Some groups may not have the practical and intellectual knowledge and a collection of technical means for controlling nature (e.g., savages and barbaric peoples). Thus, English speakers can use either the phrase “Ancient Egypt culture” or “Ancient Egypt civilisation.” However, most English speakers prefer to use “primitive culture” rather than “primitive civilisation.”



### 2.1.3 Culture in anthropology

The thesis is moving on now to consider the definition of culture in cultural anthropology. Anthropology is a global discipline of studying various aspects of humankind within past and present societies. Early anthropology is a study of cultural diversity in Classical Greece (5th and 4th centuries BC). In contrast, contemporary anthropology is a social science that originated and developed in the 19th centuries in Europe and the United States (Harris, 1968). According to Segal and Yanagisako (2005), in the late 20th century, anthropology became the central discipline in some new interdisciplinary fields (e.g., cognitive science, global studies, various ethnic studies).

The anthropology discipline focuses on the discussions of the biological aspect (e.g., the origins, physical development, natural characteristics) and the sociocultural element (e.g., cultural development, social customs, and beliefs) of humankind. Anthropology has several subdivisions: Biological anthropology, Linguistic anthropology, Archaeological anthropology, Social anthropology, and Cultural anthropology.

In the United States, social anthropology is commonly included within Cultural anthropology (or sociocultural anthropology). While in much of Europe (such as France and the United Kingdom), Social anthropology is distinguished from cultural anthropology. Each of these subdivisions applies a different set of research methods to deal with varying topics of research (see Table 2.1.1)

In the anthropology field, culture is mainly studied by Cultural anthropology, which applies a variety of methods to examine the cultural variation among humans (Christopher, 2003). Cultural anthropologists typically use interviews, surveys, participant observation, and fieldwork as research methods.

Table 2.1.1: Social anthropology subdivisions

	Also known as physical anthropology.
<b>Biological Anthropology</b>	Biological Anthropology is a scientific discipline of human beings from the biological perspective (e.g., human evolution, human genetics, human behavioural ecology).
	Also known as anthropological linguistics, initially called linguistically.
<b>Linguistic Anthropology</b>	Linguistic Anthropology is an interdisciplinary study of how language works in all its different forms and how it changes across time and space (e.g., the social uses of speech, the relationship between language and culture).
<b>Archaeology</b>	Archaeology is a study to deduce modes of ancient people's behaviour and practices through inspecting their material remains (e.g., Artifacts, faunal remains, and human-altered landscapes).
<b>Social anthropology</b>	Social anthropology is studying the relationships among persons and groups (such as minorities, subgroups, dissidents). Social anthropology is more related to sociology and history in that it helps develop the understanding of social structures, typically of others and other populations (Ingold, 1994).
<b>Cultural anthropology</b>	Cultural anthropology is a branch of anthropology focused on the study of cultural variation among humans.

As a vital branch of anthropology, Cultural anthropology raises in the late 19th century. In 1870, the founder of cultural anthropology, Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917), applied high culture verse low culture and then proposed a theory of religion's evolution. In this process, following Klemm's anthropology view,

Taylor developed a clear anthropological definition of culture. On the first page of his most famous work, *Primitive Culture*, volume 1, Taylor discussed:

*Culture or civilisation, taken in its broad ethnographic sense, is that complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a society member (Tylor, 1871, p.1).*

This study agrees with the definition of culture from a cultural-anthropological perspective: culture is the shared and learned behaviour patterns held by a community or group of people (Tylor, 1874, Useem et al., 1963). The concept of culture became one of the essential ideas of anthropology since E. B. Tylor's time. Cultural anthropologists argue that individuals or groups acquire culture (such as knowledge, belief, art) through the learning process of civilisation and socialisation. Thus, people living in different environments<sup>11</sup> will often have distinctive cultures (Cunha, 2014). Culture plays a significant role in analysing the social interaction and motivations of contemporary behaviour around the world. Cultural anthropologists mainly use qualitative methods such as participant observation, ethnography, and cross-cultural comparison to study culture.

#### 2.1.4 Culture in sociology

Sociology is a discipline in studying society (e.g., patterns of social relationships, social interaction, and culture). Social analysis has origins in philosophy. For instance, many ancient philosophers such as Plato (c.428 BC-c.347 BC) and Confucius (551 BC-479 BC) emphasise the importance of different social roles. The institutionalisation of modern Sociology was chiefly led by French

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<sup>11</sup> E.g., People are living in the same geographic circumstance, but different age; or people are living in the same age, but different geographic circumstance.

sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) in the late 19th century (Wacquant, 1992). Since human activities are strongly influenced by social structure and the individual's social role, the research scope of sociology is extensive. For example, the scope of sociology includes education, deviance, internet, law, military, religion, social capital, social class, social mobility, social stratification. Traditional social researchers primarily use a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods to study society. Influenced by cultural turns in the mid-twentieth century<sup>12</sup>, the interpretative and hermeneutic approaches also become the standard methods to analysis society.

In the sociology field, culture is an essential concept across many sociology branches, mainly studied by Sociology of culture and Cultural Sociology. The sociology of culture is an older, more conventional, and familiar concept. It is a branch developed from the intersection between sociology and anthropology. In the late 19th century, European philosophers such as Karl Marx (1818-1883), Émile Durkheim (1858-917), and Max Weber (1864-1920) developed early theory. For German sociologist, philosopher Georg Simmel (1858-1918), culture referred to the cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms that have been objectified in the course of history (Levine, 1971).

The concept of cultural sociology was pioneered by Weimar German (1918-1933) sociologists such as Alfred Weber (1868-1958). In the 1960s, as a product of the "cultural turn," Cultural sociology was re-discussed in the English-speaking world. Cultural sociologists mainly use cultural analysis, critical theory, and hermeneutically (focusing on meanings, words, artefacts, and symbols) to study culture.

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<sup>12</sup> The cultural turn is a relational movement in sociology field beginning in the early 1970s, which emphasised the importance of studying culture in social sciences.

Jeffrey C. Alexander (born 1947) innovated “cultural sociology.” Both sociology of culture and cultural sociology regard culture (incl. values, codes) is an essential part of society. According to Alexander:

*One would say that the more traditional sociology of culture approach treats culture as a dependent variable that processes relative autonomy in shaping actions and institutions, providing inputs with every bit as vital as more material or instrumental forces.*

*Speaking of culture's sociology suggests that culture is something to be explained by something else entirely separated from the domain of meaning itself. Speaking of the sociology of culture suggests that explanatory power lies in studying the “hard”: variables of social structure, such as structured sets of meanings, become superstructures and ideologies driven by some real and tangible social force.*

*In this approach, culture becomes defined as a “soft,” not an independent variable: it is more or less confined to participating in the reproduction of social relations (Alexander, 2003, pp.5-6).*

Thus, the critical difference between the two terms is:

Sociology of culture sees culture as a dependent variable; it is an approach that regards the cultural phenomena as a product of social processes.

Cultural sociology sees culture as an independent variable; it is an approach that regards all, or most, social phenomena as inherently cultural.

Table 2.1.2: The elements of culture in sociology

<b>1. Values</b>	The value in cultural theory means whether something is ascribing worth to do it: it is the judgments of what is acceptable or unacceptable, important or unimportant, right or wrong, workable or unworkable, in a community or society.	
<b>2. Language</b>	The communication system.	
<b>3. Beliefs</b>	Refers to the beliefs (something believed) that guiding one's action (e.g., an opinion, faith, or worldview <sup>13</sup> ).	
<b>4. Norms</b>	In sociology, norms refer to the manner, custom, usage, or habit. The two types of social norms are mores and folkways:	Mores (norms of moral) distinguish the difference between right and wrong.
		Folkways (norms for routine, casual interaction) draw a line between right and rude.
<b>5. Behavioural patterns</b>	The way of production	E.g., manual or automated manufacturing.
	The way of communication	E.g., the choices of language content.
	The way of organising significant events	E.g., a festival or a particular practice.
	How people satisfy their basic needs	E.g., food, security, sex, entertainment.
<b>6. Artefacts</b>	Mainly are material culture, which refers to the physical evidence of one culture such as the architecture, technologies, artistic creations.	

<sup>13</sup> Worldview (or a comprehensive worldview) is the beliefs, shared by a group of individuals about the world and their relationship to it (Edgar and Sedgwick, 2008). A worldview can contain natural philosophy, values, and ethics (Palmer, 1996).

## 7. Social institutions

The modes of the organisation;  
the relationships regarding governance, production,  
socialising, education, knowledge creation, arts.

Similar to the Anthropological definition of culture, the Sociological definition of culture can expand to all or most of social phenomena. Moreover, according to Macionis (2010), culture can be divided into two types, non-material culture (non-physical ideas) and material culture (physical evidence of one culture)<sup>14</sup>:

### 2.1.5 Discussion

Culture is an incredibly complex phenomenon, mainly studied by anthropology and sociology. It is an incredibly complex phenomenon. It is very challenging to define it because this term has too many definitions. Culture becomes one of anthropology's essential concepts. Meanwhile, since Edward B. Tylor's time, cultural anthropology becomes one of anthropology's principal subdivisions<sup>15</sup>.

This study agrees with the definition of culture from a cultural-anthropological perspective: culture is the shared and learned behaviour patterns held by a community or group of people (Tylor, 1874, Useem et al., 1963). The concept of culture became one of the essential ideas of anthropology since E. B. Tylor's time. Cultural anthropologists argue that individuals or groups acquire culture (such as knowledge, belief, art) through the learning process of civilisation and socialisation. Thus, people living in different environments (such as the people living in the other geographic circumstance or age) will often have distinctive cultures (Cunha, 2014).

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<sup>14</sup> Non-material culture and material culture are two terms tend to be relevant only in archaeological studies.

<sup>15</sup> Edward B. Tylor is a pioneer English anthropologist.

Sociology of culture also proposes a similar definition of culture, such as John Paul Lederach emphasises that culture is the shared “knowledge” and “structures” (Lederach, 1995, p.9). Both Ralph Linton<sup>16</sup> and Talcott Parsons<sup>17</sup> emphasises that culture is the behaviour pattern that can be “inherited or learned from their elders and pass on to the young generation” (Linton, 1961, p.3; Parsons, 1949, p.8).

This study disagrees with this definition. With the development of technologies in recent years, some behaviour patterns could be learned from the young generation. Thus, culture can be passed on to the elders or passed on between the same ages. Hofstede 1991, p.5) also emphasises that “culture is learned, not inherited.” Therefore, culture is a fragile phenomenon. It is always changing because it exists almost entirely in the minds of people. Some traditional behaviour patterns vanished among the young generation (such as fashion style and eating habits). In contrast, a new, favourite behaviour pattern is easy to form a new culture shared and learned by people.

Cultural anthropologists mainly use qualitative methods such as participant observation, ethnography, and cross-cultural comparison to study culture. Culture plays a significant role in analysing the social interaction and motivations of behaviour in the contemporary world.

## **2.2 Semiotics theory overview**

Besides culture anthropology and sociology, semiotics is an effective method to study culture. The most straightforward definition of semiotics is a study of

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<sup>16</sup> Ralph Linton is a American anthropologist.

<sup>17</sup> Talcott Parsons is a American sociologist.



culture and the signs in the given culture. Signs could be anything that signifies the meaning: signs in the semiotics field refer to more than the visual “signs” (e.g., road signs, shop signs, or city signs); signs take both material and immaterial forms. A sign can be a word, a sound, an image, a smell, a flavour, a colour, a body language, or a dream (Umberto, 1965).

### 2.2.1 The models of sign

This section's discussion will point to the sign models, which describe what consists of a sign. Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce are two men who are regarded as the pioneers who offer the foundation of semiotics by contemporary semioticians. Saussure and Peirce offered two mainstream models of the sign.

#### 2.2.1.a Saussure's Model

Saussure developed comprehensive frameworks of semiotics from a linguistic perspective. Saussure named the first term to describe semiotics: “semiology,” which was generally used among the early French semiotics scholars.

Saussure's semiotic theories are widely adopted in the semiotic field, even though contemporary semiotics usually focuses on non-linguistic semiotic research (Chandler, 2007). In Saussure's book, *Course in general linguistics*, he offers a dyadic (two-part) model, which argues a sign consists of (see Figure 2.2.1):

1. a **“signifier” (significant)** - the form of the sign
2. a **“signified” (signifié)** - the association it links to



Figure 2.2.1: Saussure's model of sign

(Source: Based on Saussure, 1983, pp.65-66; Chandler, 2007, p.15)

Saussure argues that “a sign is the combination of a signifier and a signified” (Saussure, 1983, p.67). A signifier refers to the tangible or intangible form that the sign takes. It communicates a unique association (e.g., a concept, a mental image, an impression, a meaning) or, in Saussure's term: signified (Saussure, 1983). From a linguistic semiotic perspective, Saussure (1983) develops a claim that a linguistic sign does not consist of a name and an object but consists of a sound pattern and an association. This sound pattern can be understood as a “physical” object that connects to a signified (an association, a concept, or a mental impression). For example, a linguistic sign of the “tree” consisting of (see Figure 2.2.2):

1. **A signifier:** the sound pattern of the “tree.”
2. **A signified:** the concept of a perennial plant with an elongated stem or trunk.

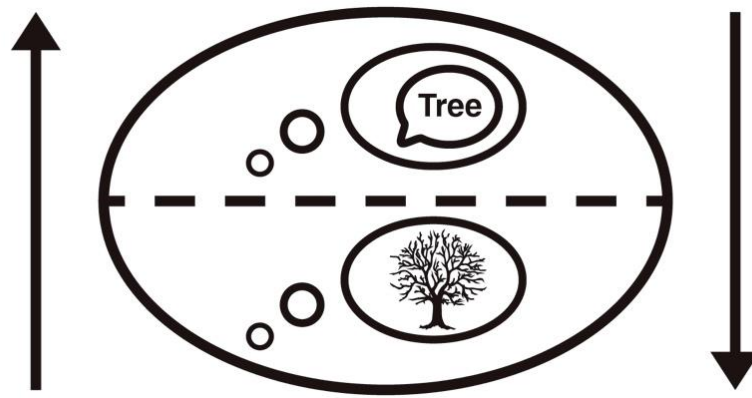


Figure 2.2.2: A sound pattern and an association

(Source: Based on Saussure, 1983, pp.65-66; Chandler, 2007, p.15)

There is evidence in favour of Saussure's model of sign: signifier is the physical form of a sign such as what we hear, touch, speak or taste in reality; the signified is the meaning of the sign such as what we experience, think, and feel (Hjelm, 2002; Chandler, 2007). In semiotics, "sign vehicle" is the word to describe the form (signifier in Saussure's term) of the sign.

#### 2.2.1.b Peirce's Mode

Peirce was an American philosopher who was highly respected for his contributions to the founding of pragmatism. Compared with Saussure's sign models, Peirce offers a "triadic" or three parts model of the sign. In Peirce's model, the "sign vehicle" is the representamen and the meaning of the sign existing in both its interpretant and its object. Peirce argues a sign consist of (see Figure 2.2.3):

1. **The representamen:** the form of the sign;
2. **The interpretant:** the mental image of the sign;
3. **The object:** the universal meaning of the sign.

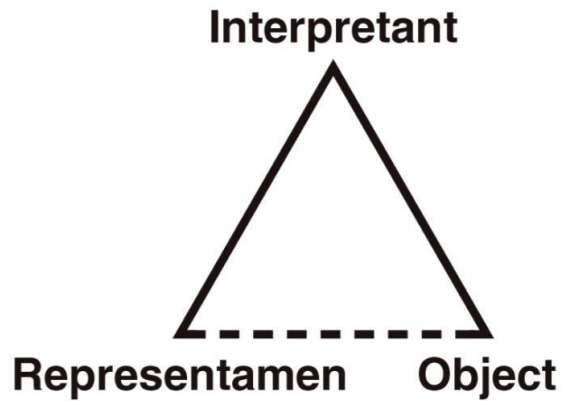


Figure 2.2.3: Peirce's model of the sign

(Source: Based on Eco 1982, p.59; Chandler, 2007, p.30)

Silverman (1983) suggests that: representamen share a similar definition with signifier; interpretant shares a similar definition with signified. Nevertheless, there is an apparent difference between the interpretant and signified. Peirce (1958) develops the claim that a sign represents a more developed sign (in the form of an interpretant, which also called the “first sign”) to the sign-receiver. Therefore, the interpretant represents a particular mental image to the sign-receiver and create a new signifier in his conscious. Thus, an Interpretant can be re-interpreted, which is named “unlimited semiosis” by Eco (1982, see Figure 2.2.4):

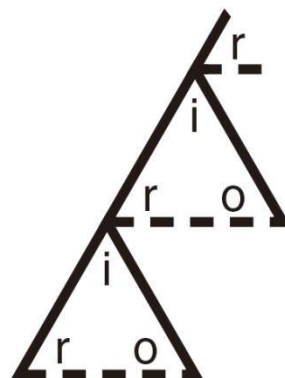


Figure 2.2.4: Unlimited semiotics

(Source: Based on Chandler, 2008, p.32)

Besides, Peirce featured an additional element, an object (or referent), in his model of the sign. The object communicates a standard concept (a universal law) to the sign-receiver. Chandler (2008, p.33) argues that “Pierce’s model provides a place for materiality and reality outside of the sign system.” A sign in Peirce’s model is similar to an opaque labelled bottle that contains something. The process of understanding this sign are:

1. **The representamen:** the first object that is perceived is the bottle and label;
2. **The interpretant:** the representamen provides the information that the bottle contains another object;
3. **The object:** the perception or knowledge to identify what the bottle contains.

The object is an essential and easily neglected element in this process. The information of “something is inside the bottle” cannot be aware without the purpose because it is opaque. This information may be awarded only in that ‘noticing the label’ and then “read the label.” For example, a visual sign of the “stop” consist of (see Figure 2.2.5).

It is worth noting that the signifier in Saussure’s model and representamen in Peirce’s model (which is also called “sign vehicle”) is different from the concepts of the sign. The sign-vehicle is the form that a sign takes; the sign is the combination of its form (sign vehicle) and its meaning (signified in Saussure’s model; interpretant and object in Peirce’s model). For convenience, this research uses signifier and signified to describe the “sign vehicle” and its meaning in this thesis (cf. Jakobson 1995; Chandler 2008).

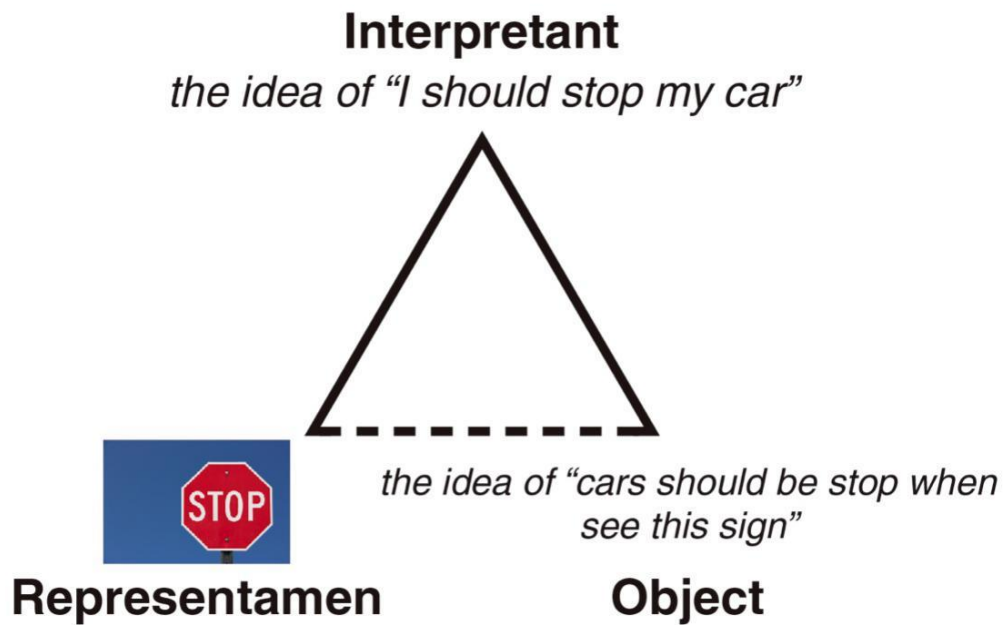


Figure 2.2.5: An example of Peirce's model of the sign

1. **The representamen:** a metal, red signboard with "stop" writing on it;
2. **The interpretant:** the idea of "I should stop my car";
3. **The object:** cars must stop

### 2.2.2 The structure of sign

To analysis the meaning of a sign, it is significant to verify its constituent elements and the relationships of these elements (Saussure, 1986). The Russian-American linguist and literary theorist Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) uses the term that "syntagmatic" and "paradigmatic" to define these two concepts. Syntagmatic and paradigmatic are two models of meaning's structure. Saussure argues that three types of systemic relationships should be taken into account when we are analysing a sign (Silverman 1983, p.10; Chandler, 2007, pp.84-85):

1. The relations between a signifier and a signified;
2. The relationships between a sign and all of the other elements inside of it;
3. The relationships between a sign and the factors surround it.

Briefly speaking (see Figure 2.2.6), the syntagmatic is the combination of "this-and-this-and-this" (e.g., the running cat). The paradigmatic is the selection such as "this-or-this-or-this" (e.g., the selection of the last word in the same sentence for "cat" or "dog" or "fox").

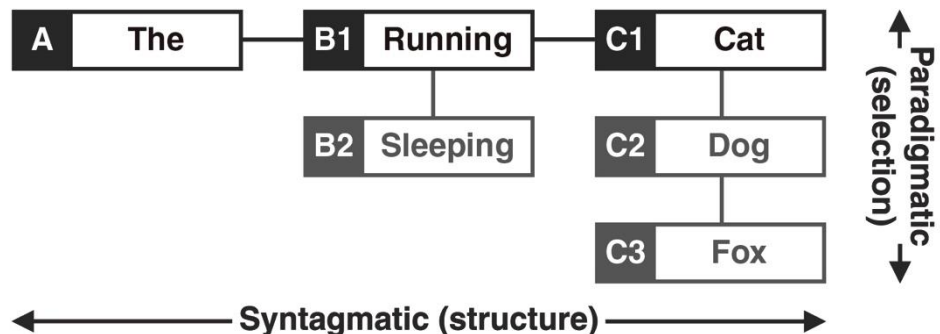


Figure 2.2.6: Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic  
(Source: Based on Chandler, 2008, p.84)

Syntagmatic refers to the sign's horizontal structural framework (concerning positioning); smaller syntagms can construct a syntagm, a group of the structured signifier that delivers the combined meanings (Jacobson, 1956; Saussure, 1986). For instance, an old Bosnian man produced a well-functional automobile covered in more than 50,000 separate oak pieces (see Figure 2.2.7). This object is reported as a "wooden automobile," not a "wooden box" or a "wooden boat" because it shares the same syntagmatic structure with the contemporary automobile.



Figure 2.2.7: The wooden VW Beetle

(Source: International Business Times, 2014)

Besides, a lot of the Hollywood movies propose the image of the future car (e.g., the flying taxi in “Fifth Element,” 1998; Audi RSQ in “I, Robot,” 2004, see Figure 2.2.8). These automobiles redefine the mode of mobility (e.g., flying-car and hove-car); however, these future cars still use the syntagmatic structure of modern cars.



Figure 2.2.8: The future automobile in Hollywood movies

The syntagmatic analysis helps a brand develop innovative design and branding strategies in the real world. For instance, AeroMobil has been developing a flying automobile. Their prototype 3.0 continues to be tested in real flight conditions since 2014 (see Figure 2.2.9). AeroMobil uses the term "flying car" to define their product. However, from a semiotic perspective, this product uses a changed syntagmatic structure compared with contemporary automobiles. Their prototype 3.0 combines the car and private aircraft's syntagmatic structure, leading to a design revolution in the automotive and private aircraft industry.





Figure 2.2.9: AeroMobil prototype 3.0

(Source: AeroMobil, 2014)

Paradigmatic refers to the vertical (concerning substitution) structural framework of the sign (Saussure 1983, Silverman 1983; Harris 1987): a paradigm is a group of signifiers or signified that all members belong to some defining classification, but in which each is different. For instance, the interior design is a syntagmatic member of automotive design with many different paradigmatic selections. Bentley Mulsanne uses the paradigmatic choice of wooden texture in their interior design, which is widely used in aeroplane first class (e.g., Emirates A380 first class). This wooden texture is a paradigm that shares the same meaning with the traditional wooden furniture or artefacts (e.g., the conventional cherry oak furniture): the idea of quality, luxury, craftsmanship, and the feeling of comfort prestige (see Figure 2.2.10).



Figure 2.2.10: The Paradigm of wooden texture

The syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis is valuable for understanding the meaning and improving the design and branding strategies. For example, the interior design with the wooden texture (e.g., the cherry oak one) could be a

practical design strategy to help ILA brand; Tesla electric automobiles using a paradigmatic evolutionary selection of automobile engineering, the electric powertrain. Syntagmatic and paradigmatic are two effective methods to investigate the cultural meaning of “luxury mobility” in Chinese culture. After understanding the syntagmatic structure, this research could uncover which, how, and why a particular signifier stands for “luxury mobility.” However, in a different given culture, this signifier may signify a different meaning.

### 2.2.3 The levels of meaning

Apart from Peirce, most early semiotic scholars developed their semiotic theories based on linguistic knowledge (e.g., Ferdinand Saussure, Roland Barthes, and Roman Jakobson). Hence, there is a part of fundamental and significant semiotic concepts are connected to linguistic knowledge. Although this research does not involve a discussion of linguistics, this section's discussion centres on several linguistic theories, which play essential roles in semiotics: rhetorical tropes, denotation, connotation, and myth. These linguistic theories are necessary to understand different levels of meaning in semiotics.

#### 2.2.3.a Rhetorical tropes

Compared to the linguistic field, rhetorical tropes refer to the signifiers that contain the connotative associations in its meaning: they are figures of speech that “does not mean what they say” (Ortony, 1993, p.3; Gibbs, 1993, p.275; Hawkes, 2003, p.59). Tropes offer a valuable method to deliver meaning, such as saying, “this is like that,” which helps people understand the unfamiliar with the familiar (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003).

Italian political philosopher and rhetorician Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) develop the claim that metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony are four

central tropes in his book “New Science” from a linguistic perspective (Vico, 1744, Table 2.2.1). However, Jakobson (1956) emphasises the significance of metaphor and metonymy in the semiotic field: on the one hand, a metaphor is a trope that highlights the syntagmatic of the sign; on the other hand, metonymy is a trope that emphasises the paradigmatic of the sign. This study adopts Jakobson's theory, which is also widely adopted by previous research (c.f. Gibbs, 1993; Chandler, 2007).

Table 2.2.1: The four central tropes in Vico's theory

Tropes	Basis	For example	Meaning
Metaphor	similar comparison	“My heart is broken.”	“I feel hurt and sad.”
Metonymy	relatedness substitution	“Give me a hand.”	“Help me.”
Synecdoche	relatedness category	“My wheels.”	“My vehicle.”
Irony	opposite association	“It is too hot.”	“It is too cold.”

A metaphor is a “better-defined” expression of an abstract meaning through comparison with something else. The nature of metaphor is utilising one concept or object to understand another one. A metaphorical signifier is generated from another signifier, which communicates a different signified (Jakobson, 1956). For a linguistic example, “he drowned in a sea of grief” is the metaphorical signifier of “he is sad.” For a visual example, in the Brazilian market, Mitsubishi uses the visual metaphorical signifier of “Animal Instinct” (in the form of combining the animals and automobiles), which delivers the concept that the extraordinary dynamic quality of new Mitsubishi Pajero (see Figure 2.2.11):



Figure 2.2.11: Mitsubishi Pajero Animal Instinct campaign

(Source: Mitsubishi 2009)

Metonymy is another significant trope using an associated and suggestive signified to substitute another semiotics (Wilden, 1987). Besides, Jakobson (1956) develops the claim that metonymy is based on contiguity or closeness. It generally involves numerous indexical relationships between two signified. Along similar lines, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) develop the claim that metonyms typically involve direct associations. For examples, “the suits” is an indexical substitution of business; “crown” is an indexical substitution of a royal person.

In conclusion, metaphor and metonymy are two basic rhetorical tropes to understand the meaning in the semiotics. Sometimes analogies make the process of interpreting meaning more confused because tropes generally do not directly signify their “true meaning.” For instance, “give me a hand carrying this box” connects two different signified: a dominant signified (the literal meaning of “give me your hand,” which is impossible in this context) and a recessive signified (“help” is a metonymic substitution of “help” in this context). In semiotics, denotation and connotation are two terms to define this difference.

### 2.2.3.b Denotation and connotation

Denotation and connotation refer to two types of relationships between the signifier and the signified. A sign consists of denotation and connotation:

1. A set of denotative signifiers and denotative signified;
2. A set of connotative signifiers and connotative signified.

Denotation refers to the definitional, literal, and recognisable associations of a sign, which keeps the same meaning in any cultural context (Panofsky, 1970; Chandler, 2008). The denotative meaning (dominant meaning) is the meaning that people can find in the dictionary. The paradigmatic modification of a sign's signifier does not affect the denotive meaning of a sign (e.g., texts always communicate the same meaning in different typefaces, see Figure 2.2.12; or sound different tenors).



Figure 2.2.12: “Hello” in serif and sans-serif typeface

However, connotation refers to the social-cultural and personal (such as ideological, emotional) associations of a sign (Panofsky, 1970; Chandler, 2008). The connotative meaning may be affected by the sign-receiver conditions (e.g., the social class, age, cultural background, and ethnicity).

For example, Figure 2.2.13 is one of Jeep's campaign posters, “See whatever you want to see.” This poster's primary signifier is the “Jeep” logos, the taglines of “see whatever you want to see,” and the illustration of a giraffe. It can show another illustration of a penguin when the poster turned upside down. These signifiers communicate a denotative meaning: you have the choice to see a

giraffe or a penguin. However, the purpose of this commercial campaign is to communicate a connotative meaning: it is free and easy to go anywhere you want to go and to see whatever you want to see with a Jeep automobile. Moreover, this connotative meaning may be interpreted differently depending on the audience's age, and personality, such as the ideas of “Jeep always offers what you want” or “Jeep is a creative and innovative automotive company.”



Figure 2.2.13: Jeep campaign from Leo Burnett Paris

(Source: Leo Burnett France, 2012)

Understanding the concept of denotation and connotation is very useful in this research: one of the project's critical research objectives is uncovering the connotative meaning of “luxury mobility” in Chinese culture. As in Chinese culture, “luxury mobility” shares the same denotative but a different connotative meaning than in non-Chinese cultures (cf. Zeng, 2000; Heffner, 2007). For example, the connotative meaning of “wearing a green hat” in China signifies the idea that a woman cheats on her husband or boyfriend. However, it does not mean any different conative meaning in a non-Chinese given culture. Furthermore, another significant concept in linguistic semiotics needs to be understood in this research: the myth.

### 2.2.3.c Myth

As the last section discussed, denotation and connotation offer two semiotic systems to understand the meaning, which can also be described as the first and second levels. There is a higher-order semiotic system compared with denotation and connotation in semiotics: Myth. In this section, the discussion will point to the literature by French literary theorist, philosopher, and linguist Roland Barthes (1915-1980), who focuses on “mythology,” or the investigation of myths.



Level	Meaning
1 <sup>st</sup> : Denotation	a young, black soldier saluting the (unseen) French flag:
2 <sup>nd</sup> : Connotation	The idea of uniting and patriotic;
3 <sup>rd</sup> : Myth	The idea of France is a nation that is committed to eradicating racism.

Figure 2.2.14: A famous example from Barthes

The myth is a critical concept in semiotics, which refers to the geographical, historical, political, sociological, and psychological association of a sign (Barthes, 1987). Myth is above the denotative and connotative level (Hjelmslev, 1961). Barthes (1987, p.125) offers a famous example to explain the three-level meaning from a semiotic perspective (see Figure 2.2.14). Barthes argues that myth is a complex sign-system representing the dominant ideologies in the social and cultural context (Barthes 1987). The magazine covers of Barthes's example communicate a higher-level meaning, which is more complicated than its connotative meaning.

For another example, Japanese Samurai warriors have a cruel custom at the battle: to cut their enemy's heads off. From a semiotic perspective, this behaviour pattern is a signifier that signifying three levels of meaning (see Figure 2.2.15). The sign-receiver generally interprets an incomplete meaning without myth (e.g., in Figure 2.2.15, the sign-receiver will not receive the third-level meaning without the samurai myth). Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that myth can be regarded as an extended metaphor. Without an in-depth culture analysis in a regional market, their design and branding strategy may communicate their consumers' inappropriate meaning for British ILA brands. For instance, "white elephant" generates a negative connotative association that represents something useless and unwanted (mainly because the cost is too expensive) in western culture. However, in Thailand, it generates a positive connotative association as the cultural myth of "white elephant" represents the sacred and royal in Thai dominate ideologies.





Level	Meaning
1 <sup>st</sup> : Denotation	Kill their enemy;
2 <sup>nd</sup> : Connotation	Symbolise the victory of this battle;
3 <sup>rd</sup> : Myth	A form of “sacrifice to the God of War.” (Joseph, 1976, p.98)

Figure 2.2.15: Oni Kojima Yataro by Utagawa Kuniyoshi

#### 2.2.4 Codes

Saussure argues that the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary from a linguistic perspective: an independent sign is meaningless without a set of agreement (Saussure, 1983). For instance, different languages use a different term to name “tree,” such as “树 (Shu)” in Chinese and “Baum” in German. All of these terms share the same denotative meaning of “tree.” However, the relationships between the association of tree and the sound

pattern of “tree,” “树 (Shu),” and “Baum” are not based on a natural principle. There is a semiotic system (socially or culturally) that connects a signifier to a signified. In semiotics, this semiotic system is described as code, which is the essential concept in semiotics. (Jakobson, 1990; Chandler, 2007).

Codes construct systems that attach meaning to its signifier through the syntagmatic and paradigmatic structure (Jakobson, 1990; Chandler, 2007). Besides, Hall argues that codes play a significant role in communication (Hall, 1980). Similarly, the codes of language codes are social and cultural contracts or conventions that have been widely recognised in a given culture (e.g., samurai code). Semiotics could not explain why a signifier delivers a particular meaning without this contract. Moreover, Chandler emphasizes that codes are the “procedural systems” rather than the convention itself (Chandler, 2007, p.148). Therefore, it is significant to understand the cultural meaning of signs (e.g., behaviour, reactions, object, and phenomenon) according to the given culture's codes.

The available evidence suggests that dividing codes into groups is valuable as the code is a framework that exists in our social lives, which contain different implicit rules and constrictions. The previous literature proposes several typologies of codes: Guiraud (1975) suggest that one method divides codes into three groups: logical, aesthetic, and social; from the perspective of photography. Eco (1982, p.35-38) offers one way that divides codes into ten groups: tonal codes, iconic codes, iconographic codes, rhetorical codes, stylistic codes, codes of perception, codes of transmission, codes of recognition, codes of taste, and sensibility, codes of the unconscious.

Chandler (2008, pp.148-160) offers one method from the cultural study adopted by this research. There are three types in this typology, and every kind of code may consist of sub-codes: social codes, textual codes, and interpretative codes.

Chandler (2008) argues that his method is based on three types of requirements of knowledge:

Type 1: the world (social knowledge);

Type 2: the medium and the genre (textual knowledge);

Type 3: the relationship between (1) and (2) (modality judgment).

At the macroscopic level, all semiotics codes are social codes (see Table 2.2.2). Social codes provide an elaborate system to understand social signs. For instance, people generally identify the social identity of a stranger by his work, clothes, hairstyle, eating habit and the way he talks, and so on. It is because the social codes (i.e., verbal language, bodily codes, commodity codes, and behavioural codes) link these signifiers to a particular meaning (e.g., link the suit to the idea of a businessman or “with-collar”). Chandler (2008, pp.154-155) offers an example in his framework:

Table 2.2.2: Social codes

Type 1	Sub-codes	Examples
<b>Social codes</b>	Verbal language	phonological, syntactical, lexical sub-codes
	Bodily codes	the facial expression, gestures
	Commodity codes	Jewelleries, automobiles
	Behavioural codes	protocols, rituals, and games

(Source: based on Chandler, 2008, pp. 148-160)

A simple example of social codes is how people show their politeness and respect. Some people follow the codes that do not look at the wrong people or in the wrong place (Argyle, 1993, 1998; Dyer, 1992). For example:

- 1) Japanese generally look at the other's neck instead of one's face to show polite and respect;
- 2) In Nigeria, people do not look at the people from higher class to show polite and respect;
- 3) In Kenya, the people do not look at their mother-in-law to show polite and respect;
- 4) In the past, within many cultures, a woman does not have the right to look at a man freely;
- 5) People do not look at a disabled stranger.

Moreover, the duration of gaze (looking at) also involves different codes and signifies different meanings. Furthermore, many social codes, such as touching, talking, and gestures, construct the complex social rules in a different culture.

Table 2.2.3: Textual codes

Type 2	Sub-codes	Examples
Textual codes	Scientific codes	mathematics;
	Aesthetic codes within the various expressive arts (poetry, drama, painting, sculpture, music)	classicism, romanticism, realism;
	Genre, rhetorical and stylistic codes	narrative (plot, character, action, dialogue, setting), exposition, argument, description;
	Media codes	Photographic, televisual, film, radio, newspaper, and magazine codes, both technical and conventional (including format);

(Source: based on Chandler, 2008, pp. 148-160)

Current research appears to validate the view that from a semiotic perspective, every text is a set of signs. Codes play the role that links these signs to a particular meaning; Chandler argues that in fact, textual codes (see Table 2.2.3) do not define the meanings of texts but limit the range of meaning that a sign links to (Chandler, 2007). Along similar lines, Hall (1980, p.134) emphasised that codes are a “preferred reading’ that offers the rules that the meaning of a sign cannot be whatever an individual wants them to be. One of the vital and fundamental sub-codes in textual codes is genre codes: they limit the meaning of content in a specific range.

Interpretative codes are connected tightly to the myth: on the one hand, the myths from the interpretative codes; on the other hand, interpretative codes protect myth (see Table 2.2.4). The interpretative codes have two sub-codes: perceptual codes (e.g., visual perception) and ideological codes (e.g., Individualism, liberalism).

Table 2.2.4: Interpretative codes

Type 3	Sub-codes	Examples
Interpretative codes	perceptual codes	visual perception
	ideological codes	Individualism, liberalism, feminism, racism, materialism, capitalism, progressivism, conservatism, socialism, objectivism, consumerism, and populism;

(Source: based on Chandler, 2008, pp. 148-160)

### 2.2.5 Discussion

Design semiotics and brand semiotics are two sub-fields of semiotics—design semiotics and brand semiotics interested in signs, signifiers, and meanings,

related to design and branding strategies. Both design semiotics and brand semiotics focus on what kind of meanings the strategy generates and how they are understood in the given culture. Semiotics is an effective method to investigate various design and branding studies, especially those related to symbolic-cognitive human phenomena because both design and branding can be regarded as “semiotic construction” (Kazmierczak, 2003; Manning, 2010; Boom, 2015).

There is overwhelming academic evidence corroborating the notion that the new role of semiotics in design fields. Approximately 25,000 journal articles about design semiotics can be searched on the University of Leeds online library system. Semiotics is an effective method of investigation for various design studies. For example, Lee and Kim (2006) carried out a quantitative analysis of Korean costume colours in cultural changes from the semiotic perspective. One of their key findings is red, blue, and yellow are the most frequently used colours during the Joseon dynasty of Korea (1392-1910), as these colours acted as cultural codes with Confucianism cultural significance. Fan (2003) applied semiotic analysis to reveal the meaning of visual and verbal signs and how they were used in American farm advertisements over seventy years. Lending suggests that semiotics is an excellent tool for helping designers and marketers to have a more sophisticated understanding of the practical use and interpretation of visual signs. Darrodi (2012) applied the quantitative analysis of the meanings and the characters of colour via semiotics. A significant finding is that people's cultural background and age may be the significant factors to affect the meaning of colour. However, that gender is probably not (this study involved over 2000 participants from countries).

Moreover, marketing and brand management have always emphasizes the importance of signs and meanings. Approximately 6,400 journal articles about brand semiotics can be searched on the University of Leeds online library

system. Kotler (2003) argues that a brand is any label or name that carries meaning and associations. Along similar lines, both Kapferer (2004) and Manning (2010) develop the claim that a brand is a set of mental associations. Semiotics also is an effective method of investigation for various branding studies. Such as Slomer (2006) applies semiotics analysis to understand the meaning of business cards' communicative aspects. Slomer's findings convincingly argue that business cards are a sign. Thus, the perception of business cards can be influenced by the different design elements (e.g., the types and the cards' material). Heffner (2007) applies semiotics to investigate how the consumers of Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs) perceived the brand image of their vehicles and the role of brand image played in consumers' purchase decisions. Oswald (2012) discussed how branding strategy influences the consumers in developing countries such as China via semiotics. Oswald emphasises building brand literacy plays a significant role in branding strategy. The available evidence suggests that the brand's innovations (e.g., communication, packaging, advertising, or product design) led by semiotics analysis are rooted in the cultural context. Consumers will instantly accept these innovations as those innovations originate from culture (for specific examples, see Norman and Verganti, 2014, pp. 84-88).

Semiotics is an inquiry and analysis mode which is widely accepted and used in design and branding industry now: some agencies such as Interbrand, Lab Brand, who provide semiotics-based research in their services; some agencies such as Semiotic Alliance, Space Doctors, and Creative Semiotics, who specialise in applied semiotics. Interbrand also suggests that semiotics offers an accurate investigation method and measures the value of a particular communication (Vasilache<sup>18</sup>, 2012, pp.1-2).

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<sup>18</sup> Jennifer Vasilache is a Senior Consultant for Interbrand, New York.

Hollywood gives a misleading image of what semiotics is about to the people<sup>19</sup>. According to the data of LinkedIn social network, there are 2868 members in Semiotic Thinking Group, which is the biggest professional applied semiotic group in the social network. The author selected 443 members as the sample (for more specific, see Appendix VI). The statistical data shows that: there are 54 people titled with the consultant, 17 people are titled with Co-Founder or CEO, and 79 people are titled director of the agency. Analysing from a broader view, 12 people are working in the field of cultural study, 30 people working in marketing and 70 people working in the field of branding. In 2012, the group's key members formed the international association of applied semiotics-Semiofest, which organises conferences and knowledge transfer activities in the area of applied semiotics. They have held four conferences so far (i.e., London, Barcelona, Shanghai, and Paris). Their market research society organises an annual training program to enhance the competitive advantage of brand communications via semiotics (The market research society, 2015). It seems fair to suggest that semiotics is a useful tool to understand the cultural drivers that help decode and encode cultural elements (Sabet<sup>20</sup>, 2014).

This study will use Saussure's Model of sign to understand the meaning of "luxury mobility" in Chinese culture. This study will apply syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis to investigate "luxury mobility" in Chinese culture. After understanding the syntagmatic structure, this research could uncover which, how, and why a particular signifier stands for "luxury mobility." Then this research will discuss the textual codes of "luxury," the social codes of "mobility," and the interpretative codes of the dominant ideology in China (also understood as a myth). Finally, the study will uncover different levels meaning of "luxury

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<sup>19</sup> e.g., Professor Robert Langdon, who is a fictional character in Hollywood films *Da Vinci Code* (2006) and *Angels & Demons* (2009).

<sup>20</sup> Denise Sabet is Vice GM and executive director in Lab brand, Shanghai.



mobility” in Chinese culture: the myth meaning, and connotative and denotative meaning

### **2.3 What is mobility?**

Mobility contains several meanings in different fields; thus, to define what is mobility is very significant. In this study, mobility refers to the movement of humans, animals, and goods freely and quickly from place to place. It is the ability to transport or transportation. Compared with transport or transportation, mobility has a far smaller scope as it focuses on the discussion of human movement rather than the others (e.g., cargos). However, it is necessary to introduce the essential concepts of transport first.

#### **2.3.1 The two elements of transport**

The first element in mobility is transporting infrastructure. Infrastructure is the fixed installations that allow a vehicle to operate. It consists of a roadway, a terminal, and facilities for parking and maintenance. For rail, pipeline, road, and cable transport, the entire way for the vehicle travels must be constructed. Air and watercraft can avoid this since the airway and seaway do not need to be built; however, they require fixed infrastructure at terminals.

Terminals such as airports and stations are locations where passengers and freight can be transferred from one vehicle or mode to another. For passenger transport, terminals integrate a different method to allow riders, who are interchanging between modes, to take advantage of each mode's benefits.

For instance, airport rail links connect airports to the city centres and suburbs. The terminals for automobiles are parking lots, while buses and coaches can operate from simple stops (Cooper, 1998). For freight, terminals act as

transshipment points. However, some cargo is transported directly from the point of production to the point of use.

The second element in mobility is the vehicle. A vehicle is a non-living device used for moving people and goods. Unlike the infrastructure, the vehicle moves along with the cargo and riders. Unless being pulled/pushed by a cable or muscle-power, the vehicle must provide its propulsion; this is most commonly done through a steam engine, combustion engine, electric motor, a jet engine, or a rocket. However, other means of propulsion also exist. Vehicles also need to convert the energy into movement, which is most commonly done through wheels, propellers, and pressure. Land vehicles are classified broadly by what is used to steer and drive forces against the ground: wheeled, tracked, railed, or skied. A driver is the most common staff for vehicles. However, some systems, such as people movers and some rapid transits, are fully automated. Vehicles include wagons, bicycles, motor vehicles (motorcycles, cars, trucks, buses), railed vehicles (trains, trams), watercraft (ships, boats), amphibious vehicles (screw-propelled vehicle, hovercraft), aircraft (aeroplanes, helicopters), and spacecraft.

Table 2.3.1: The brief history of vehicle using and inventions

Time	Vehicle using and inventions
Between 4000 - 3000 BC	Boats were used between 4000 - 3000 BC in Xia (Ancient China), Ancient Egypt, and the Indian Ocean.
4000-3000 BC	There is evidence of camel pulled wheeled vehicles.
Around 1350	Railways began reappearing in Europe.
1515	Cardinal Matthäus Lang wrote a description of the Reisszug, a funicular railway at the Hohensalzburg Castle in Austria.  The line initially used wooden rails and a hemp haulage rope. It was operated by human or animal power through a treadwheel.

<b>1769</b>	Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot constructed the first full-scale, self-propelled mechanical vehicle or car.
<b>The 1780s</b>	Ivan Kulibin developed a human-pedalled, three-wheeled carriage with modern features such as a flywheel, brake, gearbox, and bearings.
<b>1783</b>	The first balloon vehicle was built.
<b>1801</b>	Richard Trevithick built and demonstrated his Puffing Devil road locomotive.
<b>1817</b>	The "Dandy horse," also called Draisienne or Laufmaschine, was the first human means of transport to use only two wheels in tandem
<b>1885</b>	Karl Benz built (and subsequently patented) the first automobile, powered by his own four-stroke cycle gasoline engine.
<b>1885</b>	Otto Lilienthal began experimental gliding and achieved the first sustained, controlled, reproducible flights.
<b>1903</b>	Wright brothers flew the first controlled, powered aircraft.
<b>1907</b>	The first human-crewed helicopter (Gyroplane No. 1) was built.
<b>1961</b>	Vostok vehicle carried the first human, Yuri Gagarin, into space.
<b>1969</b>	Apollo Program first human-crewed vehicle landed on the moon.

### 2.3.2 The development of land mobility

The first generation of land mobility is Human-powered (HP) mobility. It is the transport of people or goods using human muscle-power. HP mobility can divide into two modes (see Table 2.3.2). Although humans can walk without infrastructure, transport can be enhanced through roads, especially when using the human power with vehicles, such as bicycles and inline skates. Motorisation has increased speed and load capacity of other mobility. However, HP mobility remains the features of environmentalism, lower cost, leisure, and physical exercise. In underdeveloped or inaccessible regions, HP mobility is sometimes the only type available.

Table 2.3.2: Modes of human-powered land mobility

Mode	Examples
<b>Non-vehicles mode</b>	Crawling; Walking; Running; Sprinting; Climbing and mountaineering ice skating, roller skating, and inline skating
<b>HPVs (Human-powered vehicles) mode</b>	Skateboards, Bicycle.

The second generation of land mobility is Animal-powered (AP) mobility (the use of working animals for people's movement). Humans may ride some of the animals directly, or harness them, alone or in teams, to pull sledges or wheeled vehicles for higher speed and duration.

Table 2.3.3: The mobility examples of animal-powered mobility

Mode	Examples
<b>Animals domesticated for transport</b>	Camel; sled dog; elephant; horse; donkey; mule; moose; ostrich; ox; reindeer; sheep
<b>Animal-powered vehicles</b>	carriage (e.g., Brougham; phaeton; rock-away); chariot (ancient form sometimes used in combat, later a racing machine, later a name for something entirely different in carriages); cutter; dray; bullock cart; sledge (e.g., sledge; sleigh); trolley; van

The Industrial Revolution in the 19th century fundamentally changes transport. The third generation of land mobility is engine-powered. The steam engine's invention, closely followed by its application in road and rail transport, made land transport independent of human or animal muscles. Both speed and capacity increased rapidly, allowing specialisation through manufacturing being

located independently of natural resources. The first steam-powered vehicle was designed and quite possibly built by Ferdinand Verbiest<sup>21</sup>. Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot (1725-1804) constructed the first full-scale, self-propelled mechanical vehicle or car in 1769 (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2017). In 1807, the Swiss inventor François Isaac de Rivaz (1752-1828) designed his own “de Rivaz internal combustion engine” and used it to develop the world's first vehicle to be powered by a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen (Wakefield, 1998). In November 1881, French inventor Gustave Trouvé demonstrated the first working (three-wheeled) car powered by electricity at the International Exposition of Electricity, Paris (Wakefield, 1998). Although several other German engineers (including Gottlieb Daimler, Wilhelm Maybach, and Siegfried Marcus) were working on the problem at about the same time, Karl Benz (1844-1929) generally is acknowledged as the inventor of the modern car (Stein, 1966; Glancey, 2013).

### 2.3.3 Moto car

A car is a wheeled motor vehicle used for transportation. Most car definitions say they run primarily on roads, seat one to eight people, have four tires, and mainly transport people rather than goods. In 1885, German engine designer and automotive engineer, Karl Benz built The Benz Patent-Motorwagen, widely regarded as the world's first practical moto car (Glancey, 2013). It is a vehicle designed to be propelled by an internal combustion engine (see Figure 2.3.1). The original cost of the car in 1885 was 600 German imperial marks, approximately 150 US dollars (equivalent to \$4,086 in 2017). In 1879, Benz was granted a patent for his first engine, which had been designed in 1878. Many of his other inventions made the use of the internal combustion engine feasible for powering a vehicle.

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<sup>21</sup> It is not known with certainty if Verbiest's model was successfully built or ran (Curious expeditions, 2007; Setright, 2004).

Cars came into global use during the 20th century, and developed economies depend on them. The year 1886 is regarded as the modern car's birth year when German inventor Karl Benz patented his Benz Patent-Motorwagen. Cars became widely available in the early 20th century. One of the first cars accessible to the masses was the 1908 Model T, an American car manufactured by the Ford Motor Company. Cars were rapidly adopted in the US, where they replaced animal-drawn carriages and carts. However, they took much longer to be accepted in Western Europe and other parts of the world.

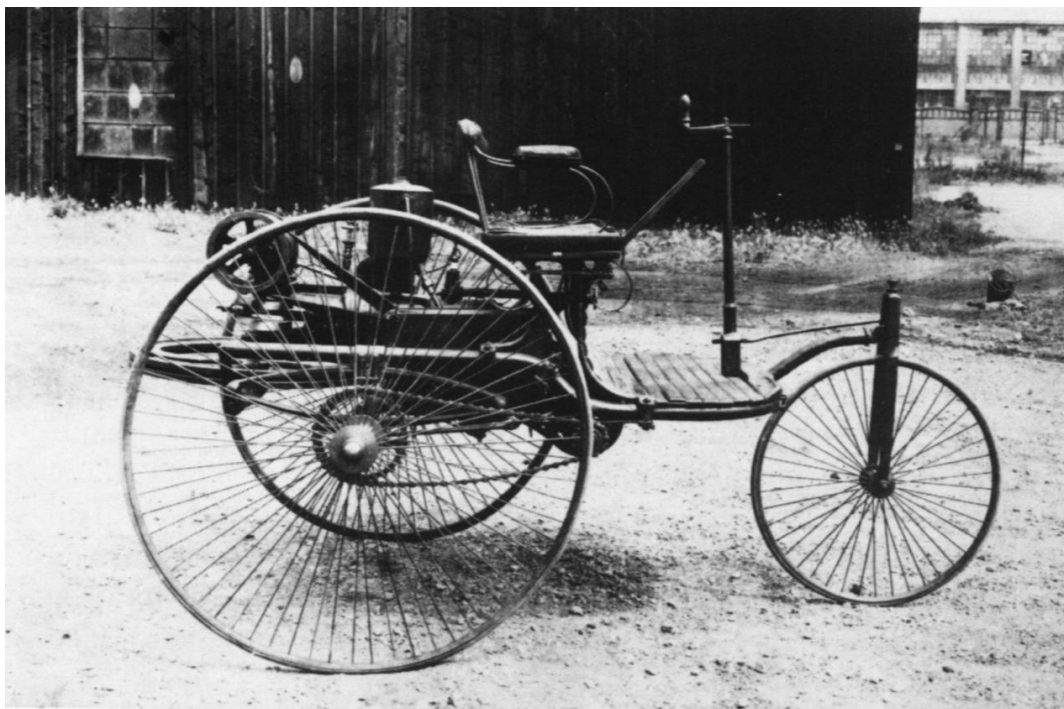


Figure 2.3.1: The Benz Patent-Motorwagen  
(Source: Mercedes-Benz, 2016)

Cars have many functional features, such as controls for driving, controls for parking, comfort for passengers, comfort for drivers, space, safety. Additional features and controls have been added to vehicles over the decades, making them progressively more complex (e.g., rear reversing cameras, air conditioning, navigation systems, and in-car entertainment).

Furthermore, steam-, electric-, and gasoline-powered vehicles competed for decades, with gasoline internal combustion engines achieving dominance in the 1910s. Although various pistonless rotary engine designs have attempted to compete with the conventional piston and crankshaft design, only Mazda's version of the Wankel engine has had more than minimal success.

Cars in use in the 2010s are propelled by an internal combustion engine, fuelled by fossil fuels' combustion. Vehicles using alternative fuels such as ethanol flexible-fuel vehicles and natural gas vehicles are also gaining popularity in some countries. Electric cars, which were invented early in the car's history, began to become commercially available in 2008.

The costs of operating a car include the fee of acquiring the vehicle, interest payments, repairs and maintenance, fuel, depreciation, driving time, parking fees, taxes, and insurance. The costs to society include maintaining roads, land use, road congestion, air pollution, public health, health care, and disposing of the vehicle at the end of its life. Road traffic accidents are the largest cause of injury-related deaths worldwide. World Health Organisation (Peden et al., 2004) argues that road traffic accidents are the largest cause of injury-related deaths worldwide. The car's benefits include on-demand transportation, mobility, independence, and convenience (Setright, 2004). It was estimated in 2014 that the number of cars was over 1.25 billion vehicles, up from 500 million in 1986 (Statista. 2018). The numbers are increasing rapidly, especially in China, India and other newly industrialised countries (Plunkett research, 2012).

#### 2.3.4 Discussion

Compared with transport or transportation; mobility has a far smaller scope as it focuses on discussing human's movement, rather than the others. Transporting Infrastructure and vehicle are two essential concepts of mobility.

The first and second generation of land mobility is Human-powered (HP) mobility and Animal-powered (AP) mobility. Then the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century fundamentally changes mobility. The third generation of land mobility is engine-powered. A car (or automobile) is a wheeled motor vehicle used for transportation. Most car definitions say they run primarily on roads, seat one to eight people, have four tires, and mainly transport people rather than goods. Cars became widely available in the early 20th century.



Figure 2.3.2: Mobility of the future campaign  
(Source: Mercedes-Benz.com Innovation, 2015)

Mobility has a far smaller scope as it focuses on discussing human's movement, rather than the others, compared with transport or transportation. The term mobility in this study refers to individuals and groups' geographical mobility, whether by foot, by the animal, or by mechanical means. It is an ability to move or be moved freely and smoothly from place to place. In recent years, the concept of mobility becomes notable in the western automotive industry. For example, Transport Systems Catapult and Nesta<sup>22</sup> organised an event that

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<sup>22</sup> Transport Systems Catapult is an innovation agency, which is established by Innovate UK. Nesta is an innovation charity.



explores how people see and use transport services called “Mobility as a Service” in London<sup>23</sup>. Meanwhile, mobility is now a term used frequently by ILA brands (e.g., Mercedes-Benz’s promotion, “Mobility of the future”, see Figure 2.3.2). This study limited the research scope: this study will mainly focus on discussing personal land mobility.

## **2.4 Mianzi in Chinese culture**

Mianzi (literally means face, Chinese: 面子) is an essential concept because of its pervasive influence on Chinese interpersonal relationships. Mianzi refers to a combined idea of one's dignity and authority. The idea overlaps somewhat with the Western concept of reputation or dignity. Mianzi is a concept influenced by Confucianism<sup>24</sup>. Confucianism emphasizes the harmony of the interpersonal relationship. Thus, Chinese people showing more kindness and adequate manners when interacting with others in the Chinese cultural context. For example, if they think something is bad or wrong, they would not use a straightforward way to express their opinion, as they need to give Mianzi to others. Nowadays, the upper class with higher social status (who have authority, knowledge, wealthy, good-looking, and influential) usually have a massive amount of Mianzi. In China, Mianzi can be understood as:

"Give someone Mianzi" (verbs, Chinese: 给面子) means "show respect to someone, or recognise someone's authority".

"Do not give someone Mianzi" (verbs, Chinese: 不给面子) means do not respect someone or recognise one's authority".

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<sup>23</sup> This study was undertaken through a panel discussion combined with a technology in 27 March 2015.

<sup>24</sup> The paper will discuss in detail Confucianism in Chapter IV.

Mianzi also relates to the prestige maintained by oneself or honoured by others through one's success or social position (Chan et al., 2003, p.48).

"Having Mianzi" (adjective, Chinese: 有面子) refers to something, or some behaviour can promote someone's dignity, authority and reputation.

"Lost Mianzi" (adjective, Chinese: 丢面子), or "Do not have Mianzi" (adjective, Chinese: 没面子) refers to something or some behaviour is shameful and humiliating.

Meanwhile, Mianzi is in particular for the upper class. In the Book of Rites, Confusion argues: "A gentleman can be killed, but he cannot be humiliated" (Book of Rites · Ruxing, 8). for a real gentleman, Mianzi can be even more important than their life in traditional Chinese cultural value. However, in some situation, one could sacrifice his Mianzi for his friend, family, and country. His friend's Mianzi, his family's Mianzi, and his country's Mianzi are more critical than the individual's Mianzi.

In China, wearing luxury, eating luxury, living luxuries, and driving luxury mean high and stable incomes. This expression of higher social status, or the idea of "Having Mianzi" (adjective, Chinese: 有面子) will promote one's dignity, authority and respect from others, especially between strangers in social interaction. An explicit expression of higher social status also is a benefit to expand their social network (sometimes, it can even earn more business chance). Due to this culture of china, a lot of Chinese luxury consumers are not only consuming the original value of the product (both material and immaterial products) of the goods but consuming for the additional value from the luxury product: the positional function.

Several manufactured products attain the status of "luxury goods" due to their

design, quality, durability or performance that are remarkably superior to the comparable substitutes (Parker, and Doyle, 2018). Although luxury goods are independent of the goods' quality, consumers generally considered luxury goods have the highest quality in the market. Some goods are perceived as luxurious by the public simply because they play a role of status symbols as such goods tend to signify the purchasing power of those who acquire them. While not necessarily being better (in quality, performance, or appearance) than their less expensive substitutes, these items are purchased with the primary purpose of displaying the wealth of the buyers. In socio-economic, this phenomenon is called conspicuous consumption.

Veblen goods are named after American economist Thorstein Veblen, who first identified conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899). Luxury goods are often synonymous with superior goods and Veblen goods. Veblen goods are types of luxury goods for which the quantity demanded increases as the price increases, an apparent contradiction of the law of demand. Consumers prefer more of the good as its price rises, which result in an upward-sloping demand curve. Due to the rare, high quality, and expensive luxury goods feature, almost all the luxury good has the positioning function. A clear expression of higher social status will gain more dignity, authority and respect from others. Also, luxury goods consumers will have satisfaction through others' envy and jealousy because of luxury products' rare feature.

Also functioning as positional goods, they include expensive wines, jewellery, fashion-designer handbags, and luxury cars which are in demand because of, rather than despite, the high prices asked for them. Besides, the luxury goods' positional feature makes them desirable as status symbols in the practices of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure. Wong and Ahuvia (1998, p5) stated that Western consumers would place higher importance on hedonic experience; South-east Asian consumers will put more emphasis on publicly

visible possessions. They also state Asians, relative to Westerners, would place more importance on the symbolic value, at least when consuming in public.

Consuming for Mianzi is one of the most critical culture drivers for Chinese luxury goods consumers. Chinese people believe that to own luxury goods is "Having Mianzi" (adjective, Chinese: 有面子), as the luxury product can promote one's dignity, authority and reputation. Chinese luxury consumers turned the meaning of luxury goods from a rare, high quality guaranteed, expensive goods to a functional good. Whether having Mianzi becomes an essential feature for a product or brand. This culture difference is significant for the ILA's branding and design strategies because the meaning of luxury Mobility is changed in the Chinese cultural context.

## **2.5 Summary**

This study agrees with the definition of culture from a cultural-anthropological perspective: culture is the shared and learned behaviour patterns held by a community or group of people (Tylor, 1874, Useem, et al., 1963). The concept of Culture became one of the essential ideas of anthropology since E. B. Tylor's time. Cultural anthropologists argue that individuals or groups acquire culture (such as knowledge, belief, art) through the learning process of civilisation and socialization. Thus, people living in different environments (e.g., in different geographic circumstance or age) will often have distinctive cultures (Cunha, 2014).

The semiotics theory overview section started with a discussion of the sign models, which describes what consists of a sign. The two mainstream models of the sign are addressed directly by Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce, two men who are regarded as the pioneers who offer the

foundation of semiotics by contemporary semioticians. Semiotics is an inquiry and analysis mode widely accepted and used in the design and branding industry. Based on the evidence currently available, it seems fair to suggest that semiotics is a useful tool to understand the cultural drivers that help decode and encode cultural elements (Sabet<sup>25</sup>, 2014).

Mobility has a far smaller scope as it focuses on discussing human's movement compared with transport or transportation. The term mobility in this study refers to individuals and groups' geographical mobility, whether by foot, by the animal, or by mechanical means. It is an ability to move or be moved freely and easily from place to place. In recent years, the concept of mobility becomes notable in the western automotive industry. This study limited the research scope: this study will mainly focus on discussing personal land mobility.

This study will use Saussure's Model of sign to understand the meaning of "luxury mobility" in Chinese culture. Firstly, this study will apply syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis to investigate "luxury mobility" in Chinese culture. After understanding the syntagmatic structure, this research could uncover which, how and why a particular signifier stands for "luxury mobility". Secondly, this research will discuss the textual codes of "luxury", the social codes of "mobility" and the interpretative codes of the dominant ideology in China (also understood as a myth). Finally, the study will uncover the meaning of "luxury mobility" in Chinese culture.

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<sup>25</sup> Denise Sabet is Vice GM and executive director in Lab brand, Shanghai.

## Chapter III Methodology

Kumar (2011, p.88) defines research as "a systematic examination of clinical observations to explain and find answers for what you perceive". This study seeks to understand the cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" in China via semiotics. To achieve this in a manner satisfactory at the level of PhD study, an expertly formulated methodology is required. However, within design research (and the broader scope of social sciences), a range of different research styles is possible. Research undertaken within an institution is the systematic procedure of enquiry, using appropriate methods, through which a researcher contributes to that institution's body of knowledge. This research seeks to contribute to the knowledge of "luxury mobility" in China to academia. Within academia, the contribution is achieved by using research methods to collect information (through a useful methodology), confirm the philosophical position of the researcher, and produce an original insight. Chapter III Methodology is structured as follows:

3.1 What is research? - This section introduced the definition and the purpose of real-world research.

3.2 Research paradigms - This section introduced the definition of ontology, epistemology, methodology; and then this section introduced the definition of positivism and interpretivism.

3.3 Formulating the research methodology - This section introduced a semi-structured interview as a research method.

3.4 In-depth interview design - This section introduced the participant selection method in study, and how the author designed the interview (the questionnaire's design to collect the participant's necessary information; the design of interview procedure).

3.5 Interview analysis method - This section introduced the application of

"structured semantic analysis" as the Interview analysis method. Besides, the author gave an example of the interview analysis method in this section.

3.6 Summary - This section is a summary of the methodology chapter.

### 3.1 What is research?

Dawkins defines social research as "the deliberate study of other people to increase understanding and/or add to knowledge" (Dawkins, 2006, ix). Robson and McCartan argue that real-world research is "one seeking answers to problems faced in... people-related fields, rather than being concerned primarily with advancing academic discipline" (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p.17). It is within this field of people's research, rather than the hard sciences that the majority social-sciences and design research occur. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of Real-World Research, Robson provides a table classifying the four core purposes in real-world research. These are (see Table 3.1.1):

Table 3.1.1 The introduction of four core purposes research.

Purposes	Introduction
<b>Exploratory</b>	Exploratory research is undertaken in fields where there is a lack of established knowledge. As a result, it is a useful purpose when the concern is to develop foundations for further research.
<b>Descriptive</b>	Descriptive research involves a more rigorous approach to making careful documentation of a phenomenon. Here an existing knowledge base and theory is added to or proven true, by using a set of more precise methods (e.g., this typically involves measurement and quantitative methods).
<b>Explanatory</b>	Explanatory research concerns why a perceived phenomenon (or set of phenomena) occurs (or coincide). Here investigations are typically geared more towards the identification (and isolation) of causal relationships between phenomena.

## Emancipatory

Emancipatory research is concerned with enacting (through the research) positive influence in the field being studied; emancipating, empowering or emboldening those immediately involved during, and following the research activity.

(Source: Robson and McCartan, 2016)

Each of these purposes involves a different approach to research, such as the formulation of questions, methodology, and selecting more appropriate data collection methods.

However, Robson notes that a research project is not limited exclusively to a single one of these aims. The purpose of the research project may itself change in the process of it being conducted. Additionally, Robson states that:

*"While one purpose will usually be central to a project, a particular study may be concerned with more than one purpose" (Robson and McCartan, 2016).*

Thus, a research project may be understood as having a primary purpose - which is achieved through several smaller objectives (e.g., describing a phenomenon it may first need to be explored and explained, vice versa, or any combination of the above).

Methods alone cannot produce significance in data; they only generate data. It is within the structure of a methodology (itself within a research paradigm), where methods (e.g., surveys, focus groups, workshops) yield meaningful findings that accomplish research objectives. The researcher must be aware of the larger research paradigm they subscribed to before a methodology can be effectively constructed.



Table 3.1.2: The sub-purposes of four core purposes research

Purposes	Type	Sub-purposes
<b>Exploratory</b>	Almost exclusively of flexible design	1. To find out what is happening, particularly in little-understood situations.
		2. To see new insights
		3. To ask questions
		4. To assess phenomena in a new light
		5. To generate ideas and hypothesis for future research
<b>Descriptive</b>	May be of flexible and/or fixed design	1. To portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations
		2. Requires extensive previous knowledge of the situation to be researched or described, so that you know appropriate aspects on which to gather information
<b>Explanatory</b>	May be of flexible and/or fixed design	1. Seeks an explanation of a situation or problem, traditionally but not necessarily in the form of causal relationships
		2. To explain patterns relating to the phenomenon being research
		3. To identify relationships between aspects of the phenomenon
<b>Emancipatory</b>	Almost exclusively of flexible design	1. To create opportunities and the will to engage in social action

(Source: Robson, 2002, pp.59-60)

### 3.2 Research paradigms

As cited in this sense, the term paradigm is derived from Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Here paradigms are described as specific scientific knowledge structures, which radically transform in "paradigm shifts" when scientific breakthroughs occur. Specifically, Kuhn describes a paradigm as "achievements," which share two characteristics (1970, p.10):

- 1: Sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity;
- 2: Sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve.

Kuhn uses the term to refer to specific fields (e.g., the transformation of essential principles in astronomy from Copernican to Galilean models). Thus, to Kuhn, paradigms are widely accepted structures of knowledge (core beliefs, practices, and methods of enquiry) reinforced through periods of "normal science" activity. During these periods, a paradigm's components and fundamental tenets are better defined and supported through a broad research concern. Kuhn described "paradigm shifts," wherein a discovery (typically emerging from an anomaly being found in the previous paradigm) becomes a transformative catalyst for establishing an entirely new paradigm of thinking. Adherence to a paradigm; is essentially the subscription to a set of beliefs that shape the kinds of knowledge-seeking activity being undertaken.

#### 3.2.1 Ontology, epistemology and methodology

However, for this review, a research paradigm refers to the fundamental position the researcher places themselves with scientific knowledge - known and unknown. Terre Blanche argues that a research paradigm comprises three parts: ontology, epistemology, and methodology (2008). The research structure

must represent a coherent logic from its paradigmatic position to the selection and deployment of the research methods.

Guba states that ontology refers to the fundamental and total nature of a phenomenon; or its fundamental underlying truth. The ontology may include aspects of the phenomenon's existence beyond what researchers, or humans in general, understand. Thus, ontology refers to the fundamental truth, including the current limits upon its comprehension.

Furthermore, Guba describes epistemology as the nature of knowing a phenomenon. It is how the ontological nature becomes understood and then known; through our senses, logic, measurement, cognition, and explanation (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Methodology refers to the epistemological strategy, which through we may bring the ontology of phenomena into knowing. Thus, methodology comprises a set of data collection procedures configured to achieve the research goal (Terre. B. et al., 2008, p.6). Thus, the research paradigm's statement reflects the selection of a set of fundamental beliefs held by researchers. Research paradigm shapes their approach to existing knowledge, the new knowledge they uncover through their research, and how best to set about acquiring and describing it.

Throughout history, within social and real-world research, many research paradigms have been established and compete against each other in the field of social science and real-world research (and thus design). What follows is a description of these fundamental positions for this research; and their impact upon ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

### 3.2.2 Positivism vs interpretivism (constructivism)

In the broadest terms, the researcher must take a position between the

fundamental theoretical positions of positivism and interpretivism (also referred to as constructivism). As above, this decision places the researcher in a particular relationship to the knowledge they seek to generate.

### 3.2.2.a Positivism

Positivism focuses on uncovering objective knowledge. This approach is based upon the philosophy of Auguste Comte, and particularly his book: *A General View of Positivism*. This position's drive is a desire to "form... a satisfactory synthesis of all human conceptions" (Comte and Bridges, 1909, p.1). From Auguste Comte's view, the social world (the behaviour of humans alone or together in groups) is precise as the natural world - subject to fundamental laws of behaviour and external to human perception. Comte thus set out to study people's social world in the same way the natural world had been previously - through challenging scientific observation and measurement. It is noteworthy that when Auguste Comte formulated the field of sociology, he had initially wished to call it "social physics."

Thus, to positivists, to acquire knowledge of the social world, one must identify the unifying laws that shape social behaviour. Auguste Comte states the completion of two aims are: "to generalise our scientific conceptions, and to systematise the art of social life" (Comte and Bridges, 1909, p.1).

Generalisation refers to the extension of already established laws more broadly, where applicable. In doing so, knowledge from proximal fields is brought together to be in service to each other. For example, a historically useful audio media theory might be extended to television - through generalisation based on their similarities. Systemisation, on the other hand, refers to the application of scientific methods and the principles of positivist scientific research to study (and thus "systematise") the social world. Through systemisation, positivists approach new phenomena (where generalisation is inapplicable) through

established scientific methods - bringing the phenomenon in question into a known system of knowledge production and criticism (Comte and Bridges, 1909). Where either two activities are undertaken, four principles of positivist research are (see Table 3.2.1):

Table 3.2.1: Four principles of positivist research

<b>Principles</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Determinism</b>	Other phenomena generate a phenomenon;
<b>Empiricism</b>	The collection of evidence to verify a hypothesis;
<b>Parsimony</b>	A phenomenon is explained in its simplest terms;
<b>Generality</b>	The local phenomenon may be perceived to reflect upon the wider world.

As a consequence of these principles, the positivist process of epistemology begins with a set of theoretical underpinnings, a representative of the belief that an underlying system of laws governs the social phenomena being studied. From this, a hypothesis is deduced, positing how the phenomena will follow patterns predicted by previously observed laws.

Empirical measurement is used to determine the extent that the informed hypothesis is proven to be true. Parsimony, determinism, and generality ensure that any phenomena studied are understood: independently (in its simplest form) and in its place with a broader system (both in its deterministic effect upon other parts, and in its general relation to other knowledge). While the ultimate belief of positivism is that there is a fundamental underlying system of laws which govern all phenomena, which occur - the position concedes that no knowledge of this system can be considered complete, or absolute. In the *Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Popper states that this concession is inevitable:

*"The old scientific ideal of episteme - of certain, demonstrable knowledge has proven to be an idol. The demand for scientific objectivity makes it inevitable that every scientific statement must remain tentative forever. It may indeed be corroborated, but every corroboration is relative to other statements which, again, are tentative" (Popper, K.R. 2002, p.280)*

As a result, the positivist theory is never viewed as final - but instead, tentative, quasi-absolute and subject to modification as additional information comes to be known; or new methods of measurement become available. Within social sciences, there has been significant opposition to the application of positivism. Keat argues that this is often a consequence of a conflation of critiques against positivism as a singular entity when these arguments should have been levelled upon several distinct approaches (Keat, 2013). Despite this, positivism in the social sciences may primarily be criticised for its lack of consideration for individuals' subjective experience and the reduction of their input to numerical instances that affirm or contradict a stated hypothesis. Guba presents several criticisms, the most significant of which are summarised below (see Table 3.2.2)

Table 3.2.2: The key criticisms that Guba presents

Key criticisms	Explanation
<b>1. Exclusion of meaning and purpose</b>	Humans, unlikely objects, "cannot be understood without reference to the meanings attached by human actors to their activities." As such, there is a requirement for a qualitative dimension to research with the human.
<b>2. Disjunction of grand theories with local contexts</b>	The etic (outsider) theory brought to bear on an inquiry by an investigator... may have little or no meaning within the emic (insider) view of studied individuals."  The qualitative study encourages the discovery of emic knowledge.

<p><b>3. Inapplicability of general data to individual cases.</b></p>	<p>Statistical data has no relevance to the individual experience. Qualitative data collection highlights the disparity between trends and single actors.</p>
<p><b>4. Exclusion of the discovery dimension in the inquiry.</b></p>	<p>Attempting to verify an existing hypothesis, "glosses over the source of those hypotheses... the discovery process." Here reducing research to verification removes the possibility of uncovering new phenomena.</p>
<p><b>5. The theory-ledness of facts</b></p>	<p>Positivism's statement of hypotheses theory defines the nature of supporting facts in the research. This feature provides no likelihood that supporting evidence is sought that is independent of the a priori theory and hypothesis. Qualitative research casts the net more comprehensive for the kinds of evidence that may support a hypothesis.</p>
<p><b>6. The underdetermination of theory</b></p>	<p>Known as the problem of induction...; Guba notes that not only may theory shape the kinds of supporting evidence that is found - but that different theory windows may support certain kinds of evidence. In this case, selection of the most applicable theory is arbitrary.</p>
<p><b>7. The value-ledness of facts</b></p>	<p>Just as theories and facts are not independent, neither are values and facts. Indeed, it can be argued that theories are value statements. Thus putative "facts" are viewed not only through a theory window but through a value window as well...</p>
<p><b>8. The interactive nature of the inquirer-inquired into a dyad</b></p>	<p>Positivism places the researcher in an observing relationship with the phenomena studied. With human subjects especially, it is impossible not to interact; and thus, influence findings through research in practice</p>

(Guba, and Lincoln, 1994, p.108)

As above, positivist research operates based on a pre-determined hypothesis being proven to be true or false - to a varying degree. This feature encourages a narrower focus compared to other research paradigms: all suspected variables are accounted for before the hypothesis is made, and all suspected variables are controlled for during the research activity itself. Guba's criticisms highlight vital drawbacks. These are mainly concerned with:

1. A loss of reference to the individual's experience;
2. An overextension of a priori general rules to dynamic and subjective phenomena;
3. The unwieldiness of a priori theory and its determination of findings.

This feature is also reflected in criticism of research methods typically employed for positivist research, wherein the data sought is that which proves or disproves the research hypothesis; with little concern for peripheral research outcomes. In doing so, emergent variables or insights are secondary to identifying and validating an expected effect. As design research, usually research tasks itself to understand and accommodate the needs users as best possible; who may have many uniquely individual and emergent needs. As such, holding a pre-existing theory of a phenomenon and focusing on confirmation is problematic. Thus, contemporary design research in social science typically involves interpretive approaches.

### 3.2.2.b Interpretivism

Interpretivism is inverse of positivism. In the generalisability of the findings, it produces. As such, within the social sciences, research tends to avoid making claims of universality. Sarantakos notes equate to a "failure to acknowledge the contribution of social and cultural mechanisms" (1994, p.41).

While individuals are viewed as reacting uniquely to the social world - the



influence of broader "mechanisms", as above, upon many individuals may result in similar outcomes. In this way; while individuals are viewed as reacting uniquely to the social world - the influence of broader "mechanisms", as above, upon many individuals may result in similar outcomes. By focusing on the individual and their subjectivity alone, the emphasis is taken away from the pervasive nature of broader effects which may be significant. Furthermore, by championing the individual's subjectivity, the interpretive also invests into the perceived accuracy of their perceptions. Schutz also notes that the credibility of people's conceptions of phenomena cannot be tested effectively - and must be viewed as potentially unreliable (Schutz and Natanson, 1967). Sarantakos (1994, p.43) presents other key criticisms which will have to be addressed in this research:

1. *"Adherence to the central elements of interpretive inquiry (intention, reason, motives) is quite difficult to police, and reflective monitoring is not always present."*
2. *"It is not possible to know whether researchers gain a true account of the respondents' meanings, Accounts of the researcher and respondents may vary and be competing."*
3. *"Interpretivist cannot address the factors and conditions that lead to meanings and interpretations, actions, rules, beliefs and the like."*
4. *"Interpretivism is conservatism in that it does not take into account structures of conflicts and hence the possible sources of change".*

Thus, core criticisms of interpretive approaches centre around:

1. The difficulty of interpreting the respondents; both through the difficulty of communication of subjective meanings and their correct interpretation;
2. The primacy of focus on the personal meaning that broader effects affect populations of respondents is secondary to their unique experiences.

As such, this research is poised to take an interpretive position; however, these several concerns must be addressed within the research (e.g., optimising the research; not overstating the scope of the findings).

### **3.3 Formulating the research methodology**

#### 3.3.1 Ontology and epistemology

The first task for this study to formulating the research methodology is to confirm the ontological and epistemological perspective. It is useful to restate the research questions and identify the most suitable ontological and epistemological perspective to take. The research questions addressed in this research are the following. The primary research question is: What are the cultural meanings of “luxury mobility” in Chinese culture? Furthermore, how do these cultural meanings inform design and branding strategy for the ILA brand in the Chinese market? The secondary research questions are:

1. What are the denotative meanings of “luxury mobility” in Chinese culture?
2. What are the connotative meanings of “luxury mobility” in Chinese culture?
3. What are the myth meanings of “luxury mobility” in Chinese culture?
4. How these meanings of “luxury mobility” are connected with consumers’ preferences, attitudes, and choices in China?

The research question would suggest that an interpretive approach is the most appropriate position to take (thus primarily drawing upon qualitative methods). This decision is informed by the notion that:

1. The research area is fledgeling (the semiotic meaning of luxury mobility in

China); therefore, a Chinese traditional luxury mobility literature review is required.

2. Consuming luxury auto car is likely to be subjectively motivated practice;
3. As design research, there is a latent bias toward exploration rather than verification.

### 3.3.2. Link between research purposes and data collection methods

Specific data collection methods are more suitable than others for achieving each research purpose (Robson and McCartan above). For example, to achieve a description, it is more suitable to use quantitative means of measurement. Because quantitative data and analyses provide the researcher with a means to report the strength of the experimental effect. Thus, findings, analyses and discussions necessarily involve reporting how strongly the research hypothesis has been proven correct. In this way, quantitative approaches are more precise means of description; utilising methods that generate numerical data (e.g., numerical surveys, rating scales, experimental measurement).

To explore a phenomenon is more of an open-ended purpose. Here qualitative methods surveys (unless designed to be open-ended) may constrain the research's potential to uncover unanticipated facets of the phenomenon being studied. Like this, in-depth interviews, ethnographies, observation and focus groups are used to gather as much data around the phenomena being studied as possible. Qualitative methods surveys may be done before a theoretical framework is strictly applied - to develop a more general understanding of the studied phenomena.

Similarly, methods are needed to isolate (and measure) the perceived causality of two coinciding phenomena from any other external influences. Depending on the nature of the phenomena studied - a mixture of the above may be used. For

example, two phenomena' relatedness may first be explored through observation, ethnography and focus groups. Then the extent of their relationship may then be measured through experimental means.

To emancipate, methods are required which embed the research within the context of the phenomena and empower relevant stakeholders. Establishing the overall purpose of this research activity, and the secondary purposes (which might be considered research objectives) can help inform the optimal methodological design beyond the fundamentally interpretive epistemology it will take (Hendry, 2017, p.121). Notably, the purpose of this research is not emancipatory. However, the research enterprise's logical structure does touch upon the three other core purposes of real-world research. These purposes can be derived from the primary research question (and sub-questions):

The primary research question:

1. **Description** of cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" in Chinese culture;
2. **Exploring** how these meanings can inform the guidelines of design and branding strategy for the ILA brand in the Chinese market.

The secondary research questions:

1. **Exploration** of the denotative meanings of "luxury mobility";
2. **Exploration** of the connotative meanings of "luxury mobility";
3. **Exploration** of find out the myth meanings of "luxury mobility";
4. **Description** of the relationship between the cultural meaning of "luxury mobility" and consumers' preferences, attitudes, and choices in China.

Each of the above questions requires its section of the research activity:

1. The denotative meanings of "luxury mobility" in Chinese culture will be **explored** through a suitable qualitative data collection process with luxury

users.

2. The connotative meanings of "luxury mobility" in Chinese culture will be **explored** through a suitable qualitative data collection process with luxury users.
3. The myth meanings of "luxury mobility" in Chinese culture will be **explored** through the literature review (ancient Chinese literature and modern research).
4. A **description** of the relationship between cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" and consumers' preferences, attitudes, and choices in China will be achieved through the analysis of (1), (2) and (3).
5. An **exploration** of the ILA brand's new design and branding strategy can be achieved by discussing the relationship identified through (4).

### 3.3.3 Qualitative or quantitative

As suggested above, specific data collection methods are more suitable than others under the umbrella of certain research paradigms. This short section provides further detail on this effect. Generally speaking, a research strategy may comprise quantitative or qualitative, or a combination of the two.

Quantitative methods are preferable, where a large quantity of data is present beforehand, easily captured. Here, knowledge concerning a phenomenon, or coinciding variables is deduced from data via measurement and statistical inference. Thus, data usually are captured in numbers (e.g., via surveys, through scientific measurement using sensors). In this sense, quantitative methods are most appropriate within the positivist paradigm as an established theory base, and a priori hypothesis allows for the measurement and verification of a research claim. The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and the meanings of central themes in the subjects' life world. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale, 1996).

Qualitative methods are preferable, where an existing pool of knowledge in the research area does not exist. These methods produce textual data that is oral - both in terms of various forms of testimony from research participants, and themes which emerge. A qualitative research interview seeks to cover both a factual and a meaning level. However, it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaning level. (Kvale, 1996). Thus, data usually are captured in the form of text (e.g., via interviews, focus groups, case study, observation, ethnography).

This research will use qualitative research methods and selected the interview as the most appropriate qualitative data collection method in this study. Interviews are beneficial for getting the story behind a participants' experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. McNamara (1999) argues that interviews may be useful as follow-up to individual respondents to questionnaires (e.g., investigating their responses further).

Among the three leading types of the interview (i.e., structured interview; semi-structured interview; unstructured interview), this research will apply the semi-structured interviews method. This selection is to ensure that while the scope of the data collected explores, with as much depth as possible, the nature of respondents' experiences - there is an underlying structure, which frames the kinds of findings (McCartan and Robson, 2016, p. 278):

*"Interviewers have their shopping list of topics and want to get responses to them, but they have considerable freedom in the sequencing of questions, in their exact wording, and in the amount of time and attention given to different topics".*

#### 3.3.4 Why in-depth interview?

This research will use qualitative research methods and selected the interview

as the most appropriate qualitative data collection method in this study. Interviews are beneficial for getting the story behind a participants' experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. McNamara (1999) argues that interviews may be useful as follow-up to individual respondents to questionnaires (e.g., investigating their responses further).

The semi-structured interview allows the research to maintain a broad enough scope for participants to offer unexpected insights about their practices; while providing a rationale to the questions that provide adequate structure to the activity. The semi-structured interview also allows the participants to express their views, attitude, and opinion in their languages, and the interviewer does not insert his personal opinion during the conversation.

Thus, this method can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data to help this research to identify the semiotics of luxury mobility in China. Meanwhile, this method can explain how the cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" connected to automobiles' consumer preferences in China. Besides, the structured interview cannot get participants' explicit opinions of luxury mobility. The participants of the unstructured interview may not provide reliable qualitative data, as the unstructured interview is arguably hard to control (e.g., time and interview topic).

### **3.4 In-depth interview design**

This section outlines the interview process. This process was used in all the interviews with ILC owners, and in general, was based on McCracken's (1988b) long interview technique. The interview progressed through the four steps sequentially: the interview was scheduled, conducted, analysed by itself, and then compared with other interviews.

### 3.4.1 Participant selection

The objective of the interview was to explore the role of semiotics in ILC purchases. The target population, therefore, was a Chinese buyer that already owned an ILC. The cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" in China can be understood along two axes:

The first one is geography conditions (cities by tiers, as they are organised along with the size of the luxury markets). According to the report by McKinsey & Company (2013, p.24, see Table 3.4.1), two cities from Tier 1, and nine cities from Tier 2 occupied 51% shares of the Chinese luxury consuming market in 2010. Also, the increase in consumption in Tier 2 and 3 cities is driving the trend towards premiumisation. Thus, Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities will be leaders in consumption of premium and luxury products (Nielsen, 2014).

Table 3.4.1: 2010 luxury market shares of Chinese cities

City Tier	Number of City	The share of Chinese Luxury goods market	Cities
Tier 1 cities	2	21%	Beijing, Shanghai
Tier 2 cities	9	30%	E.g., Tianjin, Chongqing, Foshan, Shenzhen.
Tier 3 cities	25	25%	E.g., Xi'an, Taiyuan. Dalian.
Tier 4 cities	620 (Roughly)	22%	E.g., Lanzhou, Tieling

(Source: McKinsey & Company, 2013, p.24)



The second one is the Chinese consumer behaviour<sup>26</sup>.

1. For the luxury goods market, post-80s, post 90s buyers are distinct in their attitudes and purchase motivations compared to middle-aged buyers.
2. According to the report by Nielsen (2014), there is 51% repurchase buyer for the general Chinese automobile market, 34% Post 80s/90s and 45% Female occupies the total Chinese market.
3. For general Chinese automobile market, the sedan is the most popular car type, which occupies 63% of Chinese car market (see Figure 3.4.1).

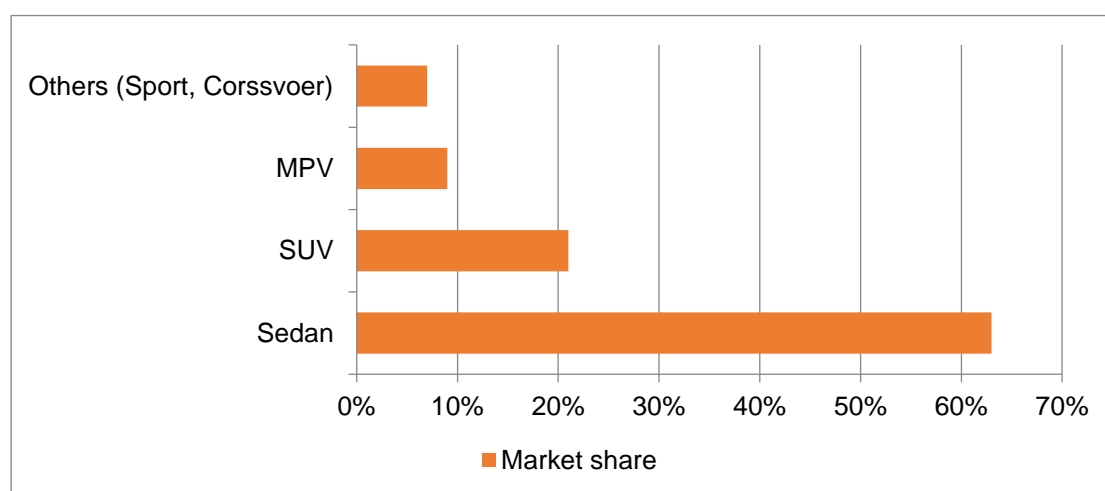


Figure 3.4.1: 2014 Passenger vehicle sales by type in China

(Source: EU SME Centre, 2015, p.12)

To collect reliable, comparable qualitative data, the ideal participants are (recently) ILC owners. The ideal participants' age groups should cover Post 80s/90s (20-30), middle-age (30-40 and 40-50). Besides, at least 33% of the ideal participants should be female (or the male ILC owner's partner, such as their girlfriend or wife). Due to the time limitation, the author cannot interview all

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<sup>26</sup> The Chinese consumer here refers to Chinese luxury goods consumer, and Chinese car consumer.

Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities' participants. Thus, this research will select all Tier 1 cities (Beijing and Shanghai), one city from Tier 2 and another one city from Tier 3 as the geography condition for the participants (see Table 3.4.2).

Table 3.4.2: Participant selection summary (A)

Location		Age groups			Total
City Tier	City	20-30	30-40	40-50	
Tier 1	Beijing	2 Males 1 Female	2 Males 1 Female	2 Males 1 Female	9
	Shanghai	2 Male 1 Female	2 Male 1 Female	2 Male 1 Female	9
Tier 2	Tianjin	1 Male 1 Female	1 Male 1 Female	1 Male 1 Female	6
Tier 3	Dalian	1 Male 1 Female	1 Male 1 Female	1 Male 1 Female	6
<b>Total</b>		10	10	10	30

Also, Chinese consumers have to pay for very expensive tax (the tax fee included in the price of the ILCs) when they are purchasing the ILCs. Thus, the costs of most ILCs in the Chinese market are far higher than in Europe and the U.S. price (see Table 3.4.3). According to McKinsey & Company (2012), Chinese consumers define the top 9% of automobiles in the Chinese market as the luxury car. Thus, most of ILA bands' models can be defined as an ILC in the Chinese market. Moreover, these models can be divided into different classes according to their targeting market. Thus, in this study, the category of ILCs can be divided into four levels:

1. ELC: Entry-level luxury, or compact executive cars (e.g., BMW 3 Series, Lexus IS series).

2. MLC: Mid-size luxury, or executive cars (e.g., BMW 5 series; Lexus ES series Jaguar X.F.).
3. HLC: High-end luxury, or full-size luxury cars (e.g., BMW 7 series; Jaguar X.J.).
4. Super luxury cars (e.g., Lamborghini, Bentley),

Table 3.4.3: Price examples of ILCs in the Chinese market

Brand	Series	Model	Lowest price in China (GBP)	The highest price in China (GBP)
<b>BMW</b>	3 series	320	32,800	39,680
	5 series	520	43,560	45,700
		525	46,660	69,860
		528	55,060	65,560
	7 series	730	89,800	102,800
		740	118,800 (72,060 in UK)	143,800
<b>Lexus</b>	IS	250	37,500	39,980
		250 F Sport	40,980	40,980
		250	34,800	44,900
	ES	300h	37,800	49,900
		350	55,000	65,400
<b>Jaguar</b>	XF	XF	51,800	80,800
	XJ	XJL	79,800 (61,690 in UK)	89,800
		XJL SC	89,800	142,800
		XJL SC 5.0	222,800	242,800

(Source: autohome.com, 2016)

This study selects three ILA brands from three countries: BMW from German, Lexus from Japan, Jaguar from British to make the analysis and comparison phase of the research more accurate. BMW, Jaguar, and Lexus are the leading ILA brands globally, representing three different brandings and design strategies from three different countries. The models that participants owned in this study should also cover ELC, MLC, and HLC. Since there is an excellent possibility that the researcher cannot recruit the super-luxury car owners, the ideal participants could be the owners of these models (see Table 3.4.4):

Table 3.4.4: Models selection for the ideal participants

ILA Class	The price in China (GBP)	Brand	ILA Class	Models
<b>ELA</b>	32,800-44,900	BMW	3 Series	E.g., 320
		Lexus	IS	E.g., 250
			ES	E.g., ES 300
<b>MLC</b>	37,800-80,800	BMW	5 Series	E.g., 525
		Lexus	ES	E.g., ES 300h
		Jaguar	XF	E.g., XF
<b>HLC</b>	89,800-242,800	BMW	7 Series	E.g., 730
		Jaguar	XJ	XJL

(Source: autohome.com, 2016)

As mentioned in Section 1.1, BMW has more market competitiveness than Lexus and Jaguar (see Table 1.1.3 and 1.1.4 in Chapter 1). Thus, participant selection can be designed (see Table 3.4.5). This research will use a non-random sampling method, as the ideal participants need to fit the conditions mentioned above. Also, snowball sampling will be a potential method as the participant may identify potential participants for this research (c.f. Heffner, 2007). This research will collaborate with Chinese automotive dealers to locate

the penitential participate (This study will offer a marketing report about Chinese ILC consumers' preference to the retailer one year later).

Table 3.4.5: Participant selection summary (B)

	ELA	MLA	HLA	Total
<b>BMW</b>	6	4	8	18
<b>Lexus</b>	4	4	0	8
<b>Jaguar</b>	0	2	2	4
<b>Total</b>	10	10	10	30

### 3.4.2 Interview design

For uncovering the cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" in China through the interview, the study used various techniques. One of the most effective techniques was deflection (Adler and Adler 2002), a method used when subjects are uncomfortable with themselves as the object of study. Deflection shifts discussion from the respondent's behaviour and opinions to the behaviour and opinion of others. The researcher used an interview protocol to guide the discussion in the interviews (see Table 3.4.6).

Before the interview starts, the researcher will send the Information Sheets and Consent Forms to all participants (a copy of the Information Sheets is included in Appendix I; a copy of the Consent Forms is included in Appendix II). The researcher will inform the participants this study is interested in understanding "why they purchased their ILCs". Following the interview, the researcher will debrief the interview procedure and answer the questions if participants want to ask.

Table 3.4.6: Interview procedures

Section	Procedures
Before the interview starts	Search and identify the participants; Introducing self and this study (also send the Information Sheets and the Consent Forms to the participants);
	Confirm whether the participants will participate in or not; If yes, Design the timetable of all interviews;
	Select a suitable time and location for the participants;
	Inform the time and locations and confirm with participants;
	Send the prepared questionnaire to the participants;
	Re-confirm with the participants (two days before the interview).
During the interview	Welcome participant. Let participant read and sign the Consent Form, then start briefing;
	Start audio recording. Start with easy, familiar questions. Use emotionally neutral and encouraging interview skills (e.g., nodding, smiling, looking interested).
At the end of each interview	Inquire them if there is additional information they would like to offer;
	Thank participant for their participation;
	Record ends. Make notes immediately after the interview about observations.
Data protection	Fully anonymised

For uncovering the cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" in China, the following two questionnaires were prepared for the semi-structured interviews, to collect participant's necessary information (see Table 3.4.7):

Table 3.4.7: Two questionnaires for the interview

<b>A: Personal profile</b>	
<b>Participant code</b>	
<b>Living city</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	
<b>Age group</b>	
<b>The luxury class of the purchased car</b>	
<b>Occupation</b>	
<b>The main field of business</b>	

<b>B: The purchased luxury car profile</b>	
<b>Purchased model</b>	(What?)
<b>Purchased time</b>	(When?)
<b>Original budget</b>	(How much?)
<b>Main task or activities</b>	(What?)
<b>Main passengers</b>	(Who?)
<b>Time for made decision</b>	(How long and why?)
<b>Dealership visits</b>	(How many times and why?)
<b>Other owned luxury cars</b>	(Which one, how many and when?)

Besides information on personal profile and, purchased luxury car profile, the researcher will discuss five semi-structured questions with participants in each interview (see Table 3.4.8). Each participant shares the experience of his ILCs buying process such as: why he decided to buy a new car, how the purchase occurred, is any other people were involved in the purchase process. This story was about more than just the participant's car: it was also about the participant himself, an expression of his identity (Heffner, 2007, p.113). Reissman (2002, p.705) argues that "the truths of narrative accounts lie not in their faithful

representation of a past world, but in the shifting connections they forge between past, present and future." This idea fits well with Giddens' (1991) this idea of identity and self-narrative, namely that individuals are continually moulding past and present events into a story that fits with whom they think they are (Heffner, 2007, p.114).

Table 3.4.8: Interview semi-structured questions

<b>C: Personal opinions on "Luxury Mobility"</b>	
<b>1. Could you tell me about your car purchase?</b>	
	1 When?
<b>Follow on:</b>	2 How?
	3 Why?
	4 Have you ever considered any other models/brands?
<b>2. What information did you seek before and during your purchase?</b>	
<b>Follow on:</b>	1 Adverts? Brochures? Website? Friends? Social media?
	2 When?
	3 Why?
<b>3. What were features most important in your purchase decision?</b>	
<b>Follow on:</b>	1 What is the importance of these factors in your consumption preference?
	2 Why?
<b>4. What are the main weaknesses that you identified in your luxury automobile?</b>	
<b>Follow on:</b>	1 What is the importance of these factors in your consumption preference?
	2 Why?



**5. Do you also use any other luxury mobility (e.g., by train, by flight)?**

- Follow**
- on:**
- 1 What?
  - 2 When and Where?
  - 3 Why?

According to (Heffner, 2007, p.117), the discussion of symbolic meaning was the most challenging part of the interview with some participants. Zaltman and Coulter (1995) warn that consumers can have difficulty interpreting and explaining the symbolic meanings attached to a product. Individuals may also deliberately conceal symbolic meanings or downplay their importance. Thus, in some cases, the researcher would revise the protocol questions to make participants more comfortable to understand these interview questions. Meanwhile, the researcher would also adjust techniques based on how effective they were in eliciting respondents' information. Firstly, the researcher would select a technique that is the most appropriate for a particular respondent. If the first method does not yield results, this research will apply other techniques. For example, this research used planned prompts to guide the interview. According to McCracken (1988b) and Heffner (2007, p.113):

*Planned prompts are questions or elicitations used to open up new topics. In contrast, floating prompts are used to sustain discussion of the current topic. Planned prompts were developed before the interview and were applied across all interviews. In contrast, floating prompts were chosen during the interview and often were unique for each participant.*

Each interview will be a quiet, comfortable cafe shop, which can make participants feel relaxed and be happy to share their views. Besides, the place could be inside participants' ILAs (which can collect more accurate data). Other

potential places may be the office room or meeting room of participants' workplaces. Most of the interviews will be one-to-one, as the researcher can be engaged in interviews and encourage the participants to share more key information (there is a possibility that the researcher will interview two participants in one interview such as couples or friends). Each interview will take 80 minutes, which is enough to collect the essential data, and the participant can be concentrate.

### **3.5 Interview analysis method**

The aim of analysing an individual interview was to draw out themes that were important to the ILC purchase and use respondents, including any cultural meanings that emerged. After the researcher finished the in-depth interview, the researcher will investigate the cultural meaning of luxury mobility in Chinese market thorough the following procedure called "structured semantic analysis" (the author given an example of the interview analysis method in this section).

#### *Step 1: Re-listening and Transcriptions*

The researcher has three sources of data from each interview: the background profile tables, an audio recording of the interview, and the field note that taken during the interview. Interview analysis begins with a review of these materials, which includes listening to the interview again. This re-listening process allows us to re-evaluate what we heard during the interview. "Since the interviewer controls the pace of the recording playback, he can slow or repeat sections of discussion that are of particular interest" (Heffner, 2007, p.117). In most cases, this re-listening process can emerge when the new information emerges that the researcher missed during the live session. In this study, the volume of transcription data from the interviews would have been excessive. Thus, according to (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), this study used a selective

transcription (An example shown in Appendix 1). In this technique, researchers transcribe only the information from the interviews that "they consider most relevant" (Heffner, 2007, p.118). An example of an interview transcription is shown in Appendix III.

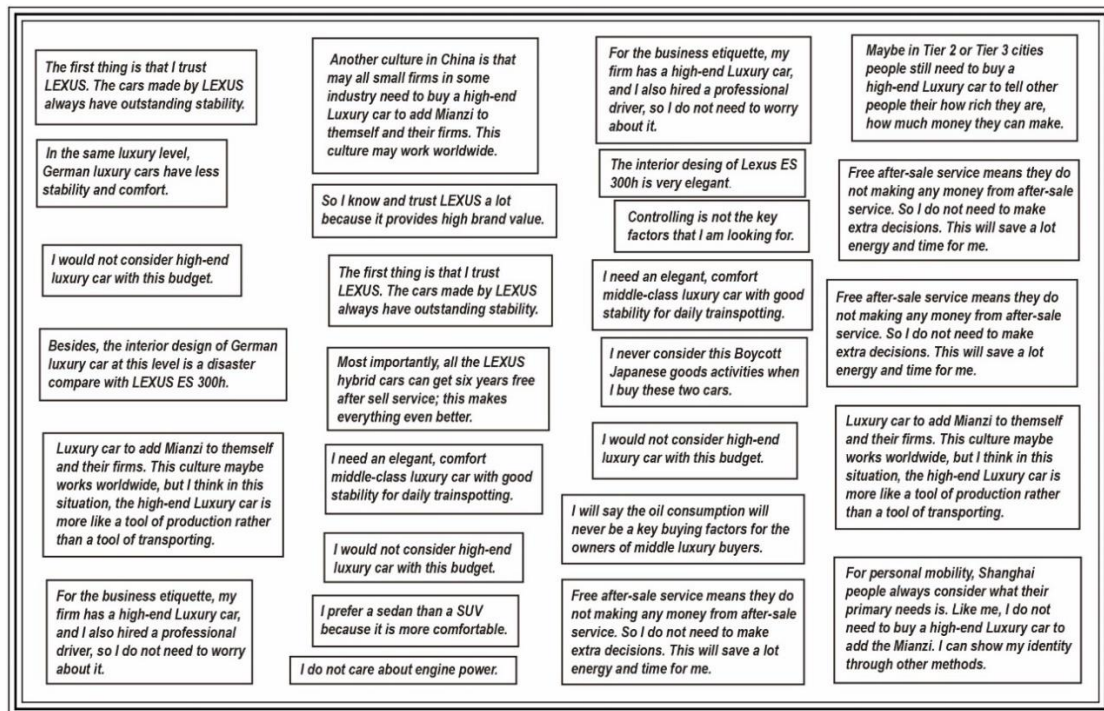


Figure 3.5.1: An example of the decomposed chart

### Step 2: Decomposition interview records

According to both to grounded theory methodology and Chao's method (Chao, 2005), descriptive interview records must be "broken down into discrete parts" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.62). Meanwhile, Mizuno (1988, p.126) argues that to lead to new findings, the researcher should collect verb data through "broken down into.... independent sentences". In this study, the researcher was taking these two methods as reference. Secondly, the researcher transferred each interview record into "decomposed charts." In the decomposed charts, the critical phrases in the interviewee's words were picked up while listening to the interview record. The researcher put each of these critical phrases into an independent, movable word cell on a blank Microsoft Word document. Each

interview record was decomposed this way into a chart filled with these word cells (see Figure 3.5.1).

Step 3: Categorising luxury mobility characteristics and key buying factors

The researcher identified similar keywords in the word cells in the decomposed charts and assigned these words with a specific colour. Then the researcher moved the word cells with similar key phrases together to assemble categories of luxury mobility characteristics (see Figure 3.5.2). According to the context of issues revealed in the categories of luxury mobility characteristics identified in the decomposition charts, proper definitions of axes were assigned to construct the coordinate system for further classifying and positioning the cultural meaning of luxury mobility in the Chinese market.

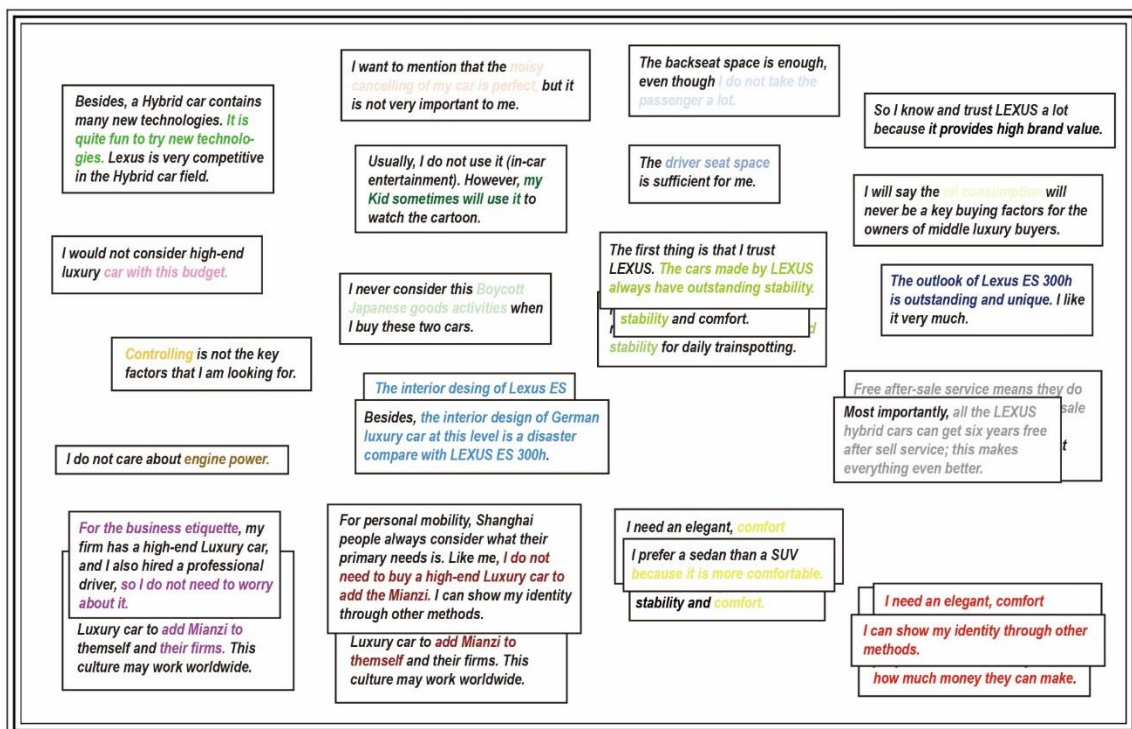


Figure 3.5.2: An example of categorising chart

#### Step 4: Positioning the field facts

In this step, the researcher rated and positioned the word cells on the new coordinate system established in the earlier steps. The resultant coordinate system constructed by the horizontal axis representing the "dimension of purchase decision"; the vertical axis representing the "dimension of luxury mobility" can be useful in analysing the cultural meaning of luxury mobility in the Chinese market (see Figure 3.5.3 and Figure 3.5.4). Each word cell was rated independently on the two axes, using a constant comparative method and comparing each interview records' luxury mobility characteristics (Example is shown in Figure 3.5.5).

The horizontal axis is defined with the dimension of key factors that effects purchase decision on the right; the dimension of non-key factors that effects purchase decision on the left;

1. The dimension of important factors that effects purchase decision on the right;
2. The dimension of unimportant factors that effects purchase decision on the left;
3. The dimension of high-luxury mobility on the top;
4. The dimension of low-luxury mobility on the bottom.

The purpose of establishing such a coordinate system chart (Example shown in Figure 3.5.6) is not to analyse the individual interviewees, but to identify a general pattern of luxury mobility consuming behaviour. Finally, the author will uncover the cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" in the Chinese market. Then the author will discuss a creative design and branding principle to enhance the market competitiveness for ILA brands.

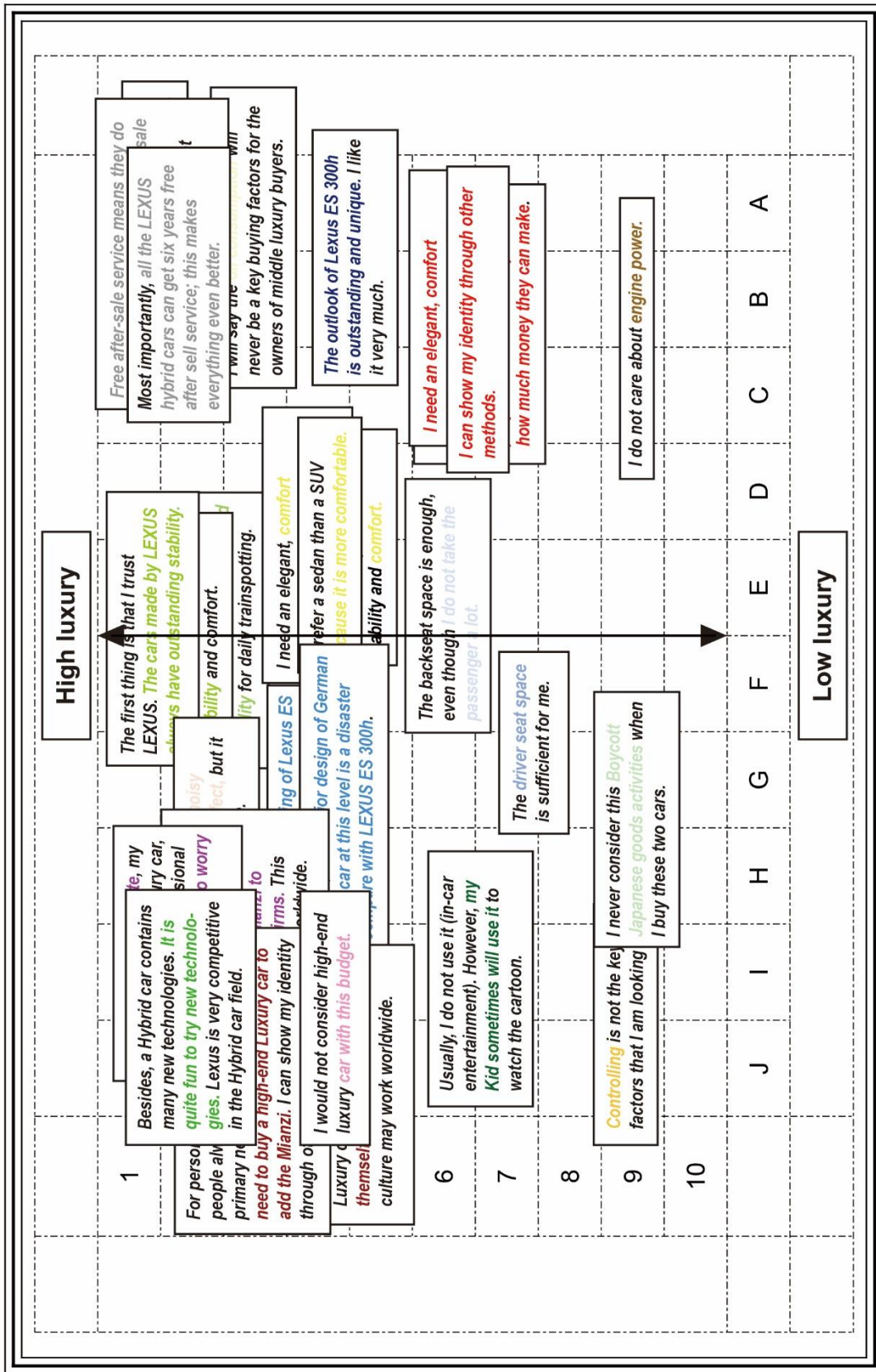


Figure 3.5.3: An example of a coordinate system chart (A)

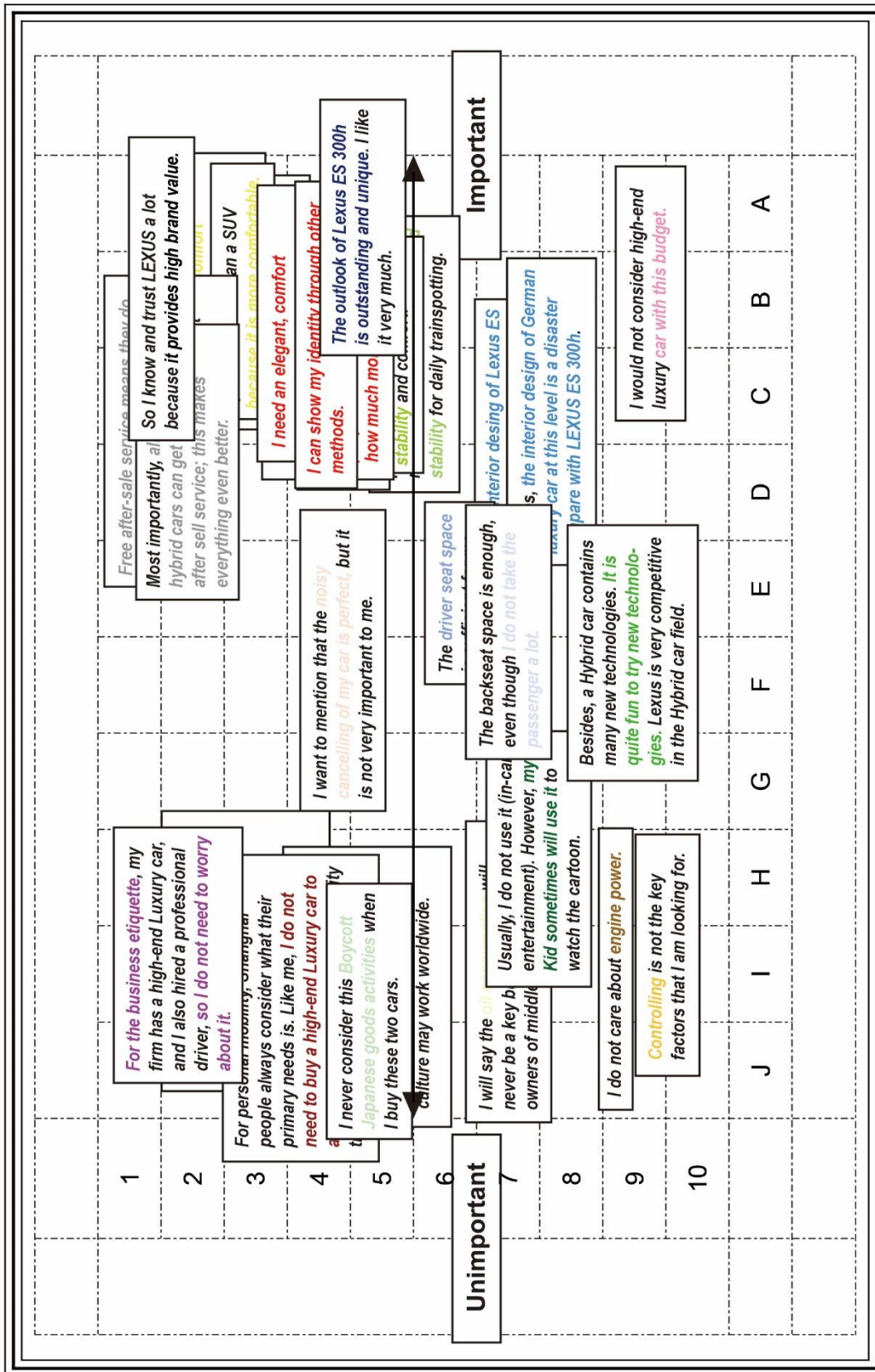


Figure 3.5.4: An example of a coordinate system chart (B)

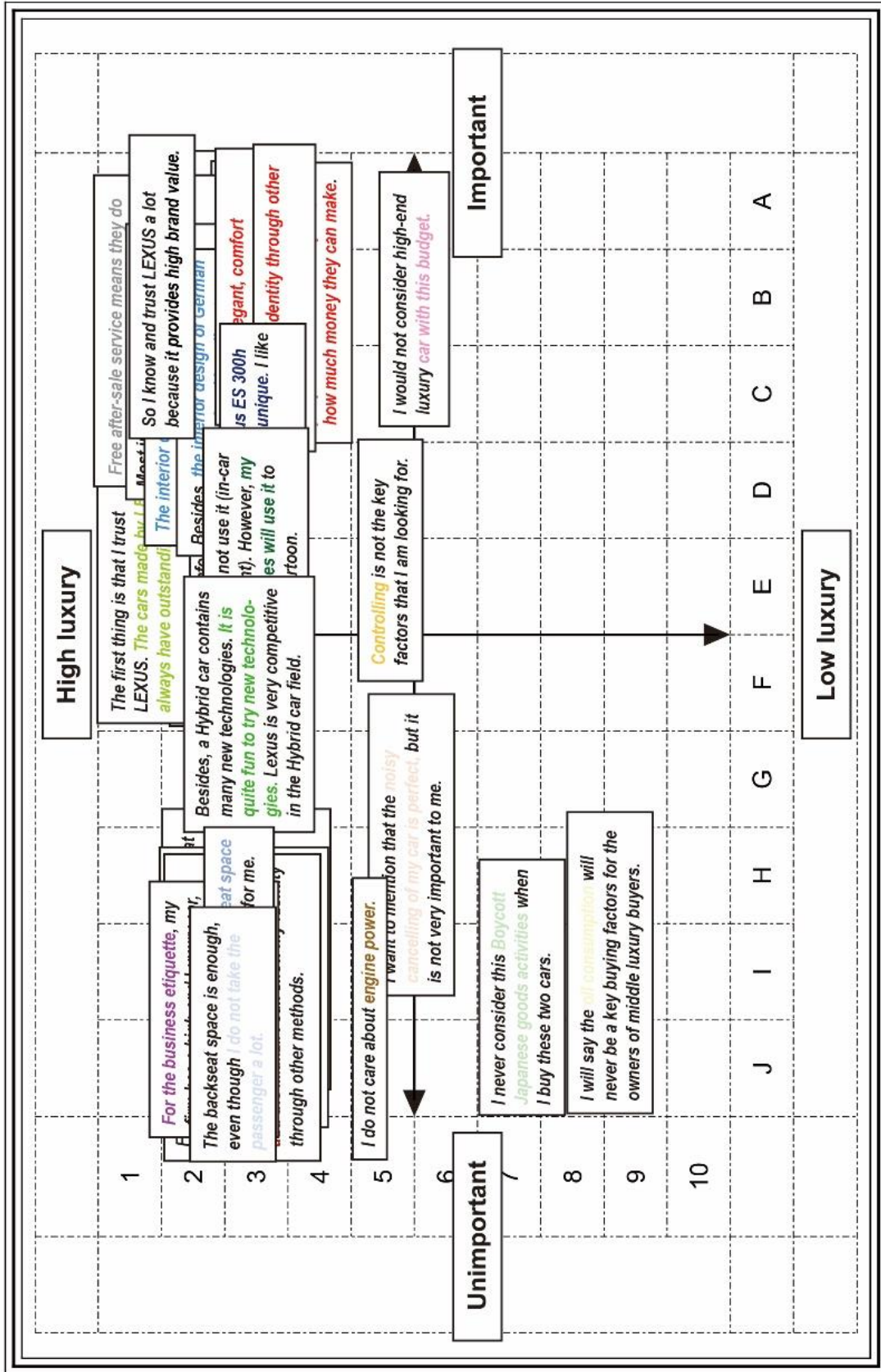


Figure 3.5.5: An example of positioning the field facts chart



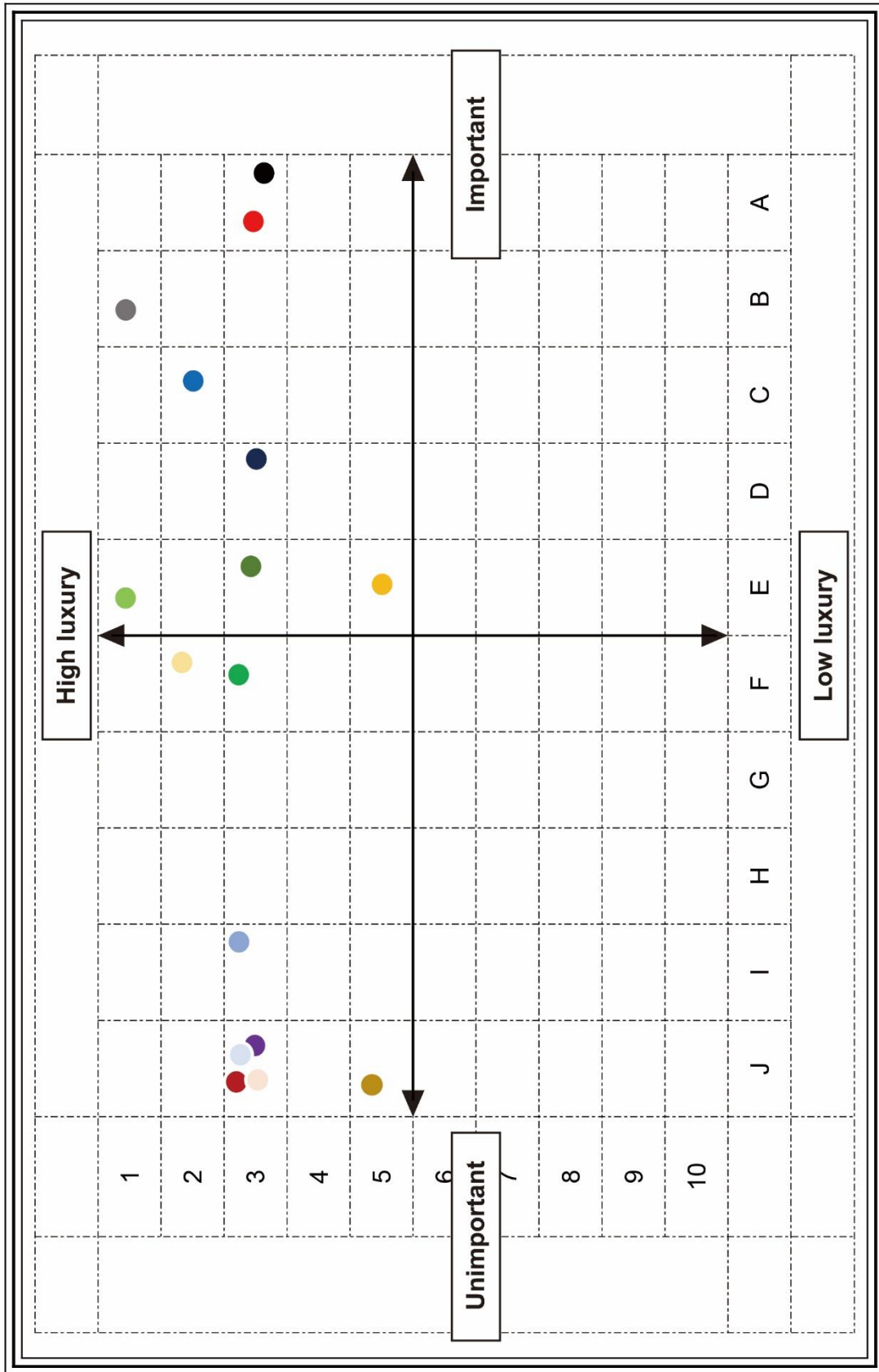


Figure 3.5.6: An example of the decomposed chart

### 3.6 Summary

This chapter starts with a broad review of the methodological considerations associated with contemporary social-studies and design research: the purposes of real-world research, the definitions of Research paradigms (what is ontology, epistemology, methodology; the difference of positivism and interpretivism).

This research will use qualitative research methods and apply the semi-structured interviews method. This selection ensures that while the scope of the data collected explores, with the participants to express their views, attitude, and opinion in their languages, the interviewer does not insert his personal opinion during the conversation. This method can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data to help this research to identify the semiotics of luxury mobility in China. Meanwhile, this method can explain how the cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" connected to automobiles' consumer preferences in China. Besides, the structured interview cannot get participants' explicit opinions of luxury mobility, and the participants of the unstructured interview may not provide reliable qualitative data.

To collect reliable, comparable qualitative data for the interview, the ideal participants are (recently) ILC owners. The ideal participants' age groups should cover Post 80s/90s (20-30), middle-age (30-40 and 40-50). Besides, at least 33% of the ideal participants should be female (or the male ILC owner's partner, such as their girlfriend or wife). This study selects three ILA brands from three counties: BMW from German, Lexus form Japan, Jaguar form British to make the analysis and comparison phase of the research more accurate. The models that participants owned in this study should also cover ELC MLC and HLC. This research will use a non-random sampling method, as the ideal participants need to fit the conditions mentioned above (see Table 3.6.1):

Table 3.6.1: Participant Selection Summary (overall)

Location		Age groups			Total
City Tier	City	20-30	30-40	40-50	
Tier 1	Beijing	2 Males	2 Males	2 Males	9
		1 Female	1 Female	1 Female	
Tier 1	Shanghai	2 Male	2 Male	2 Male	9
		1 Female	1 Female	1 Female	
Tier 2	Tianjin	1 Male	1 Male	1 Male	6
		1 Female	1 Female	1 Female	
Tier 3	Dalian	1 Male	1 Male	1 Male	6
		1 Female	1 Female	1 Female	
<b>Total</b>		10	10	10	30

	ELA	MLA	HLA	Total
<b>BMW</b>	6	4	8	18
<b>Lexus</b>	4	4	0	8
<b>Jaguar</b>	0	2	2	4
<b>Total</b>	10	10	10	30

For uncovering the cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" in China through the interview, the study used various techniques. The researcher used an interview protocol to guide the discussion in the interviews. Meanwhile, the researcher would also adjust techniques based on how effective they were in eliciting respondents' information. Each interview will be a quiet, comfortable cafe shop, making participants feel relaxed and happy to share their views.

The aim of analysing an individual interview was to draw out themes that were important to the ILC purchase and use respondents, including any cultural

meanings that emerged. After the researcher finished the in-depth interview, the researcher will investigate the cultural meaning of luxury mobility in the Chinese market through the following procedure called "structured semantic analysis." Finally, the author gave an example of the interview analysis method in the last section of this chapter.

## **Chapter IV Chinese traditional luxury mobility**

This chapter seeks to uncover the myth meaning of luxury mobility in Chinese culture. Myth meaning is a critical concept in semiotics that refers to the geographical, historical, political and sociological association of a sign (Barthes, 1987). Also, as Chapter II discussed, the myth meaning is above the denotative and connotative level. This chapter will explore luxury mobility in Chinese culture by reviewing Chinese history and ancient literature. Chapter IV Chinese traditional luxury mobility is structured as follows:

4.1 Chinese traditional cultural values - This section is a comprehensive review of Chinese traditional cultural values, especially the dominant ideology in ancient China - Confucianism.

4.2 Yufu system in Chinese Culture - This section introduced the Yufu system and discussed its influence on Chinese culture.

4.3 Chinese traditional luxury mobility - This section introduced two traditional luxury mobility in Chinese culture: two-wheels carriage and Jiao.

4.4 Luxury good in Chinese culture - This section introduced what the luxury good is, and its meaning in traditional Chinese culture.

4.5 Summary - This section is a summary of the Chinese traditional luxury mobility chapter.

### **4.1 Chinese traditional cultural value**

Ancient China was a feudal society dominated by Confucianism philosophy. Confucianism, also known as Ruism (Ru Jia, Chinese: 儒家), is described as a tradition, a philosophy, a religion, a humanistic religion, a way of governing, or only a way of life (Yao, 2000). The core idea of Confucianism focuses on the cultivation of morality and the ethics of interpersonal relationships.

#### 4.1.1 Early Confucianism (The Confucius's and Mencius's)

Confucianism is an ideology developed from the famous Chinese philosopher Confucius (c. 551-479 BC) during the Hundred Schools of Thought period<sup>27</sup>. The ideology of Confucius is to revival the cultural values of the Zhou dynasty<sup>28</sup>. Confucian particularly emphasizes the importance of harmony (both in the family and society). On the morality side, Confucian argued the primary subcategories include Rén (仁), Yì (义), and Lǐ (礼):

1. Rén (benevolence; humaneness) is the spirit of the human being, which expresses as a kindness (Tay, 2010);
2. Yì (righteousness) is the maintenance of justice and morality;
3. Lǐ (proper rites) is the regulation of ritual norms and propriety that determines how a person should appropriately act in their life.

Mencius (372-289 BC) is another pioneer who offered the foundation of Confucianism. Based on Confucius's thought, Mencius developed Four Duan (see Table 4.1.1). It is an ethical system that includes Rén (Benevolent), Yì (Righteous), Lǐ (proper rite), and Zhì (knowledge):

*"Forgiveness and kind-hearted are the starting point for Rén. Can feel guilty when doing the wrong thing is the starting point for Yi. Modesty and humility are the starting point for Lǐ. The judgment of good and evil is the starting point for Zhì (Mencius, Gongsun Chou Shang, 6)."*

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<sup>27</sup> The Hundred Schools of Thought (Chinese: 诸子百家) were philosophies and schools that flourished from the 6th century to 221 BC in ancient China. The thought includes Confucianism, Legalism, Taoism, etc.

<sup>28</sup> Mainly refers to the golden age of Western Zhou Dynasty period, 1046-771 BC.

Table 4.1.1: Four Duan

Four Duan		Philosophers	
Chinese	English	Confucian's explanations	Mencius's explanations
Rén (仁)	Benevolent	Kindness	Forgiveness and kind-hearted
Yì (义)	Righteous	The maintenance of justice and moral principles	Can feel guilty when doing the wrong thing
Lǐ (礼)	Proper rites	The regulation of ritual norms and propriety that determines how a person should appropriately act in their life	Modesty and humility
Zhì (智)	Knowledge	X	The judgment of good and evil

(By the author, according to Cambridge Dictionary, 2013; Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2015)

Early Confucianism emphasises that individuals should take responsibility according to their social class and the family's role on the side of interpersonal relationships' ethics. During the Spring and Autumn period of ancient China, the state of Qi was compelling. Duke Jing of Qi was the ruler of the state of Qi from 547 to 490 BC. There were a lot of thoughtful conversations between Duke Jing of Qi and Confucius. Once Duke Jing of Qi<sup>29</sup> asked Confucius: "What is the correct way to govern the country?" Confucius said: "when the monarch is the monarch, and his minister is the minister; when the father is the father, and his son is the son" (Analects, Yanyuan, 11; The Analects of Confucius Variorum). Confucius argues filial piety and loyalty do not mean that to obey one's father

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<sup>29</sup> Duke Jing of Qi (Chinese: 齐景公; died 490 BC) was the lord of the State of Qi from 547 to 490 BC in the Chinese Spring and Autumn period.

and the monarch unconditionally: people should be able to judge the right and wrong of the orders (Classic of Filial Piety, Jianzheng; Xunzi, Zidao, 2). Mencius also argued that the interpersonal relationship between the ruling and ruled class is interrelated:

*"If the monarch treats his minister as their brother, his minister will view the monarch as a trusted person. If the monarch treats his minister as a dog or horse, his minister will view the monarch as an ordinary person; if the monarch treats his minister as nobody, his minister will see the monarch as an enemy" (Mencius, Lilou Xia, 3).*

Confucius's and Mencius's ethics of interpersonal relationships are the ruling class (e.g., the monarch, the father, and the husband) should take their responsibility and obligation first. They should treat the ruled class (the minister, son, and wife) kindly and respectfully, and then the ruled class will serve the ruling class with full loyalty. Furthermore, Mencius argues: "the people are the most critical element in a country; the country's stability is the next; then the monarch is not that important (Mencius, Jinxin Xia, 14). Well-known Warring States period Confucianism scholar Xun Kuang argues (c. 310-c. 235 BC):

*"To respect for one's parents, elders and ancestors is the small virtue; to obey the upper class, and be kind to the lower class, is the middle virtue; to follow the justice and principle, rather than one's monarch or father, is the great virtue" (Xunzi, Zidao, 1).*

The Confucianism ethical interpersonal relationship is not the ethical restraint for the ruled class; in contrast, it emphasizes the ruling class's responsibility and obligation. The philosophy of early Confucianism (Confucius, Mencius, and Xun Kuang's) limited the ruling class's authority, particularly for the monarch's authority (the emperor, the king, or the lord). It advocated that people should



follow the righteous and principle, rather than the order from the ruling class. Before the Han dynasties, all Hundred Schools of Thought were contesting for the dominant position of lifestyles and social consciousness. Limiting the monarch's power is crucial because most lords or kings in the Warring States period refused to use Confucianism as a dominant social and ethical philosophy system. However, the Confucianism ethical principle is widely accepted and learned during the Warring States (476-221 BC) period in ancient China.

#### 4.1.2 Confucianism in Han Dynasty

Legalism (Fa Jia, Chinese: 法家) is the dominant social and ethical philosophy during the Qin Dynasty. Legalism (or Fa Jia) mainly ignoring morality or questions on how a society ideally should function, but it emphasising a realistic consolidation of the wealth and power of autocrat and state to achieve increased order, security, and stability (Yuri, 2014).

After the establishment of the Han Dynasty (202 BC), the ideology of Confucianism gradually restored. During the early reign of Emperor Wu of Han<sup>30</sup>, his primary political needs were to consolidate his authority, maintain social stability, and expand productive social forces. He must select a well-developed philosophy as a system of social and ethical philosophy for the Han Dynasty.

In 134 BC, Emperor Wu of Han accepted the suggestion of Dong Zhongshu (Chinese: 董仲舒; 179-104 BC) to promote Confucianism as the mainstream ideology of social and ethical philosophy for the Han Dynasty. Dong Zhongshu absorbed many other Hundred Schools of Thought (e.g., Legalism, Taoism. Yin and Yang) and developed a new-branch of Confucianism.

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<sup>30</sup> Emperor Wu of Han (Chines: 汉武帝, 156-87 BC) was the 7th emperor of the Han dynasty of China. His reign lasted 54 years.

On the morality side, based on Early Confucianism theory, Dong Zhongshu developed an ethical system called Five Chang. Five Chang are five core moralities, and each of them includes subcategories. Five Chang laid the standard and the code of morality for Chinese people and still affects contemporary Chinese values and lifestyles (e.g., Filial piety, humility).

Table 4.1.2: Five Chang

Five Chang	Meaning		
	Refers to	Subcategories	Meaning
Rén (仁)	Benevolent; the excellent feeling virtuous human experiences when being altruistic.	Shù (恕)	Forgiveness
		Wēn (温)	Gentle
		Liáng (良)	Kindhearted
Yì (义)	Righteous means to act and behave according to the Lǐ (礼)		
Lǐ (礼)	It refers to the cultural regulations for ancient Chinese lifestyle, ethics, and behaviour.	Zhōng (忠)	Loyalty
		Xiào (孝)	Filial piety
		Jié (节)	Principles; Integrity
		Jiǎn (俭)	Frugal
		Ràng (让)	Modesty; Humility
		Gōng (恭)	Respectful
Zhì (智)	Nature, the source, the content, and the effect of knowledge; Learning; Wisdom.	Chǐ (耻)	The judgment of right and wrong
		Yǒng (勇)	Brave
Xìn (信)	One's action is consistent with his words.	Chéng (诚)	Honesty
		Lián (廉)	Incorruptible

On the ethical interpersonal relationship side, Dong Zhongshu redefines Confucius and Mencius's explanations. Firstly, Dong Zhongshu emphasised the

interpersonal relationship between the ruling class and the ruled class, like Yin and Yang. Secondly, he advocated that the ruling class is more critical than the ruled class. He discussed in the interpersonal relationship, the ruling class (the Yang side) is kind, benevolent, and noble; the ruled class (the Yin side) is evil, violent, and humble (Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals, Yangzun Yinbei). Dong Zhongshu argued that the ethical principle of interpersonal relationship should be:

*The minister should fit his monarch, the son should fit his father, and the wife should fit her husband. (Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals, Ji Yi).*

Dong Zhongshu's Confucianism is the mainstream living and ruling ideology for Han Dynasty until Emperor Guangwu<sup>31</sup>. He founded the Eastern Han (the restored Han Dynasty). After establishing the Eastern Han Dynasty (202 BC), the Confucianism scholars developed many new-branches of Confucianism. For example, Emperor Guangwu believed in Chèn Wěi (Chinese: 讖纬), which is a combined ideology of the Confucianism theology and old fortune-telling practice (Zizhi Tongjian, Chapter 42 and 44). Thus, Confucianism ideology is an inconsistent mainstream ideology in Eastern Han.

According to the Hou Hanshu (Suzhongxiao Zhang, 1), Emperor Zhang of Han<sup>32</sup> was an admirer of Confucianism's social and ethical philosophy. In 79 A.D., on the orders of Emperor Zhang of Han, the Confucianism scholar community had a conference to discuss and to develop a consistent Confucianism social and

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<sup>31</sup> Emperor Guangwu (Chinese: 汉光武帝, 5 BC-57 AD) was one of the many descendants of the Western Han imperial family, who founded the Eastern Han (the restored Han Dynasty).

<sup>32</sup> Emperor Zhang of Han (Chinese: 汉章帝, 57-88 A.D.) was the Eastern Han's third emperor.

ethical philosophy for the Eastern Han empire. The result of the discussion in the conference had been recorded and edited in an official document called Bai Hu Tong (Chinese: 白虎通义). Confucianism is often characterised as a system of social and ethical philosophy rather than a religion. By the effect of Western Han Confucianism text (such as Dong Zhongshu's, Liwei· Hanwenjia<sup>33</sup>), the explanation of ethical interpersonal relationship in Bai Hu Tong is:

*"The emperor is the guidance of his minister; the father is the guidance of his son; the husband is the guidance of his wife" (Bai Hu Tong, Chapter 7, 1).*

The redefined ethical interpersonal relationship is named Three Gang (Chinese: 三纲). The Gang (Chinese: 纲) in Chinese means guidance, leadership. Compare with Confucius and Mencius's thought, Bai Hu Tong's definition emphasised the ruled class should take more responsibility and obligation than the ruling class. This ideology is far different from Confucius and Mencius's philosophy. However, it is incredibly similar to the thought of Han Fei (c. 280-233 BC). He was a famous Legalism scholar in the Chinese Warring States period. Han Fei's philosophy advocated that people should follow the law (or code) rather than follow the sagacious person. His ethical ideology of interpersonal relationship is the ruled class should always obey the ruling class:

*The minister serves his monarch, the son serves his father, and the wife serves her husband. The empire will be able to get governance if people follow these three orders; the empire will be chaotic if not. Even a sagacious monarch or capable minister cannot change this rule. A competent minister*

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<sup>33</sup> Liwei· Hanwenjia (Chinese: 礼纬·含文嘉): is an ancient book by unknown, which described the value, and ideology in Western Han. Firstly official named ethical ideology of interpersonal relationship as Three Gang (Chinese: 三纲).

*cannot invade the monarch's authority, even though his monarch is not wise (Hanfei, Hanfei Zi, Zhongxiao).*

The Three Gang is a Legalism ideology, rather than Confucius and Mencius's, which many previous studies (e.g., Le, 2003) misunderstood. The definition of Three Gang in Bai Hu Tong is remarkably dissimilar to Confucius and Mencius's thought. Confucius and Mencius's interpersonal relationship theory emphasised the ruling-class should take responsibility and obligation first. It advocated that the ethic of interpersonal relationship should follow the righteous and principle. In contrast, Bai Hu Tong's definition emphasised the ruled class should always obey the ruling-class unconditionally. It advocated this ethical code is far essential than righteousness and principle. The Three Gang utilised the ideology of Legalism, instead of Confucianism, as the underlying ideology.

Before the Han Dynasty (see Table 4.1.3), Confucianism advocated limited the emperor's authority, resulting in it severe for Confucianism to become an official ideology. Three Gang extremely strengthens the emperor's authority, the father's authority (patriarchy), and the authority of the husband. Thus, Three Gang turned neo-Confucianism into a dictatorship tool for the ruling class, especially the emperor, to enslave people in ancient China. Besides, Chinese traditional culture believes the continuity of the family is one of the most important things. This continuity mainly reflected how each father should have a son inherit the family heritage<sup>34</sup>: the daughter's children would not follow the father's surname, which results in the daughter not being allowed to inherit the family heritage. Thus, in traditional Chinese values, a son has more value for the family than a daughter. This tradition also promotes the prevailing ideology of 'man is superior to woman.' To avoid this situation, each family would try their best to have at

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<sup>34</sup> Family heritage refers family property, business, land, social relations, knowledge, unique handcraft skills, and the honour of family history and title.

least one baby boy. Meanwhile, abortion in ancient China is high-risk surgery for pregnant women, so that most Chinese parents will have more than two children in ancient times.

Table 4.1.3: Dynasties in Chinese history (Part One)

Time	Last Years	Name			Period of
c. 2070- c. 1600 BC	c. 470	<b>Xia Dynasty</b>			<b>Xia, Shang, Zhou</b>
c. 1600- c. 1046 BC	c. 500	<b>Shang Dynasty</b>			
c. 1046- 256 BC	c. 791 or c. 868	<b>Zhou Dynasty</b>	<b>Western Zhou</b>	1046-771BC	
			<b>Eastern Zhou</b>	Spring and Autumn 770-476 BC	
				Warring States 476-221 BC	
221-07 BC	14	<b>Qin Dynasty</b>			<b>Qin, Han</b>
206-202 BC	5	<b>Western Chu</b>			
202 BC- 220 AD	405	<b>Han Dynasty</b>	Western Han 202 BC-9 A.D.		
			Eastern Han 25-220 AD		

Furthermore, ancient China is an agricultural nation with limited productive forces. Hunger is a constant survival pressure for every family in every dynasty. Every family needs efficient human power (mainly male) to do the farm work to ensure plentiful food. It is tough to survive for a small family (fewer than five

members, 1-3 generations, less than two skilled labours). Thus, to improve the ability to resist risks (e.g., hunger, diseases, and unfortunate), it is expected that multiple (three-five) generations of the family choose to live together. Overall, most ancient Chinese families would have a large number of populations.

Confucianism after Eastern Han (202 BC) emphasises the individuals should take responsibility according to their social identity and the role of the family. All the family members should regard the whole family's interest as the priority of the individual's interest. According to the Three Gang and Five Chang, the emperor, the parents, and the husband have the absolute right and power to decide their minister, child, and wife's destiny<sup>35</sup>. The emperor's interests, the whole family, and the husband are more important than individuals' will.

The Three Gang and Dong Zhongshu's Five Chang became the fundamental idea of Confucianism since Bai Hu Tong's time. Han Dynasty lasted for over 400 years, which laid the basis for the lifestyle, the ethics of interpersonal relationships, and Chinese culture's political and social ideology. For example, ethnic Han Chinese used "Han" instead of "Hua Xia" as their ethnic name since the Han Dynasty<sup>36</sup>. The following dynasty also followed Han's culture to use Bai Hu Tong's neo-Confucianism as the primary ideology. The Three Gang and Five Chang is the main guideline for the ethics of interpersonal relationships and lifestyle, profoundly affecting Chinese culture in ancient China.

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<sup>35</sup> For e.g., the parents can decide the area of work, the people of marriage for their children, not matter if their children will or not.

<sup>36</sup> The author disagrees with Davis (2005, p.333), "Han people" was the name that widely used by the people who governed by Han Empire as their ethnic name.

#### 4.1.3 Confucianism nowadays

In 1840, the Great British Empire opened the feudal gate of the Qing Dynasty with its cannon. After the First Opium War (1839-1842) and Second Opium War (1856 to 1860), the ruling elite realised it was necessary to adopt the Western military technology, armaments, and idea to preserve the Confucian worldview. The ruling elite suggested Empress Dowager Cixi take Western firearms, machines, scientific knowledge, and train technical and diplomatic people through the establishment of the consular office and the college. After the Sino-French War (1884-1885), the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), western developed technology strongly impacted Chinese people's minds again, making people question the Chinese traditional culture.

After the Xinhai Revolution, the Republic of China (ROC) replaced the Qing Dynasty on February Twelfth, 1912, ended two-thousand-years Chinese autocracy. The crisis of Chinese traditional social ideology and cultural values also erupted. During the May Fourth Movement<sup>37</sup> (1919), young students, intellectuals, and philosophers aggressively criticise traditional Chinese values, especially Confucianism. Confucianism ideology completely lost its dominant position since that time.

Then in 1949, the Communist Party defeated ROC in the Chinese Civil War. The Communist Party of China (CPC) established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Beijing. During the reign of Mao Zedong (1949-1978), Mao Zedong's thought, Socialism, Communist become the dominant ideology in China. The party and nation's interests are more important than the personal interests and family's interests (Triandis, 1995; Hofstede, 2001). Meanwhile, due to Socialism and Communist, the proletariat is regarded as the upper class

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<sup>37</sup> The thought of the May Fourth Movement includes science, democracy, individualism, and Marxism (Socialism).



at that time. Thus, the poor have a higher social status than rich people (e.g., workers have a higher social status than capitalists; farmers have a higher social status than landlords). In the past two hundred years, China was in the passive period of the world's economy and politics compared to the developed country,

During the reign of Mao Zedong, living supplies such as food and fabric are incredibly scarce in China. To meet everyone's living needs across the country, the PRC government forced the people to live in the rationing system. Chinese people have to use ration stamps to buy meat, rice, fabric, and kerosene. Hunger at that time is widespread. For Chinese people, luxury products mean the necessary living supplies such as fruits (e.g., apple, banana, or peach), bikes, and watches. Socialism and Communist also influenced Chinese consumption behaviour because of Socialism and Communist against all kinds of products, ideology, and lifestyle from capitalism. Hamilton (1977, p.878) states:

*'It is well known that during the height of Western commercial expansion, the Chinese did not consume Western products readily or abundantly. It is equally well-known that the lack of Western influence in China goes far beyond the non-consumption of a few factory-made commodities.'*

After economic reforms in 1978, Socialism with Chinese characteristics became the official ideology for CPC and PRC. This ideology supports creating a socialist market economy dominated by the public sector since China is claimed by the CPC, in the primary stage of socialism. The People's Republic of China government maintained that it has not abandoned Marxism but has developed many Marxist theory concepts to accommodate its new economic system. In the early time of economic reforms, western values and culture strongly influence Chinese people's lifestyles and culture. People of China lose

confidence in traditional Chinese culture and values. Thus, western lifestyle and culture are trendy at that time.

Since the start of economic reforms, China has become one of the world's fastest-growing key economies (2001; Maddison, 2007). China is the world's second-largest economy by nominal GDP, the world's biggest exporter and second-largest importer of goods in 2013 (CIA, 2017; Daily Telegraph, 2013). China is a recognised nuclear weapons nation, and it has the world's most massive standing army and the second-largest defence budget (U.S. Secretary of defence, 2013). The People's Republic of China is a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. China is also a member of many formal and informal organisations, including the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), BCIM<sup>38</sup>, BRICS<sup>39</sup>, G-20<sup>40</sup>. SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) and WTO<sup>41</sup>. With economic development, Chinese people will recover the confidence of the traditional values and ideology, especially Confucius's and Mencius's Confucianism.

## 4.2 Yufu system in Chinese culture

By the effect of Li in Confucianism Five Chang, during Qin dynasty (221-206 BC) to Qing Dynasty (AD 1644 to 1912), each dynasty has a set of cultural regulations for lifestyle and behaviour called the Yufu System (Chinese: 輿服

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<sup>38</sup> The Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar forum for regional cooperation (BCIM) is a sub-regional organisation of Asian nations.

<sup>39</sup> BRICS refers to five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

<sup>40</sup> The G20 is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 20 major economies.

<sup>41</sup> WTO refers to World Trade Organisation

制度; literal: the regulation of travelling and wearing). It is a strict cultural regulation for transporting and wearing (also includes using all kinds of decorative patterns on the vehicles and clothes) to distinguish the users to different social classes. Yufu System is a set of cultural codes to identify one's social status. The particular colours, patterns, material, and fabrics of transporting methods and clothes reflect different social identities. For example, only the emperor and the crown prince can wear yellow silk clothes with the dragon pattern<sup>42</sup>.

Yufu System is one of the essential governing tools in over 2,000 years of imperial China. The primary function of the Yufu System is to show the Emperor's Majesty, to distinguish imperial officers from ordinary people, to prevent overly luxury<sup>43</sup> (Wu, 2007, p. 67). Yufu System is a set of the visual identity system for each dynasty. It is an expression of imperial dictatorship ideology. Chinese traditional political ideology (e.g., Confucianism value) against inequality, order, and stability is always the priority. In feudal society, the relationship between the various classes is unequal.

The current Chinese government still has a set of travelling and wearing regulations (only the government officers have to follow these regulations). Comparing to the imperial Yufu System, the primary purpose of modern travelling and wearing regulation is perverting an overly luxurious lifestyle. For example, during 1996-2003, the high-level government officer (e.g., Provincial Governor, Mayor) is not allowed to own luxury auto cars such as Mercedes, Lincoln, and Cadillac.

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<sup>42</sup> People who try to wear the yellow silk clothes with the dragon pattern will be executed in most of the ancient dynasty.

<sup>43</sup> In Chinese: 列等威、别士庶、抑僭奢.

### 4.3 Chinese traditional luxury mobility

There is two mainstream traditional luxury mobility in Chinese traditional culture: one is the two-wheels carriage, which is driven by animal-powered; the other one is Jiao, which is driven by human-powered.

#### 4.3.1 Two-wheels carriage

The two-wheels carriage has at least 3,000 years of history in China. The two-wheel carriage was called Che (Chinese: 车) in ancient China, which literary means car. According to ancient Chinese literature, Chinese people start to use the chariot in war since the Xia Dynasty (c.2070-c.1600 BC). The earliest archaeological evidence of chariots in China was also discovered in Yinxu<sup>44</sup>. According to Book of Documents · Book of Shang, Pan Geng<sup>45</sup>, people living in Shang Dynasty used to do many large-scale migrations; all the family members and most of the living stuff would involve in the movement.

Meanwhile, most Shang people were doing business. Mobility is necessary for both migration and trade: it is too hard for HP (human-powered) mobility to transfer the heavy living stuff and business cargo. Two-wheel carriage satisfies the mobile needs of Shang People. Shang people have many options for the animal resource for the carriage because they have excellent skills in tame wild creatures. For example, according to Lüshi Chunqiu<sup>46</sup>: To conquer the Dongyi

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<sup>44</sup> Yinxu (Chinese: 殷墟) is the site of ancient city of Yin, the last capital of China's Shang Dynasty. Yinxu was discovered in 1993, at Anyang, Henan province.

<sup>45</sup> The Book of Documents (Chinese: 尚书), is one of the Five Classics of ancient Chinese text. It is a collection of the historical record of ancient China (before seven century BC).

<sup>46</sup> In Lüshi Chunqiu · Zhongxia Ji, Gu Yue, 14 (吕氏春秋 · 仲夏纪 · 古乐, 14). Chinese: 商人服象, 为虐于东夷.

(an ancient area in Shang Dynasty in China), Shang People used to tame elephants as military weapons (Zhongxia Ji, Gu Yue, 14). After a long practice, Chinese people finally chose horses and cattle as domesticated animals for transport.

The two-wheels carriage occupies an essential position in traditional Chinese luxury mobility because of horse-powered mobility features (fast, flexible, superb stamina). Two-wheels carriage driven by horsepower also called chariot. In ancient China, the chariot was the most valuable weapon in the war. The chariot's first value is providing mobility for the commander or senior soldiers such as archer or spearman; the second value is utilising the force of charging to kill the enemy. Chinese ancient chariot flourishes in the late Shang dynasty (1350-1046 BC). According to previous literature (Records of the Grand Historian; Lüshi Chunqiu), King Wu of Zhou<sup>47</sup> commanded 300 Chariots, 3000 cavalry, and 45,000 infantrymen in the Battle of Muye (c. 1046 bc). The victory of King Wu of Zhou in this war led to the fall of the Shang.

Chinese ancient chariot became a high technology military weapon. It reached its golden age in the Spring and Autumn period (approximately 771 to 476 BC). Both of the military thought and methods of chariot have developed to be in the mature stage. In the Battle of Chengpu<sup>48</sup>, 700 chariots were used in war. During the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD), the cavalry replaced the chariot's role in the military area, as cavalry provides advanced fast and flexibility in the battle area.

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<sup>47</sup> King Wu of Zhou (Chinese: 周武王) was the first king of the Zhou dynasty of ancient China.

<sup>48</sup> Happened in 632 BC, between State of Jin and State of the Chu and its allies.

Table 4.1.4: Dynasties in Chinese history (Part Two)

<b>Time</b>	<b>Last Years</b>	<b>Name</b>		<b>Period of</b>
220-280 AD	61	<b>Three Kingdoms</b>		<b>Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties</b>
266-420 AD	156	<b>Jin Dynasty</b>	Western Jin 265-316 AD	
			Eastern Jin 317-420 AD	
420-589 AD	170	<b>Northern and Southern Dynasties</b>		
581-618 AD	38	<b>Sui Dynasty</b>		<b>Sui, Tang</b>
618-907 AD	289	<b>Tang Dynasty</b>		
907-960 AD	54	<b>Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms</b>		
960-1279 AD	319	<b>Song Dynasty</b>	Northern Song 960-1127 AD	
			Southern Song 1127-1279 AD	
1271-1368 AD	98	<b>Yuan Dynasty</b>		
1368-1644 AD	276	<b>Ming Dynasty</b>		<b>Ming, Qing</b>
1644-1912 AD	268	<b>Qing Dynasty</b>		

The two-wheel carriage is mainly used as a vehicle for shipping goods and passengers in daily life after the Han Dynasty. Cattle-powered carriage is another crucial AP (animal-powered) mobility in Ancient China. Compared to the horse-powered carriage, the cattle-powered carriage can load more weight while slower. Thus, the cattle-power carriage was initially used for shipping goods. In Han's Yufu regulation, the low-class people such as businessmen class have no privilege to use the horse-driven two-wheels carriage. Thus, low-class people mainly choose the cattle-driven carriage as their primary transporting method. Some wealthy businessmen may have hundreds of cattle in their shipping team.

In the early years of the Western Han Dynasty, the horse was short due to a long-time war. According to the Book of Han, even the emperor cannot find a two-wheel carriage driven by four same colour horses. Even the army general and minister used cattle-powered carriage as the primary mobility<sup>49</sup>. The upper classes were also forced to use cattle as driven power for the carriage until the horsepower is adequate. During the Three Kingdoms period (220-280 AD), pursuing comfort became fashionable. The cattle-driven two-wheels carriage became popular among royalty and nobility due it provides stability when transporting.

During Western Jin (265-316 AD), Yufu regulation limited royalty and nobility to use a cattle-driven carriage. While this law was opened up in Eastern Jin (317-420 AD), cattle-driven carriage became the primary transporting method for ordinary people. However, after the Sui Dynasty (581-618 AD), this fashion flourished and fasted declined among royalty and nobility.

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<sup>49</sup> According to Book of Han · Shihuo Zhi (汉书·食货志). Chinese: 天下既定，民亡盖藏，自天子不能具醇駟，而将相或乘牛车.

During the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD), horsepower is mainly used for Military purposes (Even so, the Song Dynasty's cavalry's combat capability is far weaker than the Tang Dynasty due to the shortage of horsepower). At the same time, most upper classes choose Jiao (sedan chair), an HP vehicle, as their primary mobility. For example, in the Along the River During the Qingming Festival (see Figure 4.3.1), the primary transporting methods for people in daily life are Jiao and cattle-powered carriage. The value of cattle-driven carriage mainly focused on shipping goods after the Song Dynasty.



Figure 4.3.1: Along the River During the Qingming Festival (part)<sup>50</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Jiao

Jiao (Chinese: 轿; English: Sedan Chair) is a wheel-less, carried by two or more human-carriers transporting vehicle in ancient China. Jiao mainly has two divisions:

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<sup>50</sup> Along the River During the Qingming Festival (Chinese: 清明上河图) is a painting by Zhang Zeduan (1085-1145) in Song Dynasty. It captures the daily life of people and the landscape of the capital, Bianjing (today's Kaifeng), in the Northern Song Dynasty.



1. Jiao takes the form of open chairs or open bed called Cold Jiao (Chinese: 凉轿) or Light Jiao (Chinese: 亮轿);
2. Jiao takes the form of enclosing room called Warm Jiao (Chinese: 暖轿) or Dark Jiao (Chinese: 暗轿).

Human-Carriers will attempt to transfer the weight to their shoulders by efficiently carrying poles upon their shoulders to carry a Jiao. Thus, Jiao, also called Jianyu (Chinese: 肩舆, literal means shoulder carriage) before being officially named Jiao in the Song Dynasty<sup>51</sup>. According to Records of the Grand Historian, Hequ Shu<sup>52</sup>, Chinese people started to use Jiao since the early Xia Dynasty. The earliest archaeological evidence of Jiao in the world was discovered in Hougudui<sup>53</sup>. The Jiao found in Hougudui shown that Chinese people already have the mature skills to manufacture and use the Jiao in the early Warring States period.

During the period from Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) to Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), most of the upper classes mainly use horse-derived two-wheels carriage and ride a horse as their transporting method because these methods provided sufficient mobility in the plain area.

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<sup>51</sup> Jiao used called Bunian (Chinese: 步辇); Yu (Chinese: 肩舆); Taiyi (Chinese: 抬椅) before The Song Dynasty.

<sup>52</sup> The Records of the Grand Historian (Chinese: 史记), is a historical document of ancient China finished around 94 BC by the Han dynasty official Sima Qian (Chinese: 司马迁; c.145-90 BC). The work records the history from the age of the legendary Yellow Emperor (2698-2598 BC) to the reign of Emperor Wu of Han (141-87 BC).

<sup>53</sup> Hougudui (Chinese: 侯古堆一号) is a Warring States period tomb in ancient China. The site was discovered during 1978-1979, at Gushi, Henan province, China.

Compare to the two-wheel house-derived carriage. Jiao's critical value is that it can provide flexible and comfortable mobility for royalty to transport in the mountain area or transport inside the imperial palace (Book of Han; Records of the Grand Historian; Zhuangzi). The Yufu regulation in this period limited the privilege of un-royalty to use the Jiao. Thus, Jiao was a luxury transporting method only for royalty. For example, Admonitions of the Court Instructress painting five narrated the story that Emperor Cheng of Han<sup>54</sup> travelling with his consort with a Jiao carried by eight men-carriers as his transporting method (see Figure 4.3.2).



Figure 4.3.2: Admonitions of the Court Instructress, Painting Five (Jin Dynasty, by Gu Kaizhi)<sup>55</sup>

During the Tang Dynasty, the Yufu regulations that “only the royalty has the right to use Jiao” have been used for more than 1000 years (Book of Han; Zhushi<sup>56</sup>).

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<sup>54</sup> Emperor Cheng of Han (51-7 BC, Chinese 汉成帝) was an emperor of the Chinese Han Dynasty ruling from 33 until 7 BC.

<sup>55</sup> Admonitions of the Court Instructress (Chinese: 女史箴图) is a scroll of Chinese Jin Dynasty painting on silk by Gu Kaizhi (Chinese: 顾恺之; c. 344-406).

<sup>56</sup> Zhushi (Chinese: 塵史) is a historical document by Wang Dechen (Chinese: 王得臣; 1036-

Jiao is not just comfortable, easy-command luxury mobility, but also became a signifier (expression) that signified the connotative meaning of powerful, royal, and noble identity. Jiao's regulation became a cultural code deeply rooted in ethnic Han Chinese culture for 800 years. For example, The Emperor Taizong<sup>57</sup> Receiving the Tibetan Envoy narrated that Emperor Taizong met with the Prime Minister of Songtsän Gampo. The Emperor did not need any mobility during his meeting with a prime minister. However, he still was sitting on a Bunian (a Jiao take the form of an open bed) carried by two ladies-in-waiting to show his majesty (see Figure 4.3.3).



Figure 4.3.3: Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy<sup>58</sup>

After the long-time war between each Kingdom during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (AD 907-979), the Tang Dynasty's cultural regulation's influence significantly weakened. Jiao became a commonly used transporting method for every class. The excessive population and shortage of horsepower also made Jiao become the primary luxury mobility. In the Song Dynasty, the widely used transporting method is Jiao, cattle driven two-wheel carriage, and

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1116), in Song Dynasty.

<sup>57</sup> Emperor Taizong of Tang (598-649), personal name Li Shimin, was the second emperor of the Tang dynasty of China, ruling from 626 to 649.

<sup>58</sup> Emperor Taizong Receiving the Tibetan Envoy (Chinese: 步辇图) is a silk painting on silk by Yan Liben (Chinese: 阎立本; c. 600-673) of the Tang Dynasty.

donkey. The reason for this phenomenon is that horsepower is mainly used for military purposes. Even so, the Song Dynasty's cavalry's combat capability is far weaker than the Tang Dynasty due to the shortage of horsepower.

Emperor Taizong of Song (Chinese: 宋太宗; 939-997) was the second emperor of the Northern Song Dynasty in China. He wanted to restore the Tang Dynasty's Yufu regulation to highlight the upper class's social status. Thus, he chose a compromise Yufu system for Jiao: only imperial officer, royalty, nobility have the privilege to use warm Jiao (which take the form of enclosing room). After the Jin-Song Wars (1115-1234), the Jin Empire defeated the Song Empire and conquest northern China. Thus, the Song Empire retreated to southern China and established the Southern Song Dynasty. The capital of the Southern Song Empire was Lin'an (now Hangzhou), which has a rainy climate. Most of the time, the road is too wet to ride a horse, much imperial officer getting into the accident, particularly for some elder.

Emperor Gaozong of Song (Chinese: 宋高宗; 1107-1187) was the first emperor of the Southern Song Dynasty in China. In 1127, he entirely opened up Jiao's regulation: any people can also use warm Jiao, including the ordinary people; at the same time, he strengthens the Yufu regulation on the quantity of Jiao-carriers. Thus, the social status still can differ by a different number of Jiao-carriers. Meanwhile, Emperor Gaozong of Song cancelled the Yufu regulation of AP two-wheels carriage. After this change, Jiao officially replaced two-wheels carriage, becoming the most popular luxury mobility in Chinese history.

Besides, before the Song Dynasty period, Jiao mainly takes the form of an open bed or Chair. In the Song Dynasty, Jiao's significant innovation is that it started to take the enclosing room, called warm Jiao. This change made Jiao more gorgeous and significantly improved privacy and comfort when people are sitting inside of Jiao.

Ming Dynasty was "one of the greatest eras of orderly government and social stability in human history" (Edwin, John, Albert, 1960). During the early Ming Dynasty, The Hongwu Emperor<sup>59</sup> prohibited any imperial officer from using Jiao to avoid the imperial officer's indolent phenomenon after the peace. People who are non-royal family members lost their privilege to use Jiao until the 7th emperor of the Ming Dynasty, the Jingtai Emperor (1428-1457). Jingtai Emperor adjusted the Yufu regulations of Jiao around 1450-1456. However, the Yufu regulations of Jiao is still very meticulous and strict: people have to use a different quantity of carriers, colour, material, decorations of Jiao to show their social class; the people who come from the lower class cannot use the Jiao as same as the upper-classes.

For the human resources regulation, the Emperor is the only person who can use 16-men powered Jiao<sup>60</sup>. 8-men powered Jiao is a high-end luxury Jiao in Qing Dynasty, only Prince, duke, and Imperial Governors had permission to use it inside and outside of Beijing (the capital of the Ming Empire). Other Royal family members and the senior imperial officer can also use 8-men powered Jiao when they are travelling out of Beijing. However, they can only use 4-men powered Jiao when travelling inside of Beijing. Ordinary citizens (no matter how wealthy they are) can use 2-men or 4-men powered Jiao. The only situation for ordinary citizens to use an 8-men powered Jiao is at a wedding: a bridegroom from a super-wealthy family could use an 8-men powered Jiao to carry his bride to their wedding ceremony. The 8-men powered Jiao wedding is an extreme luxury in Ming Dynasty. Most of the ordinary people can only afford 4-men or 2-men powered Jiao wedding.

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<sup>59</sup> The Hongwu Emperor (1328-1398), personal name Zhu Yuanzhang, was the founder and first emperor of China's Ming dynasty.

<sup>60</sup> In an Emperor's funeral, the Emperor's coffin is carried by a 128-men powered Jiao.

For the colour regulation, Royal family members can use more colour such as red and golden; the imperial officer can only use blue or green; ordinary rich people can just use black. As the Yufu regulation or insufficient financial, the lower class (e.g., ordinary non-super wealthy ordinary citizens; lower-classes imperial stuff) can never use a Jiao as a daily transporting method or personal mobility. The Ming Dynasty also is the last imperial dynasty founded and ruled by ethnic Han Chinese, and ethnic Han Chinese always constitute the majority of the Chinese population (FBI, 2016)



Figure 4.4.4: Jiao in Qing Dynasty

Manchu people (Chinese: 满族), or ethnic Man Chinese established the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). Manchu people are one of the ethnic minorities in China. To consolidate the political power to rule the ethnic Han Chinese, the Qing Emperor decided to continue to use Ming Dynasty's political ideology and Ming Dynasty's culture to order the Chinese people (e.g., Confucianism and cultural regulation). Thus, for luxury mobility, Qing Dynasty also used the same Yufu

regulation of Jiao from Ming Dynasty. Furthermore, after 276 years ruled by Ming Empire, Chinese people (no matter ethnic Han Chinese or other ethnic minority Chinese) have been deeply rooted in a set of semiotic code of using different classes of Jiao.

For the upper class, Jiao provided advanced, comfortable mobility, which can avoid the bumps caused by road roughness. Meanwhile, the HP vehicle is far more intelligent than any AP vehicle, so the HP mobility is more comfortable to operate. However, from a cultural point of view, Jiao is the mobility that oppresses other humans for comfort and vanity, which fully embodies humanity's innate dark side. Using an HP carriage as the mobility can get more respect than using the AP carriage, making the user's vanity fully satisfied.

#### 4.3.3 Summary

The excessive population and shortage of horsepower also made Jiao become a primary luxury transporting method. According to Yuanshu Zaji<sup>61</sup>, during Wanli Emperor's reign in Ming Dynasty, the average annual salary of a bottom person is 20 Liang (e.g., Hawkers); the other lower-class people are 40 Liang (e.g., 36 Liang for Butcher; 40 Liang for Groom). The price of a horse was 40 Liang. Hiring two workers definitely can get more value than buying a horse for the wealthy people. For a junior imperial officer, his annual income is 45 Liang; meanwhile, he can get four workers and one groom to support his work (the imperial officer's benefits).

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<sup>61</sup> Yuanshu Zaji (Chines: 宛署杂记) is a historical document by Shen Bang (1540-1597) in Ming Dynasty. The text records the politics, economy, history, geography and culture of Ming Dynasty.

Consequently, the officers in the Ming Dynasty always have free Jiao carrier. Nevertheless, for the upper class (the wealthy people and the imperial officer) in ancient China, Jiao is higher cost-effective mobility than riding the horse. Jiao carrier plays a different role to the driver. To a certain extent, Jiao turns the Jiao carriers from the human to the domesticated animals.

From a scientific perspective, using the non-wheel machinery driven by HP to replace the wheeled vehicle driven by domesticated animals is a technical retrogression. However, both of Jiao and two-wheel carriage are leading Chinese traditional luxury mobility in ancient China. Luxury mobility in ancient China has three levels of cultural meanings:

On the denotative level, in each Chinese dynasty, horse-powered, cattle-powered, and human-powered mobility is a limited resource for the ordinary. Thus, compare with un-luxury mobility, luxury mobility is expensive mobility that ordinary people cannot afford. The denotive meaning of traditional Chinese luxury mobility is that it is expansive, efficient mobility.

On the connotative level, traditional Chinese luxury mobility provides better functional features than traditional Chinese un-luxury mobility. For example, the horse-powered two-wheel carriage is the mobility that provides more speed; the cattle-powered two-wheel carriage is the mobility that provides more comfort; the Jiao is the mobility that provides an easier way to operate. Traditional Chinese luxury mobility's connotative meaning is a comfort, more straightforward to operate, time-saving mobility.

On the myth level, due to the meticulous and strict Yufu regulation in Chinese culture, the people who can own the luxury mobility are usually the rich, the influential people, and royal members. Thus, people are consuming the denotative and connotative meaning. They are consuming the feature that



luxury mobility can represent a higher social status. Thus, compared with traditional Chinese un-luxury mobility, traditional Chinese luxury mobility's myth meaning is that it can represent the owner's upper-class social identity.

#### **4.4 Luxury goods in Chinese culture**

##### 4.4.1 What is luxury goods?

In economics, a luxury good (or upmarket good) is a good for which demand increases more than proportionally as income rises. A luxury good is a contrast to a "necessity good," where demand increases proportionally less than income (Varian, 1992). Luxury goods have a high-income elasticity of demand: as people become wealthy, they will buy more luxury goods. However, the definition of luxury goods will change according to the degree of one's wealth. Thus, a so-called luxury good (to one group of people) may become common at different income levels (e.g., a wealthy person stops buying luxury bags for their collection but starting collecting luxury cars).

Several manufactured products attain the status of "luxury goods" due to their design, quality, durability, or performance that are remarkably superior to the comparable substitutes (Parker, and Doyle, 2018). Although luxury goods are independent of the goods' quality, consumers generally considered luxury goods have the highest quality in the market. Some goods are perceived as luxurious by the public simply because they play the role of status symbols as such goods tend to signify the purchasing power of those who acquire them. While not necessarily being better (in quality, performance, or appearance) than their less expensive substitutes, these items are purchased with the primary purpose of displaying the wealth of the buyers. In socio-economic, this phenomenon is called conspicuous consumption.

Veblen goods are named after American economist Thorstein Veblen, who first identified conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899). Luxury goods are often synonymous with superior goods and Veblen goods. Veblen goods are types of luxury goods for which the quantity demanded increases as the price increases, an apparent contradiction of the law of demand. Consumers prefer more of the good as its price rises, which results in an upward-sloping demand curve. Due to the rare, high quality, and expensive luxury goods feature, almost all the luxury good has the positioning function. A clear expression of higher social status will gain more dignity, authority, and respect from others. Also, luxury goods consumers will have satisfaction through others' envy and jealousy because of luxury products' rare features.

Also functioning as positional goods, they include expensive wines, jewellery, fashion-designer handbags, and luxury cars, which are in demand because of, rather than despite, the high prices asked for them. Besides, the luxury goods' positional feature makes them desirable as status symbols in the practices of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure. Wong and Ahuvia (1998, p5) stated that Western consumers would emphasise hedonic experience; South-east Asian consumers will emphasise publicly visible possessions. They also state Asians, relative to Westerners, would place more importance on the symbolic value, at least when consuming in public. Having a luxury product is very "Having Mianzi," as it can promote one's dignity, authority, and reputation. The idea of Mianzi is significant for the ILA brand because Chinese luxury mobility consumers may change the meaning of luxury mobility.

The United States has been the largest regional market for luxury goods. It is estimated to continue to be the leading personal luxury goods market in 2013,

with a value of 62.5 billion euros (Statista, 2015). The largest ten markets<sup>62</sup> for luxury goods account for 83 per cent of overall sales (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2015). In 2012, China surpassed Japan as the world's largest luxury market (CNN, 2013). China's luxury consumption accounts for over 25% of the global market (Export to China, 2015). In 2014, the luxury sector was expected to grow over the next ten years because of 440 million consumers spending a total of 880 billion euros, or \$1.2 trillion (Zargani, 2014). For an ILC brand, China is now a vital part of its global growth, and the sales in China plays a significant role in deciding its overall strength in the worldwide market.

#### 4.4.2 Luxury consumption for gifting in China

Gifting (give somebody a gift) culture can trace back to the Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC-256 BC). With Confucianism's development, gifting culture becomes a mainstream culture, such as between the monarch and his minister, teachers and students, colleagues, and family members. Confucianism strongly emphasises the use of propriety and proper etiquette. Chinese people saw that gifting culture is pivotal in maintaining harmony among hierarchical social relationships (Chan et al., 2003). The term "gift" (Lǐ, Chinses: 礼) refers to exchanges of products and services that connect people linked not by family but by the concept of reciprocity (Yau; 1999; Joy, 2001). Current studies fill a gap in the literature on gifting culture in China. They discuss gifting of entire packs of expensive cigarettes is the social currency in China (Rich and Xiao, 2011; Ding and Hovell, 2012). Joy (2011) analysis of Hong Kong's gifting culture in family relations. Wang et al. (2011) argue that gifting expensive gifts reflects the social hierarchy and the maintenance of the balance between group needs and individual needs. The previous study also states an indigenous.

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<sup>62</sup> The largest ten markets include Japan, China, United States, Russia, Germany, Italy, France, United Kingdom, Brazil, Spain, and Switzerland.

The previous study also discussed an original Chinese concept, guanxi (Chinese: 关系) has become well known to Western marketers. The concept of guanxi can be viewed as social networking, which is the accumulation of personal relationships that are characterised by mutual responsibilities toward maintaining the relationships (Chan et al., 2003). The legal and communication infrastructures of modern China are often inadequate. Guanxi assists in accelerating the pace and efficiency of all business relations that enable companies to access scarce resources or components and fosters the legal approval of business activities.

In this situation, luxury gifting is a social currency to exchange some guanxi assists; it is a proper method to bribe someone. Chinese people are restrained and cautious when they face risk. Direct bribe with money is useless and impolite. They would like to take risks for the individuals who have a deep relationship with them rather than the strangers. Thus, a person could get broader un-official service when he has broader and stronger guanxi. As in the Chinese proverb “when people give you a plum as a gift, return him a peach.” Influenced by Confucianism Chinese people attach great importance to etiquette. Gifting is an ordinary social skill to build and strengthen a personal relationship. Thus, it is common to express thanks to returning someone’s help through gifting in Chinese culture. Precious and luxury gifting usually represent a deep link (within family members, lovers or best friends). No matter is gifting for expressing the thankful and respect or exchange the un-official service. The gift must be appropriate to the social states of the gift receiver.

By the end of 2012, the new central leadership of China's communist party, headed by Xi Jinping, expressed the determination of punishing political corruption. Chinese government policy on frugality and anti-gifting had a tremendous impact on “luxury gifting”. It limited all kinds of luxury gifting that involves government officers. Although ordinary wealthy people still have the

right to give and receive luxury gifts, this movement again reduced the culture diver of luxury consumption in the Chinese luxury market. According to Bain & Company (2012, 2013), the overall year-on-year growth in mainland China expected to slow down to ~2% in 2013 (vs 7% in 2012). Consuming a luxury automobile for gifting, usually only happens among the people who have a very close relationship (parents and children, husband and wife, lovers), as luxury automobile contains much more value than everyday luxury goods such as luxury fashion.

#### 4.4.3 Luxury consuming for Mianzi

As mentioned in 2.4 Mianzi in Chinese culture, Mianzi is an essential concept because of its pervasive influence on Chinese interpersonal relationships. Mianzi refers to a combined idea of one's dignity and authority. The idea overlaps somewhat with the Western concept of reputation or dignity. Mianzi also relates to the prestige maintained by oneself or honoured by others through one's success or social position (Chan et al., 2003, p.48). The most important cultural drivers of Mianzi of luxury goods consuming are:

"Having Mianzi" (adjective, Chinese: 有面子) refers to something, or some behaviour can promote someone's dignity, authority and reputation.

"Lost Mianzi" (adjective, Chinese: 丢面子), or "Do not have Mianzi" (adjective, Chinese: 没面子) refers to something or some behaviour is shameful and humiliating.

Modern China's economy has rapidly developed since the Chinese economic reform. With this rapid economic development, China has further widened the social status gap between the upper and lower classes in the recent decade. Meanwhile, the middle class also wants to be dissimilar to the lower class. Thus, both the upper and middle class need showing the social status to other people.

While there is no official Yufu system in modern China, the upper and middle class lost the method of differing from others. Also, Chinese people believe that to own luxury goods is "Having Mianzi" (adjective, Chinese: 有面子), as the luxury product can promote one's dignity, authority and reputation.

Wong and Ahuvia (1998, p5) stated that Western consumers would emphasise hedonic experience; South-east Asian consumers will emphasise publicly visible possessions. They also state Asians, relative to Westerners, would place more importance on the symbolic value, at least when consuming in public. Due to the unique and rare features of luxury products, people who have luxury products culturally position themselves as higher social status. The cultural driver of consuming luxury products is for the user experience of high quality, unique, brand value, and well-designed products and the expression of high-social status that luxury produces represents.

The upper class and middle class have the need to consume luxury products for a clear expression of higher social status, or Mianzi. On the one hand, they need a clear expression of higher social status dissimilar to the lower classes. In this situation, the consumers are not just consuming the original product's value (both material and immaterial products); they are consuming for the additional value from the luxury product: the positioning function. Positioning function refers to some expensive, rare product can give a clear image of the higher social status for the buyers. Due to luxury goods, almost all the luxury good has the positioning function, which makes luxury goods unique. A clear expression of higher social status will gain more dignity, authority, and respect from others. Luxury goods buyers will also have satisfaction through others' envy and jealousy because of the rare feature of luxury products.

In China, wearing luxury, eating luxury, living luxuries, and driving luxury mean high and stable incomes. This expression of higher social status, or the idea of

"Having Mianzi" (adjective, Chinese: 有面子) will promote one's dignity, authority and respect from others, especially between strangers in social interaction. An explicit expression of higher social status also is a benefit to expand their social network (sometimes, it can even earn more business chance). Due to this culture of china, a lot of Chinese luxury consumers are not only consuming the original value of the product (both material and immaterial products) of the goods but consuming for the additional value from the luxury product: the positional function.

Both consuming luxury goods for gifting and consuming luxury goods for Mianzi are two cultural drivers of consuming luxury goods. However, consuming a luxury automobile for gifting, usually only happens among the people who have a very close relationship (parents and their children, husband and wife, lovers). A luxury automobile contains much more value than common luxury goods such as luxury fashion. Thus, consuming luxury mobility for Mianzi is a more critical culture driver than consuming luxury mobility for gifting in Chinese culture. Whether having Mianzi becomes an essential feature for a product or brand. This culture difference is significant for branding and design strategies because the meaning of luxury consuming is changed. This culture difference is significant for the ILA's branding and design strategies because the meaning of luxury consuming is changed in the Chinese cultural context.

#### **4.5 Summary**

Confucianism is an ideology developed from the teachings of the famous Chinese philosopher Confucius. Firstly Confucianism particular emphasizes the importance of Rén (仁), Yì (义), and Lǐ (礼) in morality. Secondly, Mencius argued that the ethical system should include Rén (Benevolent), Yì (Righteous), Lǐ (proper rite), and Zhì (knowledge). Then in the Han Dynasty, after Han

scholar proposed San Gang and Wu Chang, Confucianism as an ideology became the mainstream social and ethical philosophy system, and profoundly affects modern Chinese cultural value.

By the effect of Lǐ (禮) in Confucianism, Yufu System is an essential governing tool in over 2,000 years of imperial China. It is a strict cultural regulation for transporting, wearing (also includes using all kinds of decorative pattern on the vehicles and clothes), to distinguish the users to different social classes. Yufu System is a set of cultural code to identify one's social status.

Also, by the effect of Confucianism, both consuming luxury goods for gifting and consuming luxury goods for Mianzi are two cultural drivers of consuming luxury goods. However, consuming a luxury automobile for gifting, usually only happens among the people who have a very close relationship (parents and their children, husband and wife, lovers). A luxury automobile contains much more value than common luxury goods such as luxury fashion. Thus, consuming luxury mobility for Mianzi is a more critical culture driver than consuming luxury mobility for gifting in Chinese culture. Whether having Mianzi becomes an essential feature for a product or brand. This culture difference is significant for branding and design strategies because the meaning of luxury consuming is changed. This culture difference is significant for the ILA's branding and design strategies because the meaning of luxury consuming is changed in the Chinese cultural context.

Two-wheels carriage (mainly driven by horse-powered or cattle-powered) and Jiao are two tradition Chinese luxury mobility. The excessive population and shortage of horsepower also made Jiao become a primary luxury transporting method. Jiao turns the Jiao carriers from the human to the domesticated animals. From a scientific perspective, using the non-wheel machinery driven by HP, to replace the wheeled vehicle driven by domesticated animals is a



technical retrogression. However, both of Jiao and two-wheel carriage are leading Chinese traditional luxury mobility in ancient China. Luxury mobility in ancient China has three levels of cultural meanings:

On the denotative level, in each Chinese dynasty, horse-powered, cattle-powered, and human-powered mobility is a limited resource for the ordinary. Thus, compare with un-luxury mobility, luxury mobility is expensive mobility that ordinary people cannot afford. The denotive meaning of traditional Chinese luxury mobility is that it is expansive, efficient mobility.

On the connotative level, traditional Chinese luxury mobility provides better functional features than traditional Chinese un-luxury mobility. For example, the horse-powered two-wheel carriage is the mobility that provides more speed; the cattle-powered two-wheel carriage is the mobility that provides more comfort; the Jiao is the mobility that provides an easier way to operate. Traditional Chinese luxury mobility's connotative meaning is a comfort, more straightforward to operate, time-saving mobility.

On the myth level, due to the meticulous and strict Yufu regulation in Chinese culture, the people who can own the luxury mobility are usually the rich, the influential people, and royal members. Thus, people are consuming the denotative and connotative meaning. They are consuming the feature that luxury mobility can represent a higher social status. Thus, compared with traditional Chinese un-luxury mobility, traditional Chinese luxury mobility's myth meaning is that it can represent the owner's upper-class social identity.

# **Chapter V The cultural meanings of luxury mobility in China**

Cultural meanings of luxury mobility in China are essential for ILA brands to understand Chinese ILC consumers, and both of them must be understood during their ILC purchasing process. From February 2016 to April 2016, the researcher finished 30 interviews in four different cities in China. This chapter will explore luxury mobility in Chinese culture through the analysis of these interviews. Chapter V The cultural meanings of luxury mobility in China is structured as follows:

5.1 Overview - This section is the overview of Chapter V The cultural meanings of luxury mobility in China.

5.2 Analysis section one - Analysis section one focuses on discussing the cultural meaning difference among the different city tiers in China.

5.3 Analysis section two - Analysis section two focuses on discussing the cultural meaning difference among the different age groups in China.

5.4 Analysis section three - Analysis section three focuses on discussing the cultural meaning difference among genders in China.

5.5 The cultural meanings of luxury mobility in China: this section summarised the important factors that influence Chinese luxury car buyers' purchase decision. Finally, this section discussed the denotative, connotative, and myth meaning of luxury mobility in Chinese culture.

## **5.1 Overview**

This study interviewed 30 participants (see Table 5.1.1). However, it is quite challenging to find ideal participants that matched all the requirements in a limited time, for example:

1. The researcher cannot find T1 city, male, 45-55 ELC and MLC buyers;
2. The researcher cannot find T1 city, female, HLC buyers.

Table 5.1.1: The participants' profile summary (A)

Participant code 1	Participant code 2 <sup>63</sup>	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
1101	2101	T1	Male	40-50	BMW 730 (HLC)
1210					BMW 730 (HLC)
1211	2102	T1	Male	30-40	BMW 730 (HLC)
1105	2103	T1	Male	20-30	BMW 730 (HLC)
1102	2104	T1	Male	30-40	Jaguar XF (MLC)
1212					LEXUS ES (MLC)
1213					LEXUS ES (MLC)
1103	2105	T1	Male	30-40	BMW 325 (ELC)
1104					BMW 320 (ELC)
1106	2106	T1	Male	20-30	BMW 325 (ELC)
1214					LEXUS IS (ELC)
1215					BMW 325 (ELC)
1107	2108	T1	Female	40-50	Jaguar ES (MLC)
1216					Jaguar XF (MLC)
1108	2109	T1	Female	30-40	BMW 325 (ELC)
1217					BMW 325 (ELC)
1109	2110	T1	Female	20-30	BMW 320 (ELC)
1218					LEXUS IS (ELC)
1319	1319	T2	Male	40-50	BMW 730 (HLC)
1320	1320	T2	Male	30-40	BMW 730 (HLC)

<sup>63</sup> The participate code 2 re-grouped the participants who come from same city tier (Beijing and Shanghai).

1321	1321	T2	Male	30-40	BMW 525 (MLC)
1322	1322	T2	Male	20-30	BMW 730 (HLC)
1323	1323	T2	Female	30-40	Jaguar XF (MLC)
1324	1324	T2	Female	20-30	BMW 320 (ELC)
1425	1425	T3	Male	40-50	Jaguar XJL (HLC)
1426	1426	T3	Male	30-40	Jaguar XJL (HLC)
1427	1427	T3	Male	30-40	Jaguar XF (MLC)
1428	1428	T3	Male	20-30	LEXUS IS (ELC)
1429	1429	T3	Female	40-50	BMW 520 (MLC)
1430	1430	T3	Female	20-30	LEXUS IS (ELC)

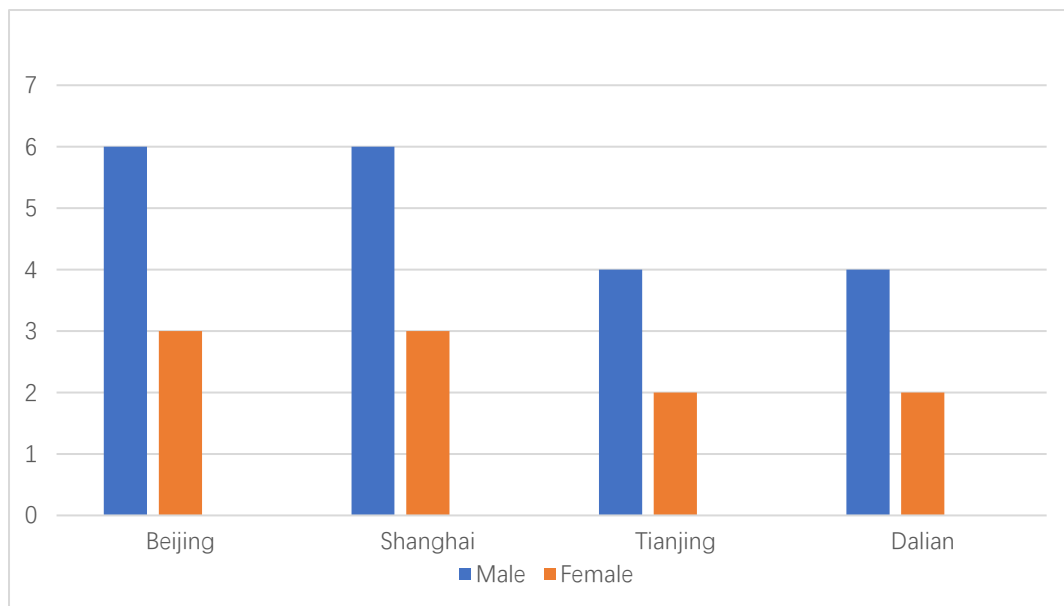


Figure 5.1.1: The participants' profile summary (B)

This chapter will present the important and unimportant factors for these participants during their ILC purchasing process. Through the analysis of the “positioning chart,” this chapter discussed the denotative and connotative meanings of luxury mobility in China. With the result discussed in Chapter IV, Chinese traditional luxury mobility, this chapter uncovers China's cultural meanings (at denotative, connotative, and myth level) of luxury mobility in China.

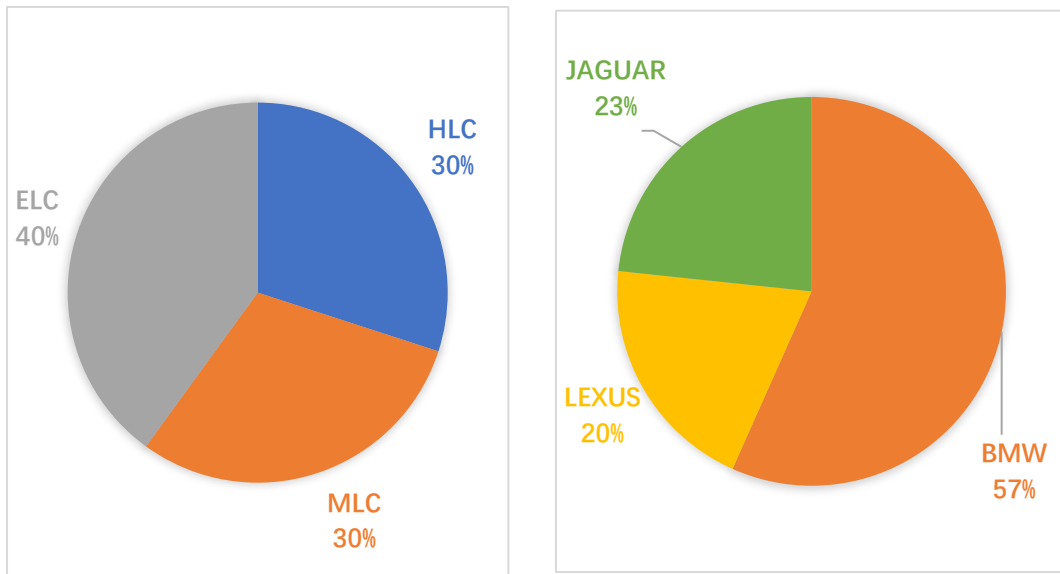


Figure 5.1.2: The participants' profile summary (C)

According to the data analysis method that mentioned in Chapter III, Section 5, the data analysis procedure in this study are:

*Step 1: Re-listening and transcriptions*

An example of an interview transcription is shown in Appendix C.

*Step 2: Decomposition interview transcriptions*

*Step 3: Categorising luxury mobility characteristics and key buying factors*

After Step 1 and Step 2, the important and unimportant factors influencing Chinese luxury car buyers' purchase decisions are summarised. The important factors are strongly influencing the buyer's decision. All the key factors will be fitted with a Microsoft Word colour in the positioning chat to be read and analysed more readily (see Table 5.1.2).

Table 5.1.2: Reading colours for the positioning chart

Positioning function	<b>For personal Mianzi</b>	
	<b>For business Mianzi</b>	
	<b>For personal identity</b>	
Performance	<b>Power</b>	
	<b>Control</b>	
	<b>Safety</b>	Unimportant factor <sup>64</sup>
	<b>Comfort</b>	
	<b>Dependability</b>	
	<b>New technology</b>	
	<b>In-car entertainment</b>	
Design Overall	<b>Exterior Design</b>	
	<b>Interior design</b>	
	<b>Driver seat space</b>	
	<b>Back seat space</b>	
	<b>Road noise cancelling</b>	
Brand	<b>Brand value</b>	
	<b>Custom service</b>	
Cost	<b>Price/budget</b>	Key factor.
	<b>After-sale service cost</b>	Unimportant factor
	<b>Oil consumption cost</b>	Unimportant factor
Others	<b>Boycott Japanese goods awareness</b>	Unimportant factors
	<b>Environmental protection awareness</b>	

Besides, the price of the car is one of the most significant factors for all buyers.

<sup>64</sup> The “Unimportant factor” will not be shown in the positioning chart. These factors are not important factors that influencing the buyers’ purchase decision.

Almost all the participants in this study will first decide their budget, then choose the most valuable car that fits their needs. For example, an ELC buyer will not buy an MLC or an HLC, as the price of an MLC or an HLC is too expensive for their budget; meanwhile, an HLC buyer will not buy an ELC or an MLC, as he or she can afford the higher price for the extra performance and functions. Due to this factor is not connect to cultural meaning. Thus, this factor will be discussed in the later section, and it would not be showing in the positioning chat.

In contrast, this study finds that the car's safety performance is a universal unimportant factor for all participants. All the ELC, MLC, and HLC in this study guaranteed a high safety performance standard. Thus, the safety performance among different luxury cars is too small to strengthen or weaken their market competitiveness. Other unimportant factors such as after-sale service cost, oil consumption cost is not significant enough to influence the buyer's decision. These unimportant factors will be discussed in a later section, and these factors would not be showing in the positioning chat.

#### *Step 4: Positioning the field facts*

According to the participant selection method mentioned in Chapter III, Section 4.1, the cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" in China can be understood along two axes: geographic conditions and consumer behaviours. Furthermore, age and gender are two critical conditions that may form different consumer behaviours (Saleh et al., 2013).

Also, each section contains several sub-groups. It is easier to identify the difference between the buying factors by separating each section into small groups. After comparing different groups, the overall positioning chart will be illustrated to discuss the key factors and then identify the cultural meaning of luxury mobility.

## 5.2 Analysis section one: geographic conditions

Analysis section one aims to uncover the relationship between the cultural meaning of luxury mobility and consumers' geographic conditions in China. Thus, 16 participants were chosen from Beijing, and Shanghai (T1), Tianjin (T2), and Dalian (T3), and be divided into four compare groups. Each group involves the participants who come from different city tiers, meanwhile from the same age groups. Moreover, the gender of the participants in each group is the same. Lastly, the luxury cars that the participants purchased in each group are in the same luxury level. Overall, the information of four groups in analysis section 1 are summarised (see table 5.2.1):

Table 5.2.1: Analysis section one groups information

Group	Participants	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
Group 1. A	4	Mixed	Male	40-50	HLC
Group 1. B	3	Mixed	Male	30-40	HLC
Group 1.C	5	Mixed	Male	30-40	MLC
Group 1. D	4	Mixed	Female	20-30	ELC

The participants in the analysis section one group A are male, 45-55, HLC owners who come from different city tiers (see Table 5.2.2)



Table 5.2.2: Analysis section one group A

Participant code one	Participant code two	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
1101	2101	T1	Male	40-50	BMW 730 (HLC)
1210					BMW 730 (HLC)
1319	1319	T2	Male	40-50	BMW 730 (HLC)
1425	1425	T3	Male	40-50	Jaguar XJL (HLC)

**Participant code two 2101:** The key factors for T1 male (40-50) HLC owners: Business Mianzi, brand value, control, dependability, driver seat space, custom service.

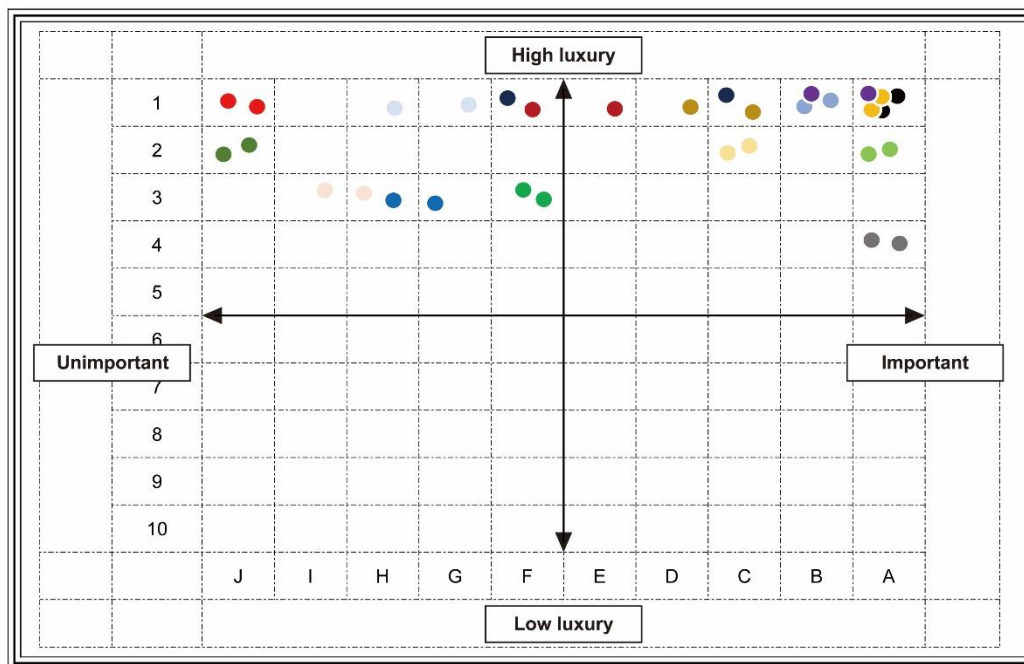


Figure 5.2.1: 2101-T1-Male-(40-50)-BMW-HLC

**Participant code two 1319:** The key factors for T2 male (40-50) HLC owners:  
 Personal Mianzi, brand value, exterior design.

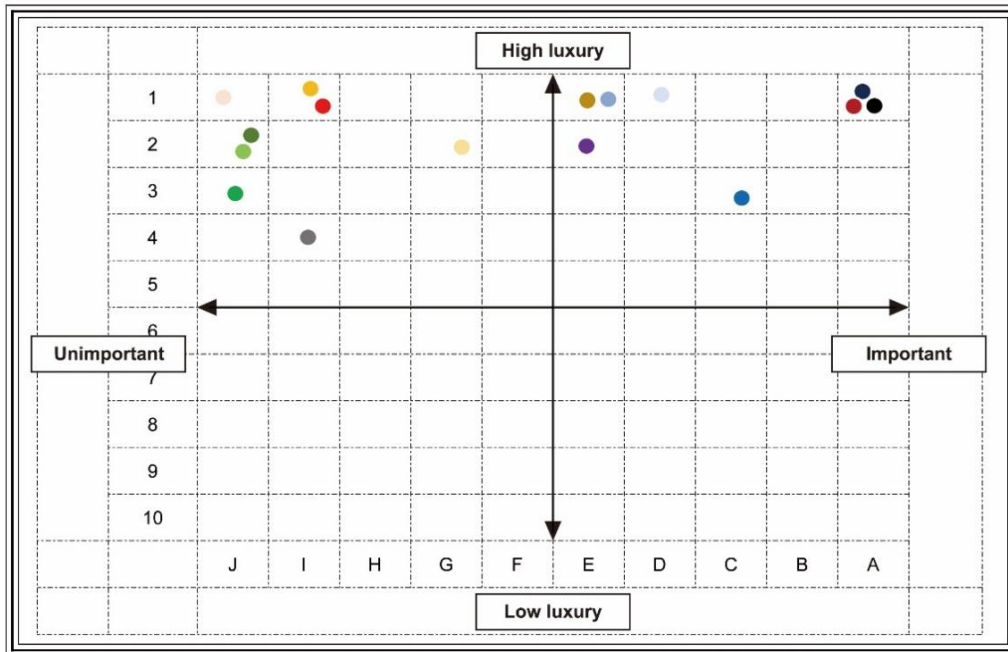


Figure 5.2.2: 1319-T2-Male-(40-50)-BMW-HLC

**Participant code two 1425:** The key factors for T3 male (40-50) HLC owners:  
 Personal Mianzi, brand value, exterior design, back seat space.

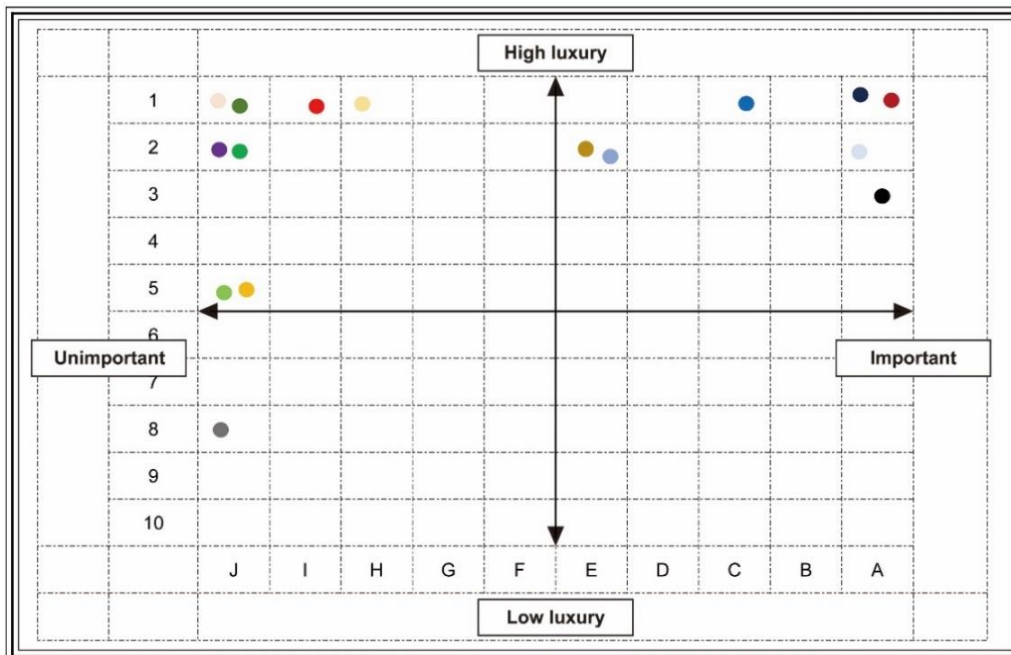


Figure 5.2.3: 1425-T3-Male-(40-50)-Jaguar-HLC

The participants in the analysis section one group B are male, 35-45, HLC owners who come from different city tiers (Table 5.2.3):

Table 5.2.3: Analysis section one group B

Participant code one	Participant code two	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
1211	2102	T1	Male	30-40	BMW 730 (HLC)
1320	1320	T2	Male	30-40	BMW 730 (HLC)
1426	1426	T3	Male </td <td>30-40</td> <td>Jaguar XJL (HLC)</td>	30-40	Jaguar XJL (HLC)

**Participant code two 2102:** The key factors for T1 male (30-40) HLC owners: Business Mianzi, brand value, exterior design, dependability, in-car entertainment.

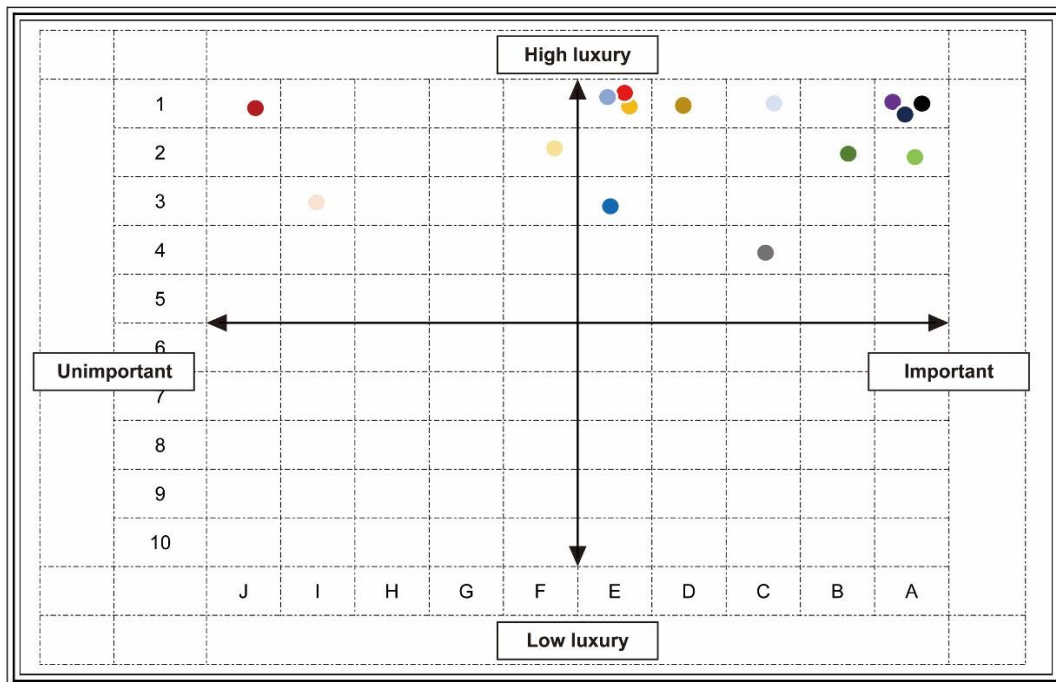


Figure 5.2.4: 2102-T1-Male-(30-40)-BMW-HLC

**Participant code two 1320:** The key factors for T2 male (30-40) HLC owners:  
 Personal Mianzi, brand value, exterior design.

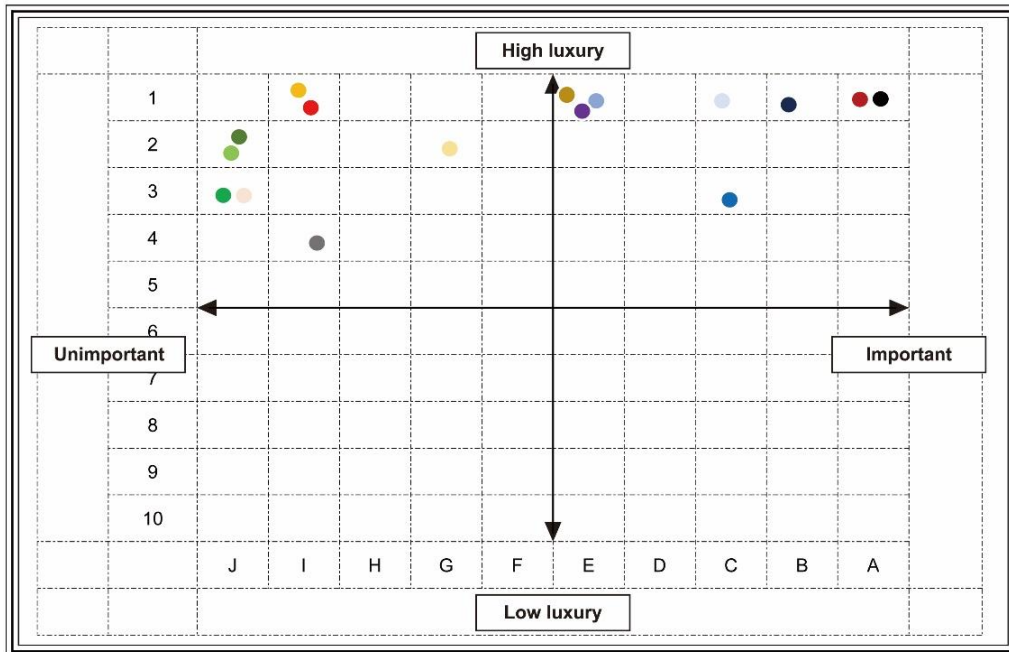


Figure 5.2.5: 1320-T2-Male-(30-40)-BMW-HLC

**Participant code two 1320:** The key factors for T2 male (30-40) HLC owners:  
 Personal Mianzi, brand value, exterior design.

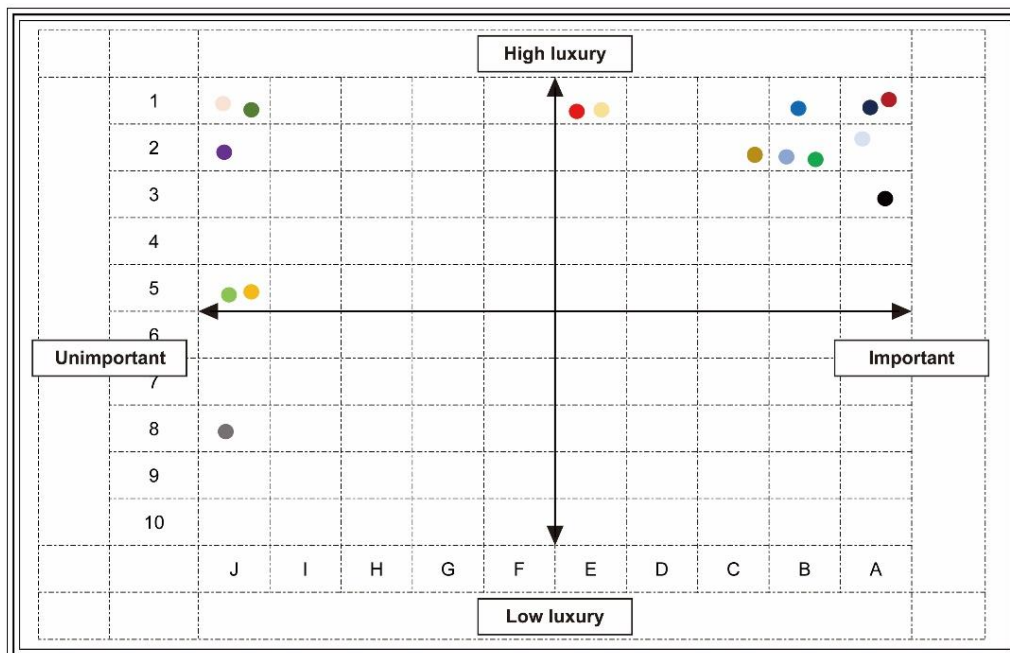


Figure 5.2.6: 1426-T3-Male-(30-40)-Jaguar-HLC

Table 5.2.4: Analysis section one group C

Participant code one	Participant code two	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
1102	2104	T1	Male	30-40	Jaguar XF (MLC)
1212					LEXUS ES (MLC)
1213					LEXUS ES (MLC)
1321	1321	T2	Male	30-40	BMW 525 (MLC)
1427	1427	T3	Male	30-40	Jaguar XF (MLC)

**Participant code two 2104:** The key factors for T2 male (30-40) HLC owners: Personal Mianzi, brand value, exterior design.

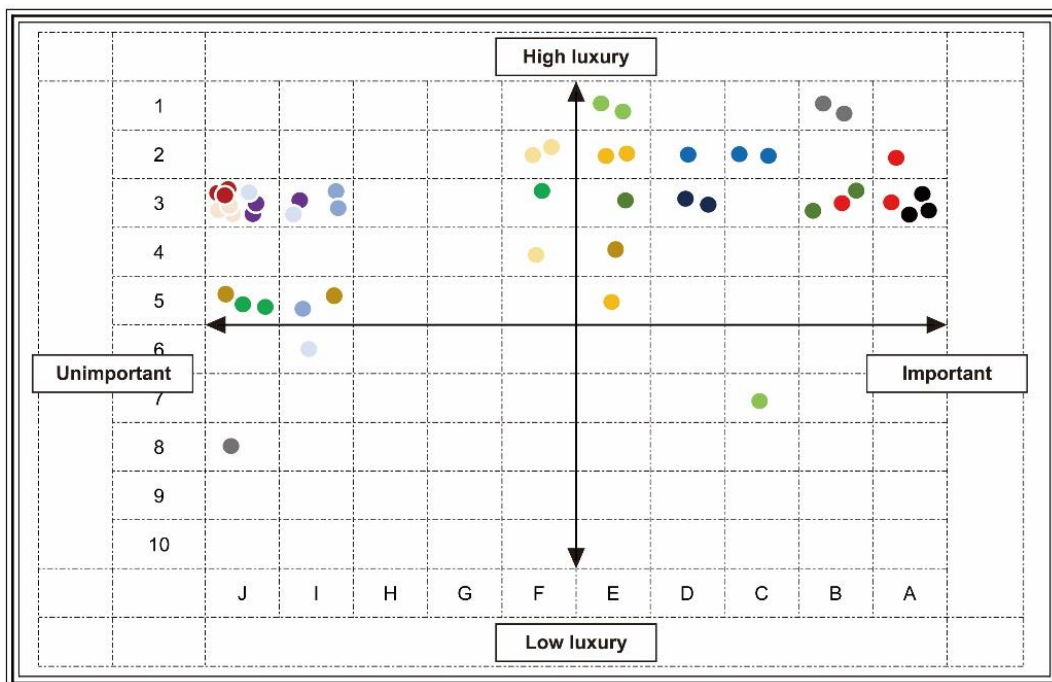


Figure 5.2.7: 2104-T1-Male-(30-40)-Lexus and Jaguar-MLC

**Participant code two 1321:** The key factors for T2 male (35-40) MLC owners: Personal Mianzi, brand value, exterior design.

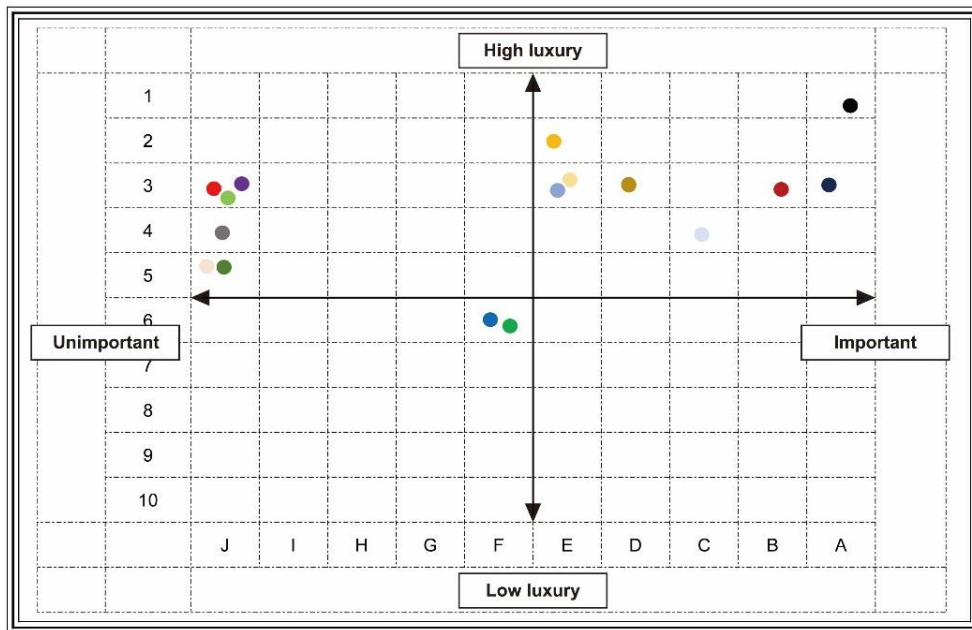


Figure 5.2.8: 1321-T2-Male-(35-40)-BMW-MLC

**Participant code two 1427:** The key factors for T3 male (30-40) MLC owners: Personal Mianzi, brand value, exterior design, new technology.

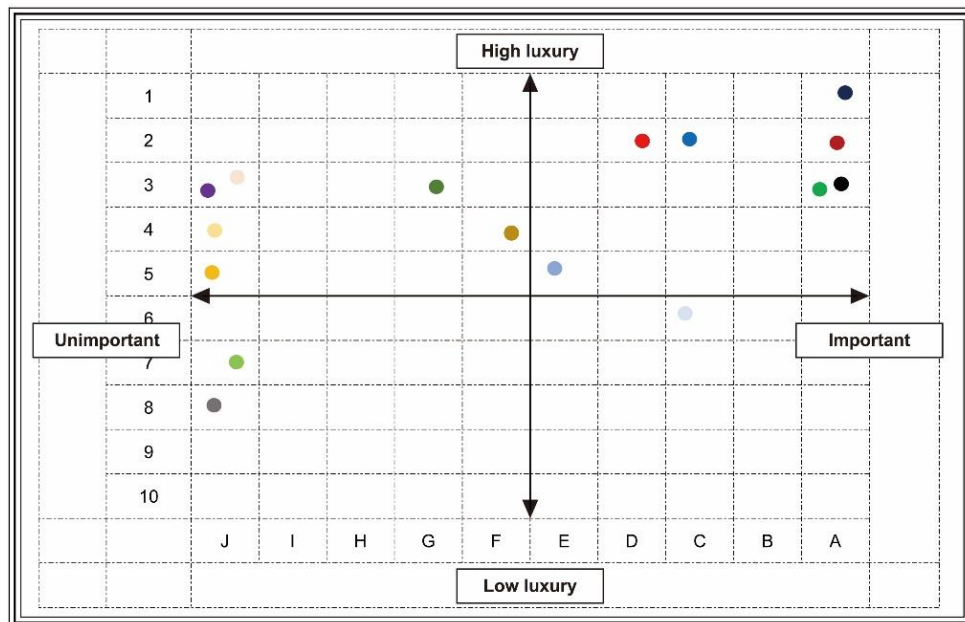


Figure 5.2.9: 1427-T3-Male-(30-40)-Jaguar-MLC

The participants in the analysis section one group D are female, 25-35, ELC owners who come from different city tiers (Table 5.2.5):

Table 5.2.5: Analysis section one group D

Participant code one	Participant code two	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
1109	2110	T1	Female	20-30	BMW 320 (ELC)
1218					LEXUS IS (ELC)
1324	1324	T2	Female	20-30	BMW 320 (ELC)
1430	1430	T3	Female	20-30	LEXUS IS (ELC)

**Participant code two 2110:** The key factors for T1 female (20-30) ELC owners: Personal identity, brand value, custom service, exterior design, interior design.

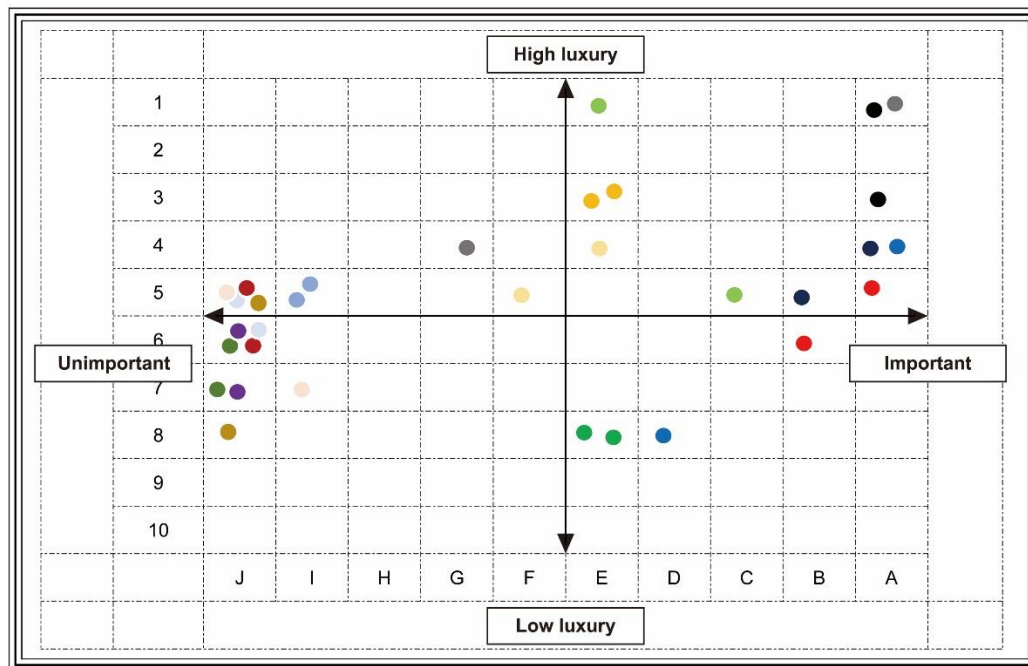


Figure 5.2.10: 2110-T1-Female-(20-30)-BMW and Lexus-ELC

**Participant code two 1324:** The key factors for T1 female (20-30) ELC owners: Personal identity, brand value, custom service, exterior design, interior design.

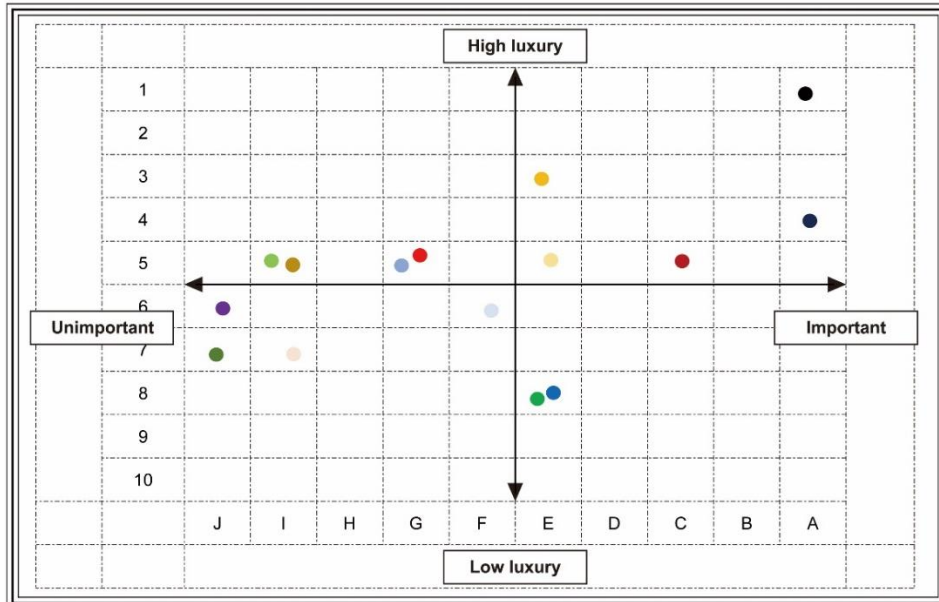


Figure 5.2.11: 1324-T2-Female-(20-30)-BMW-ELC

**Participant code two 1430:** The key factors for T3 female (20-30) ELC owners: Brand value, exterior design.

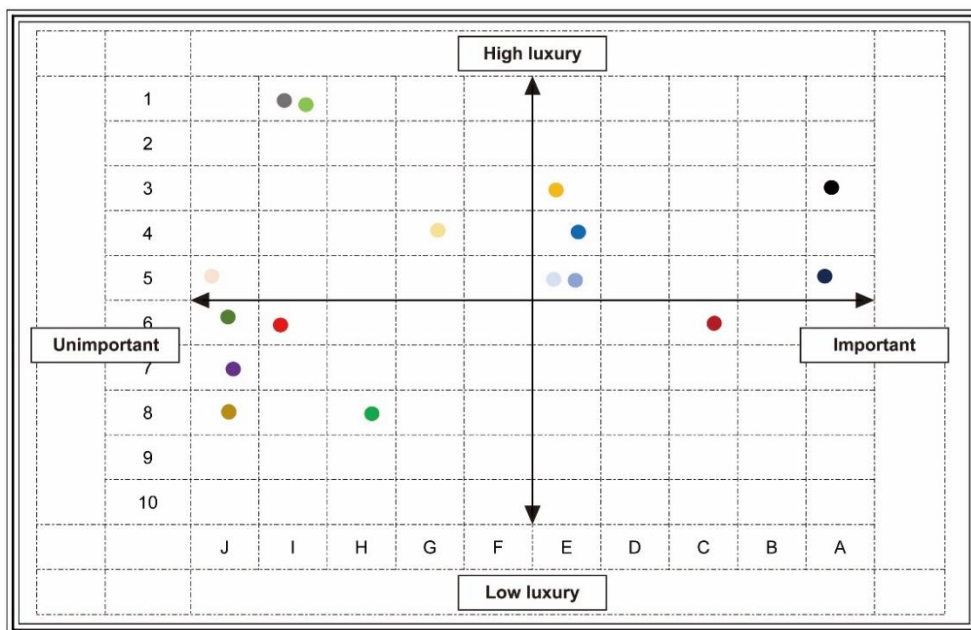


Figure 5.2.12: 1430-T3-Female-(20-30)-Lexus-ELC



Table 5.2.6: Analysis section one participants information

Participant code one	Participant code two	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car	
1101	<b>2101</b>	T1	Male	40-50	BMW 730 (HLC)	
1210					BMW 730 (HLC)	
1211	<b>2102</b>		Male	30-40	BMW 730 (HLC)	
1102	<b>2104</b>		Male	30-40	Jaguar XF (MLC)	
1212					LEXUS ES (MLC)	
1213					LEXUS ES (MLC)	
1109	<b>2110</b>		Female	20-30	BMW 320 (ELC)	
1218					LEXUS IS (ELC)	
1319	<b>1319</b>		T2	Male	40-50	BMW 730 (HLC)
1320	<b>1320</b>			Male	30-40	
1321	<b>1321</b>	Male		30-40	BMW 525 (MLC)	
1324	<b>1324</b>	Female		20-30	BMW 320 (ELC)	
1425	<b>1425</b>	T3	Male	40-50	Jaguar XJL (HLC)	
1426	<b>1426</b>		Male	30-40		
1427	<b>1427</b>		Male	30-40	Jaguar XF (MLC)	
1430	<b>1430</b>		Female	20-30	LEXUS IS (ELC)	

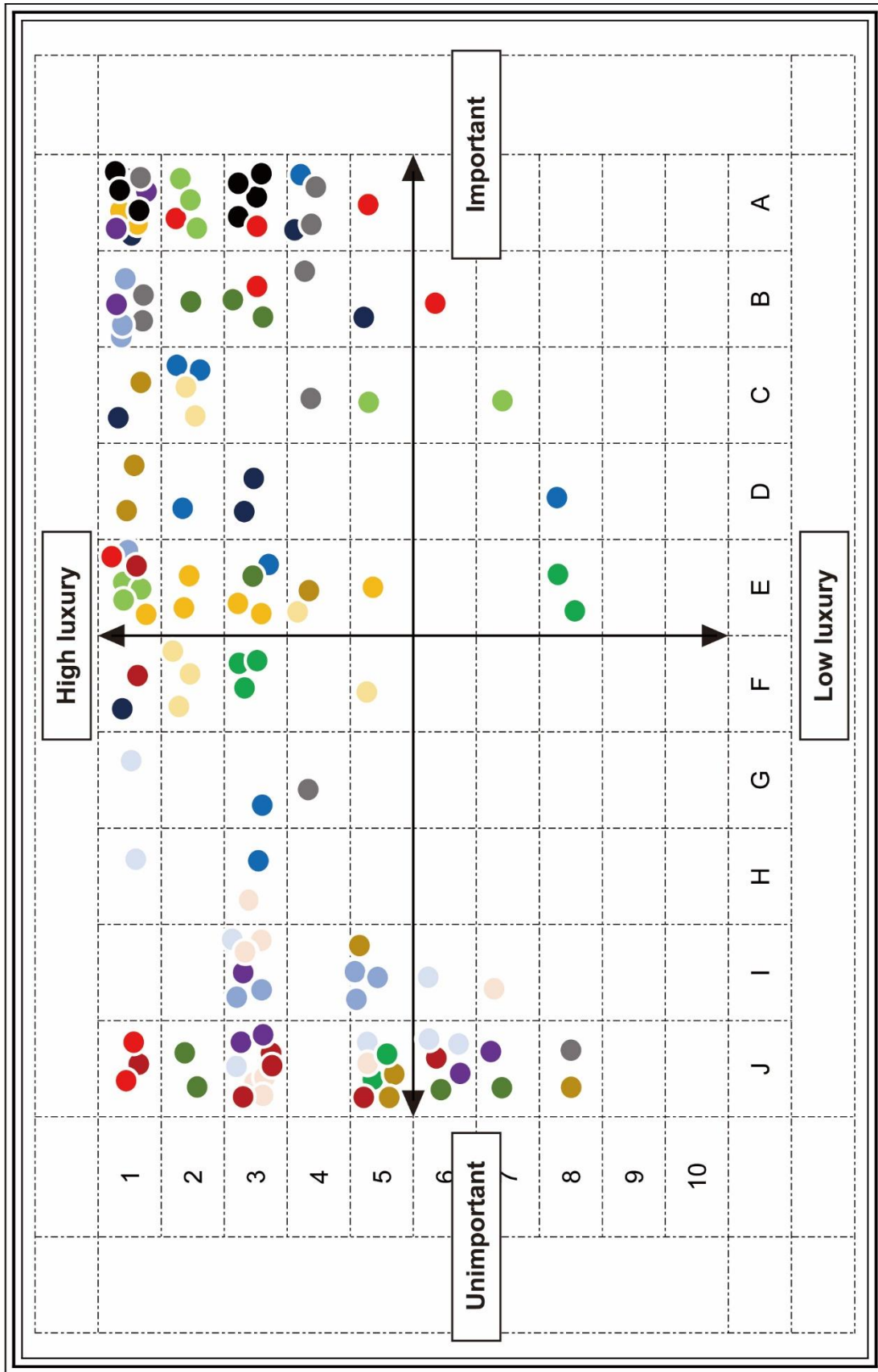


Figure 5.2.13: Analysis section one T1 participants

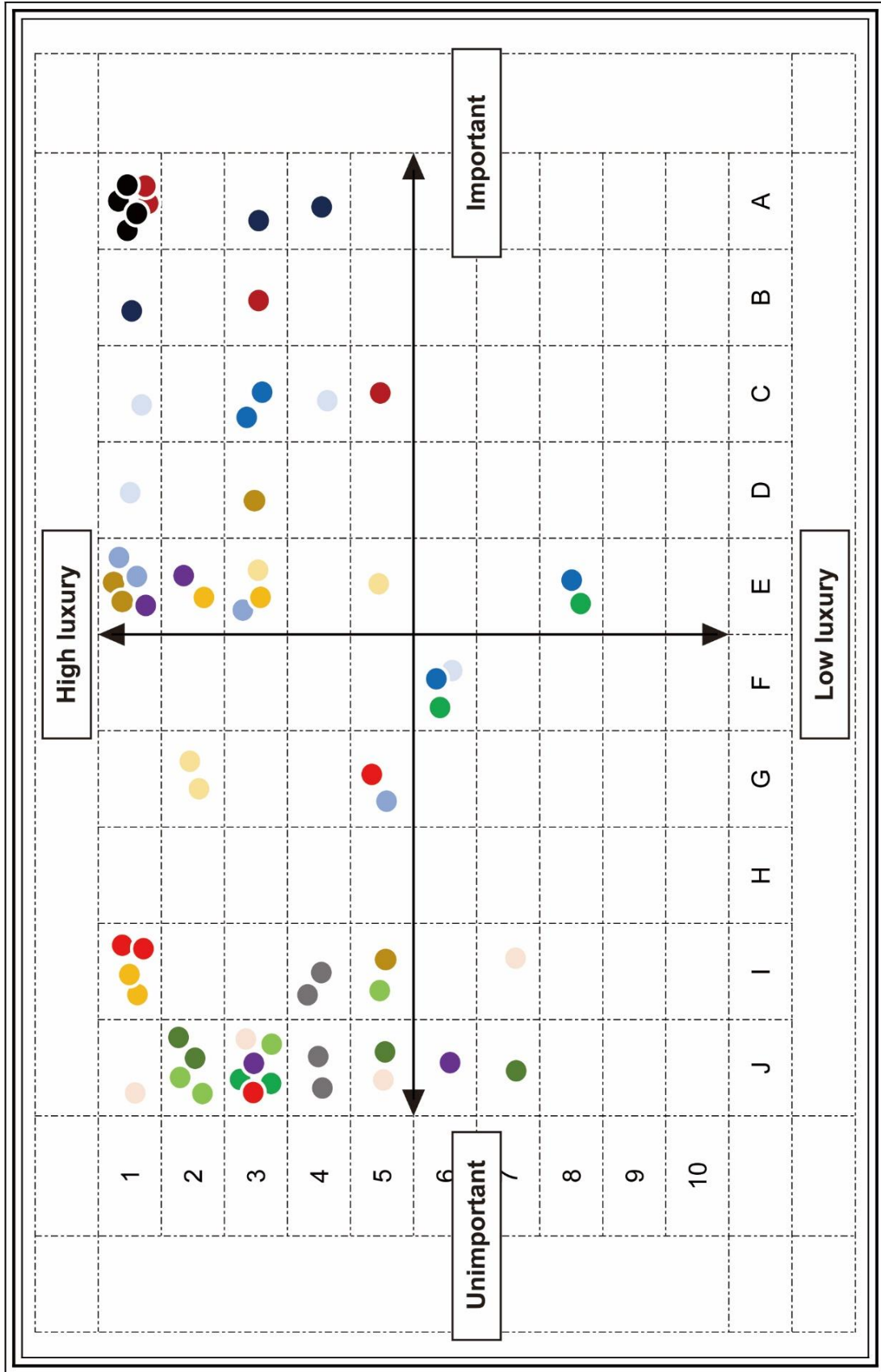


Figure 5.2.14: Analysis section one T2 participants

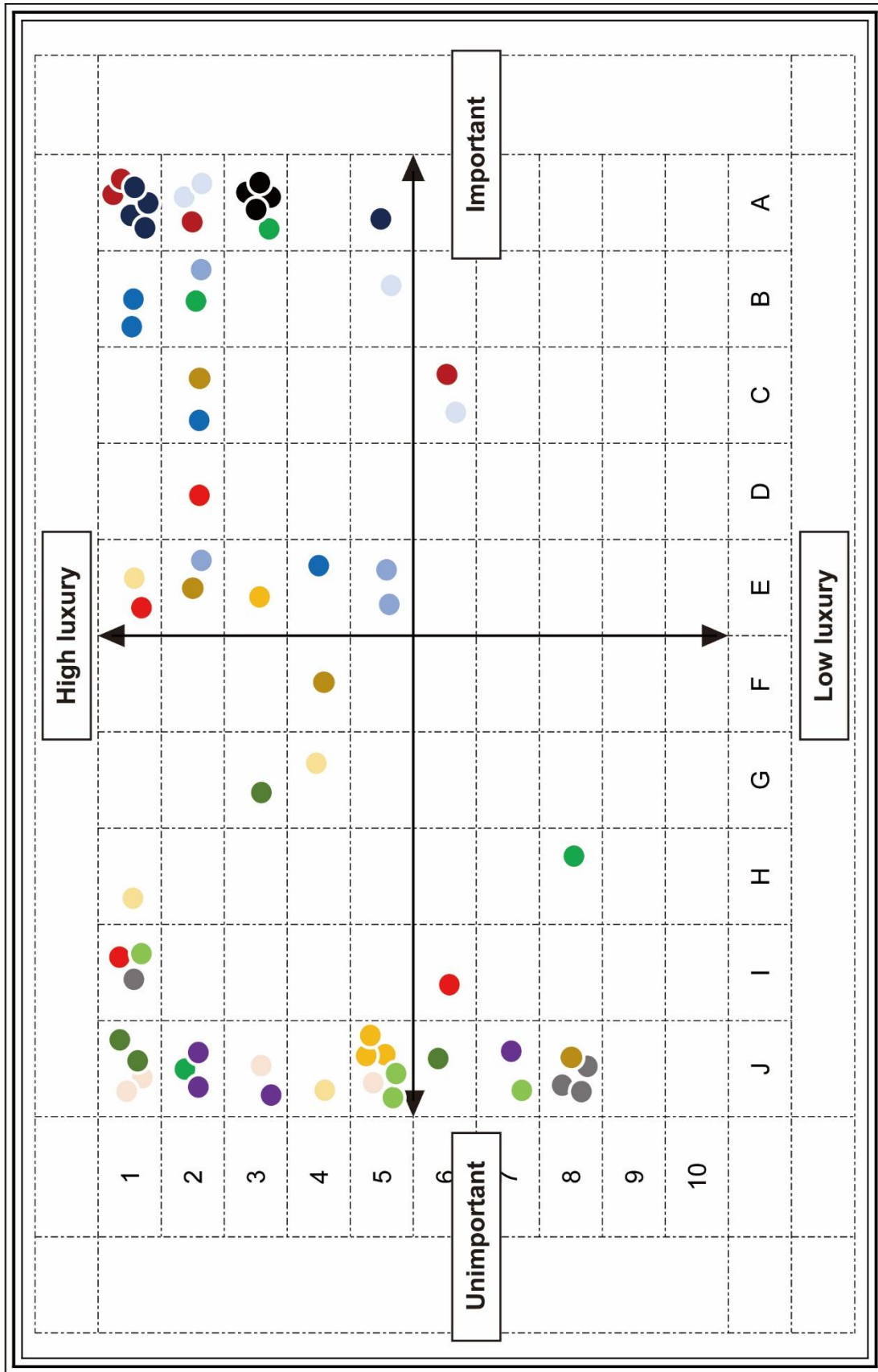


Figure 5.2.15: Analysis section one T3 participants

Table 5.2.7: Analysis section one key factors summary<sup>65</sup>

T1	T2	T3		
★	★★★★★	★★★★★	Personal Mianzi	
★★	★	★	Business Mianzi	
★★★★	★	★★	Personal identity	
★★	★★★	★★★	Power	
★★★	★★★	★★	Control	
★★★★★	★★★	★★	Comfort	
★★★★	★	★	Dependability	
★★	★★	★★★	New technology	
★★	★	★	In-car entertainment	
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	Exterior Design	
★★★	★★★	★★	Interior design	
★★	★★★	★★★	Driver seat space	
★★	★★★★	★★★★★	Back seat space	
★	★	★	Road noise cancelling	
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	Brand value	
★★★★	★	★	After-sale custom service	
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	Price/budget	-

For T1 users, the key features influencing their purchase decision are price/budget, brand value, exterior design, positioning function for personal identity, comfort, dependability, and customer service. For T2 users, the key features that influence their purchase decision are positioning function for personal Mianzi, price/budget, brand value, exterior design, and back seat space. For T3 users, the key factors influencing their purchase decision are

<sup>65</sup> Totally 5 stars. 5 stars refer to important factors, and one star refers to unimportant factors. Also, the important factors are highlighted with a dark background.

similar to T2 users, which are positioning function for personal Mianzi, price/budget, brand value, exterior design, and back seat space. Overall, the universal vital features that influence the purchase decisions of T1, T2, and T3 are brand value and exterior design. A car with a high price, high brand value, and outstanding exterior design are strongly connected to the cultural meaning of luxury vehicles by all luxury car buyers.

Also, T1 participants pay more attention to positioning functions for personal identity, comfort, and dependability, and after-sale customer service. Moreover, the space of the backseat is an unimportant factor for them. In contrast, T2 and T3 users pay more attention to the positioning function for Mianzi and back seat space. Besides, the performance of comfort, dependability, and after-sale customer service are unimportant factors for them.

Thus, the denotative cultural meaning of luxury mobility for T1 buyers can be understood as comfortable, dependable mobility with a high brand value, outstanding exterior design vehicle. Moreover, this vehicle should be supported by excellent after-sale customer service. The denotative cultural meaning of luxury mobility for T2 and T3 buyers can be understood as the mobility with a high brand value, outstanding exterior design vehicle. Also, this vehicle should have an ample back seat space.

### **5.3 Analysis section two: age**

Analysis section two aims to uncover the relationship between the cultural meaning of luxury mobility and the consumer's age. As mentioned in section 4.1, In China, T1 and T2 cities will be leaders in the consumption of premium and luxury products. Thus, 13 participants were chosen from Beijing and Shanghai (T1) and then be divided into three compare groups. Each group

involves participants who come from different age groups; meanwhile, the gender of the participants in each group is the same. Moreover, the luxury cars that the participants purchased in each group are in the same luxury level. Lastly, each group involved the participants come from different age groups for the comparison. Overall, the information of three groups in the analysis section one is summarised (see Table 5.3.1):

Table 5.3.1: Analysis section two groups information

Group	Participants	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
<b>Group 2. A</b>	4	T1	Male	Mixed	HLC
<b>Group 2. B</b>	5	T1	Male	Mixed	ELC
<b>Group 2.C</b>	4	T1	Female	Mixed	ELC

The participants in the analysis section two group A are male, HLC owners, living T1 cities in China who come from different age groups (Table 5.3.2):

Table 5.3.2: Analysis section two group A

Participant code one	Participant code two	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
1101	<b>2101</b>	T1	Male	40-50	BMW 730 (HLC)
1210					BMW 730 (HLC)
1211	<b>2102</b>	T1	Male	30-40	BMW 730 (HLC)
1105	<b>2103</b>	T1	Male	20-30	BMW 730 (HLC)

**Participant code two 2101:** See Figure 5.2.1: 2101-T1-Male-(40-50)-BMW-HLC<sup>66</sup>: The key factors for T1 male (40-50) HLC owners: Business Mianzi, brand value, control, dependability, driver seat space, custom service.

<sup>66</sup> See Chapter V Analysis section two group A, page 148.

**Participant code two 2102:** The key factors for T1 male (30-40) HLC owners:  
 Personal identity, business etiquette, brand value, exterior design.

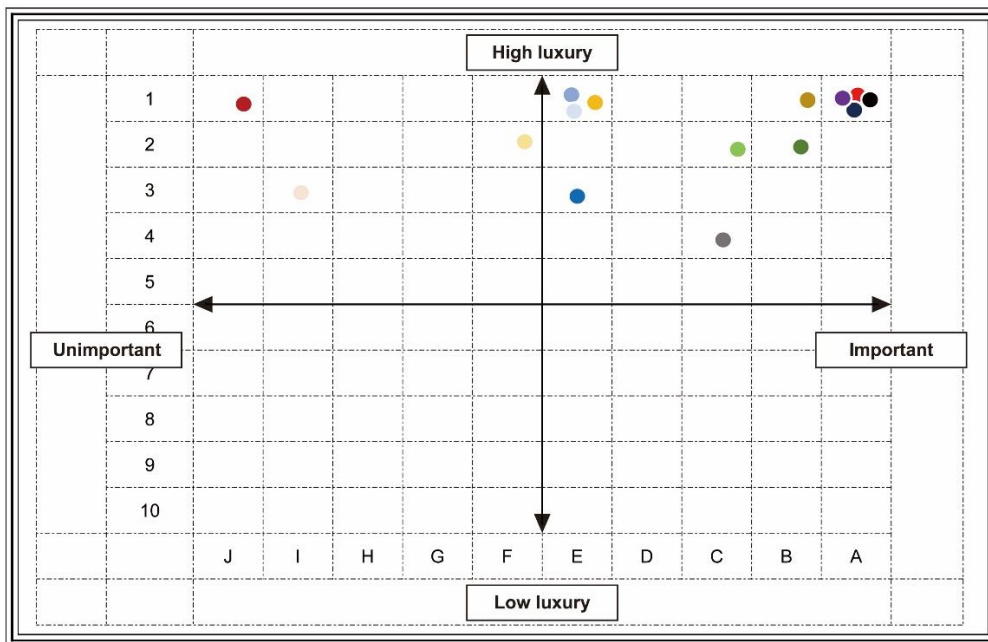


Figure 5.3.1: 2102-T1-Male-(30-40)-BMW-HLC

**Participant code two 2103:** The key factors for T1 male (20-30) HLC owners:  
 Personal identity, business etiquette, brand value, exterior design, power.

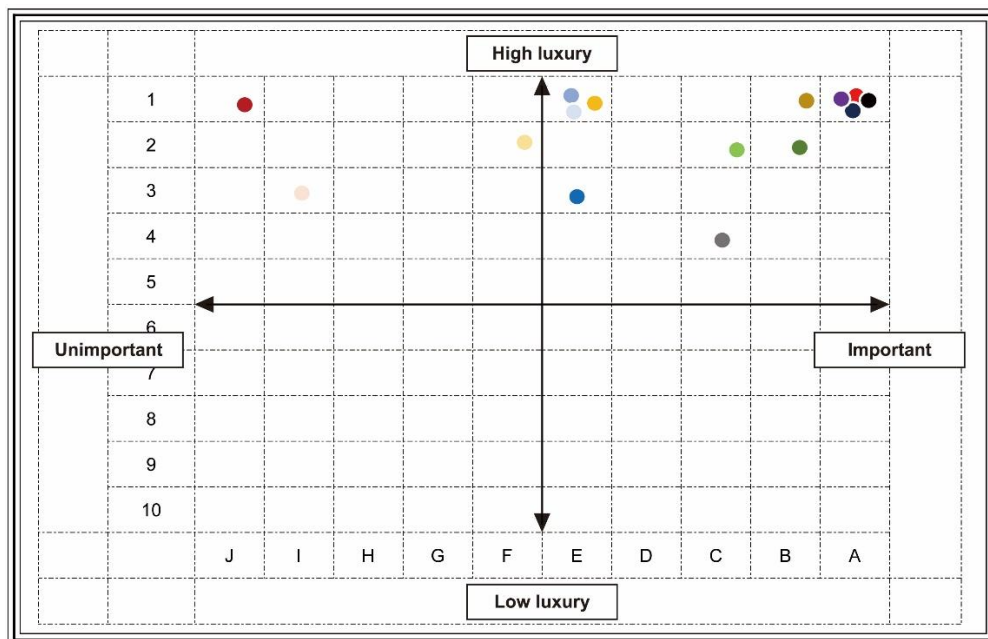


Figure 5.3.2: 2103-T1-Male- (20-30)-BMW-HLC



The participants in the analysis section two group B are male, ELC owners, living T1 cities in china who come from different age groups<sup>67</sup> (see Table 5.3.3):

Table 5.3.3: Analysis section two group B

Participant code one	Participant code two	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
1103	2105	T1	Male	30-40	BMW 325 (ELC)
1104					BMW 320 (ELC)
1106	2106	T1	Male	20-30	BMW 325 (ELC)
1214					LEXUS IS (ELC)
1215					BMW 325 (ELC)

**Participant code two 2105:** The key factors for T1 male (30-40) ELC owners: Personal identity, brand value, exterior design.

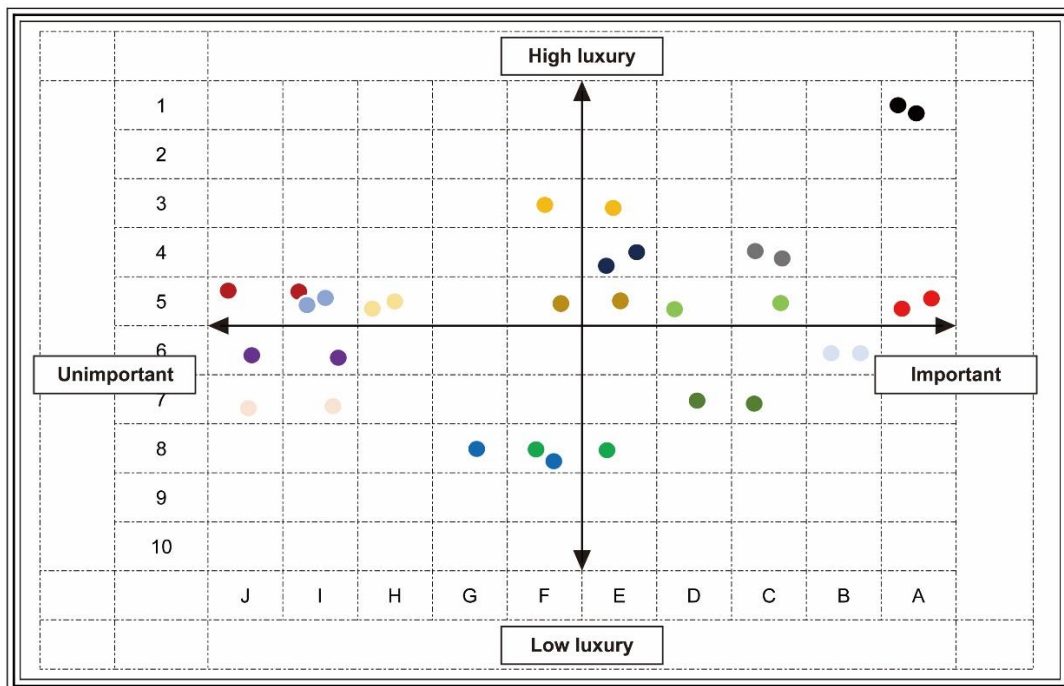


Figure 5.3.3: 2105-T1-Male-(30-40)-BMW-ELC

<sup>67</sup> 35-45 vs 25-35 only.

**Participant code two 2106:** The key factors for T1 male (20-30) ELC owners:  
Personal identity, brand value, exterior design.

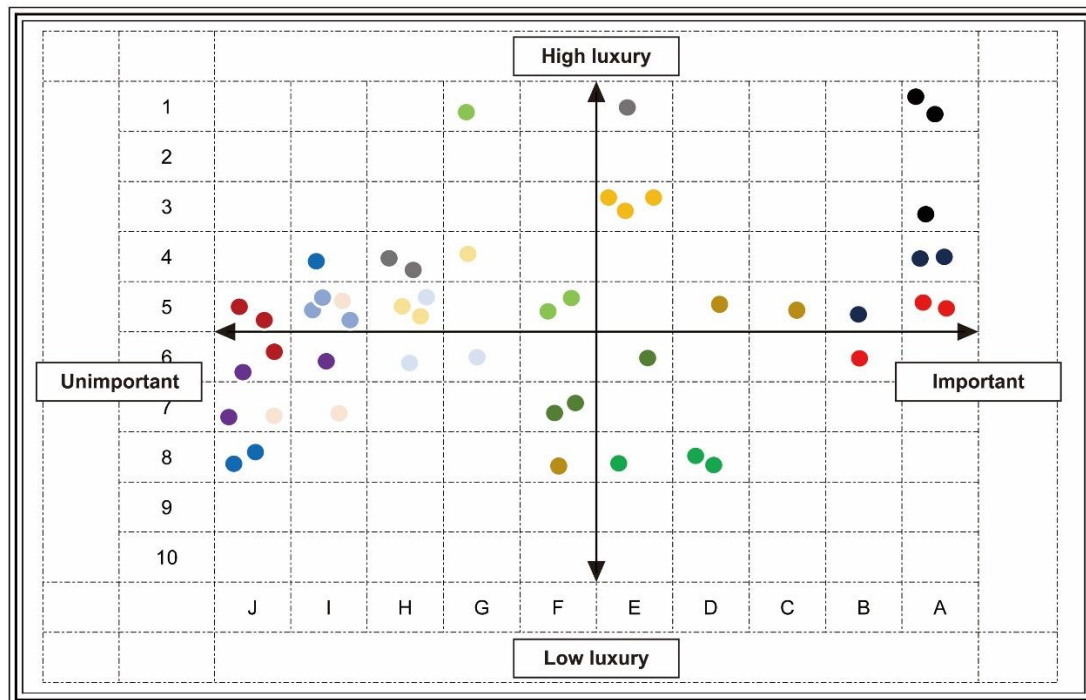


Figure 5.3.4: 2106-T1-Male-(20-30)-BMW and LEXUS-ELC

The participants in the analysis section two group C are female, ELC owners, living T1 cities in china who come from different age groups<sup>68</sup> (see Table 5.3.4):

Table 5.3.4: Analysis section two group C

Participant code one	Participant code two	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
1108	2109	T1	Female	30-40	BMW 325 (ELC)
1217					BMW 325 (ELC)
1109	2110	T1	Female	20-30	BMW 320 (ELC)
1218					LEXUS IS (ELC)

<sup>68</sup> 35-45 vs 25-35 only.

**Participant code two 2109:** The key factors for T1 female (30-40) ELC owners: Brand value, exterior design, dependability.

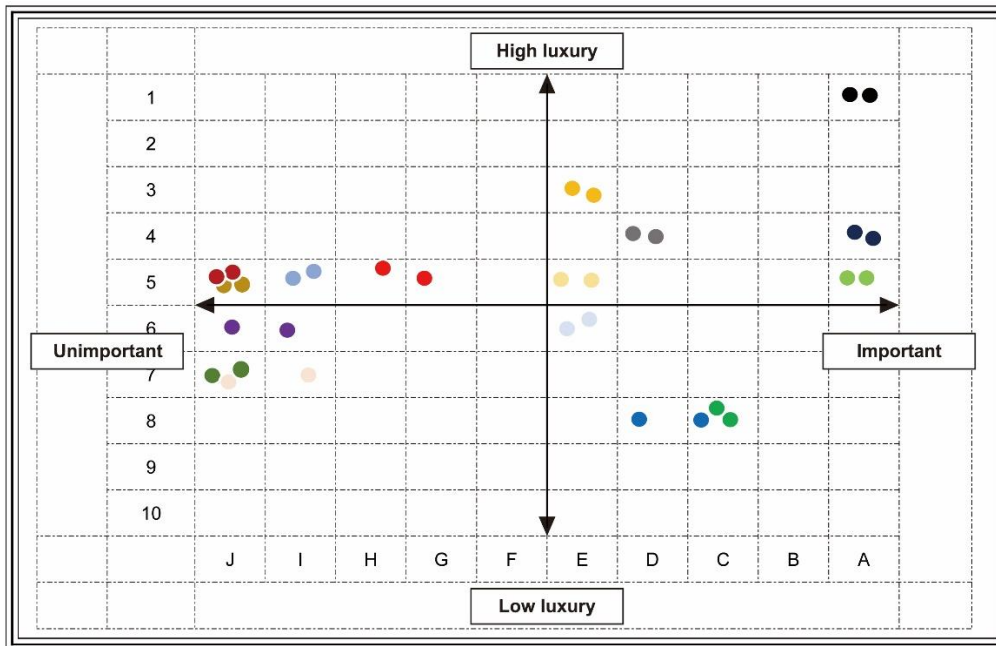


Figure 5.3.5: 2109-T1-Female-(30-40)-BMW-ELC

**Participant code two 2110:** The key factors for T1 female (20-30) ELC owners: Brand value, exterior design, personal identity.

See Figure 5.2.10: 2110-T1-Female-(20-30)-BMW and LEXUS-ELC<sup>69</sup>.

<sup>69</sup> See Chapter V Analysis section two group C, page 154.

Table 5.3.5: Analysis section two participants information

Participant code one	Participant code two	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car		
1101	<b>2101</b>	T1	Male	40-50	BMW 730 (HLC)		
1210					BMW 730 (HLC)		
1211	<b>2102</b>	T1	Male	30-40	BMW 730 (HLC)		
1103	<b>2105</b>				BMW 325 (ELC)		
1104					BMW 320 (ELC)		
1108	<b>2109</b>		Female		BMW 325 (ELC)		
1217					BMW 325 (ELC)		
1105	<b>2103</b>		T1		Male	20-30	BMW 730 (HLC)
1106	<b>2106</b>						BMW 325 (ELC)
1214		LEXUS IS (ELC)					
1215		BMW 325 (ELC)					
1109	<b>2110</b>	Female		BMW 320 (ELC)			
1218				LEXUS IS (ELC)			

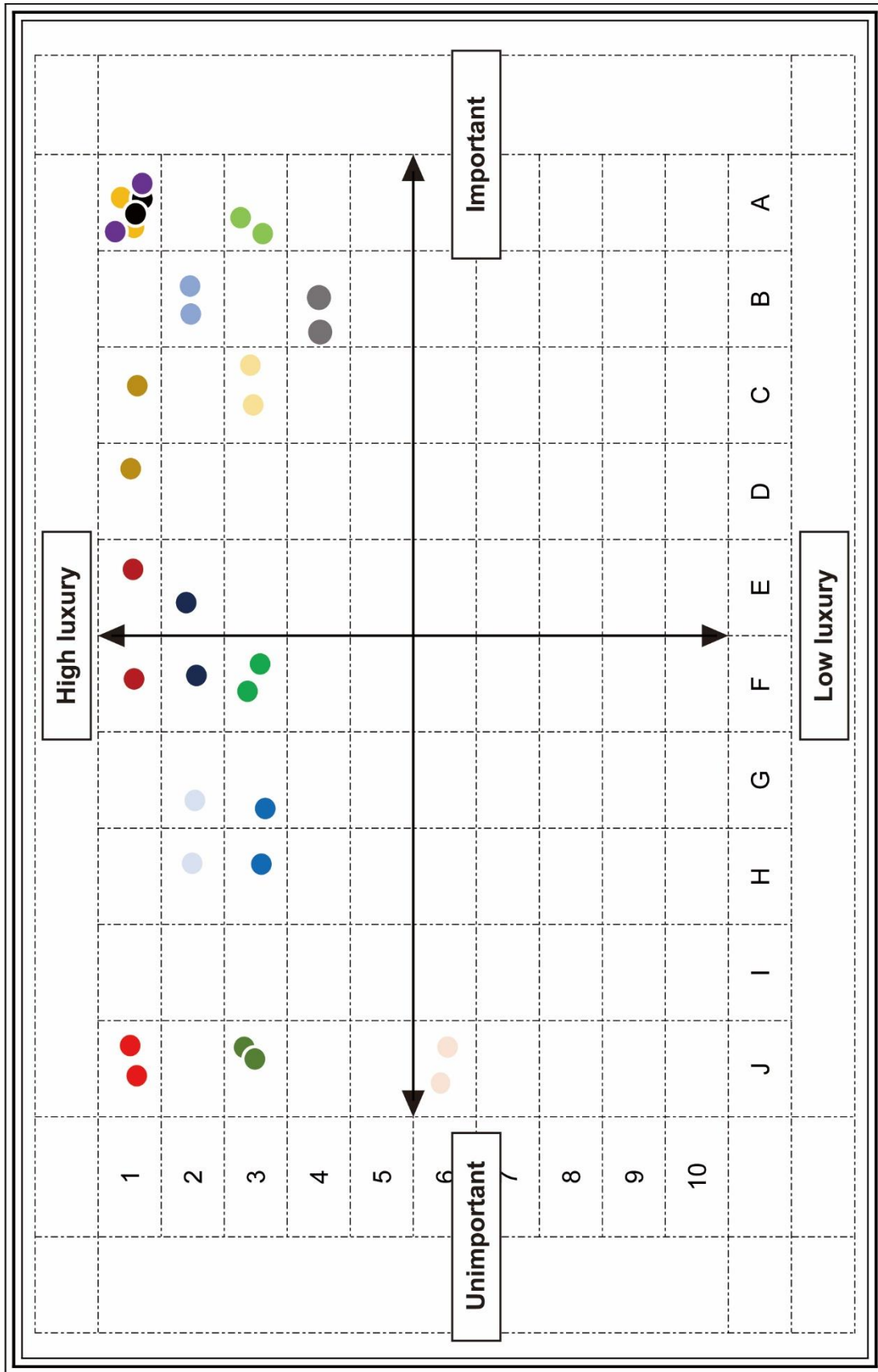


Figure 5.3.6: Analysis section two 40-50 participants

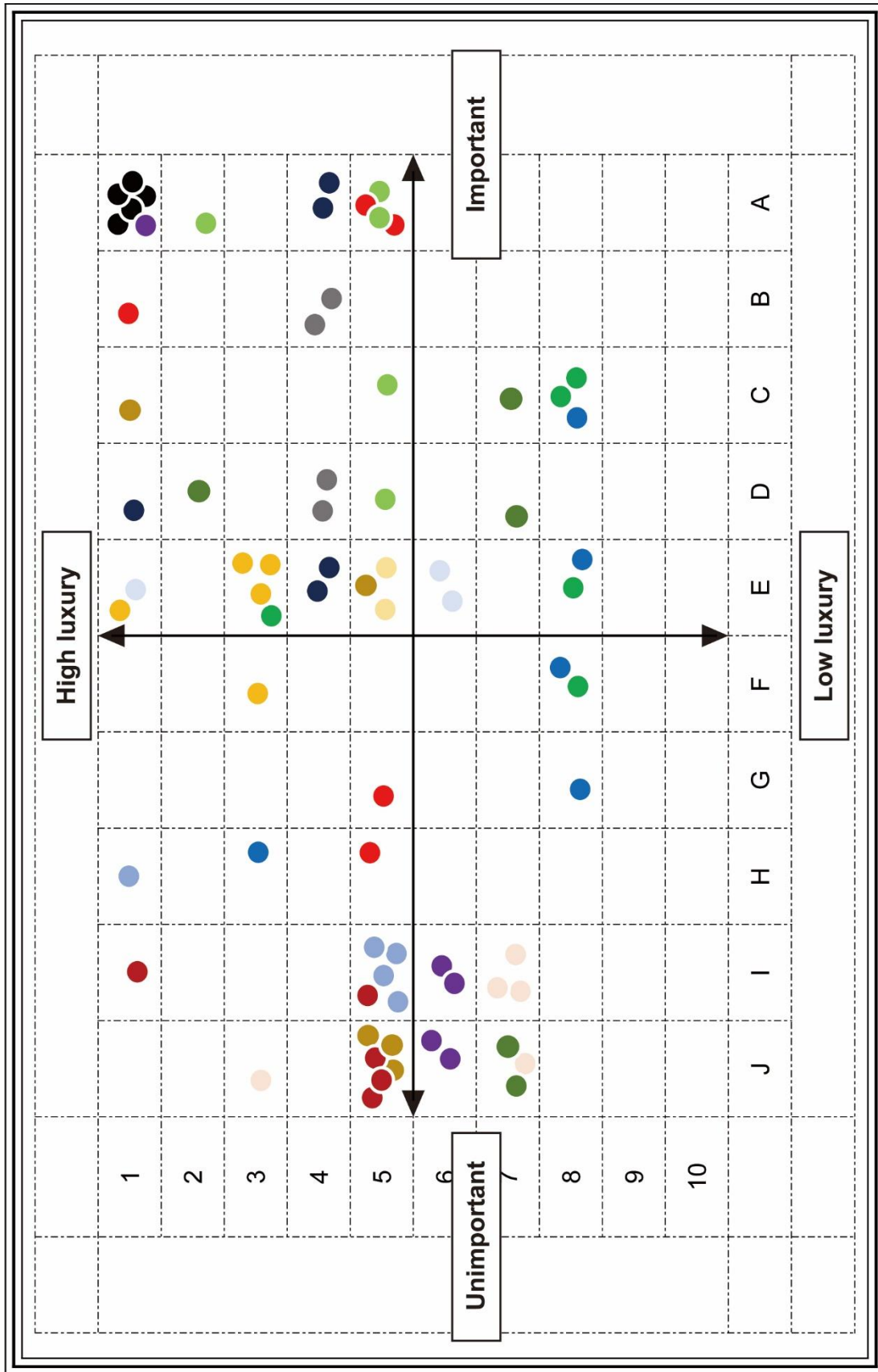


Figure 5.3.7: Analysis section two 30-40 participants

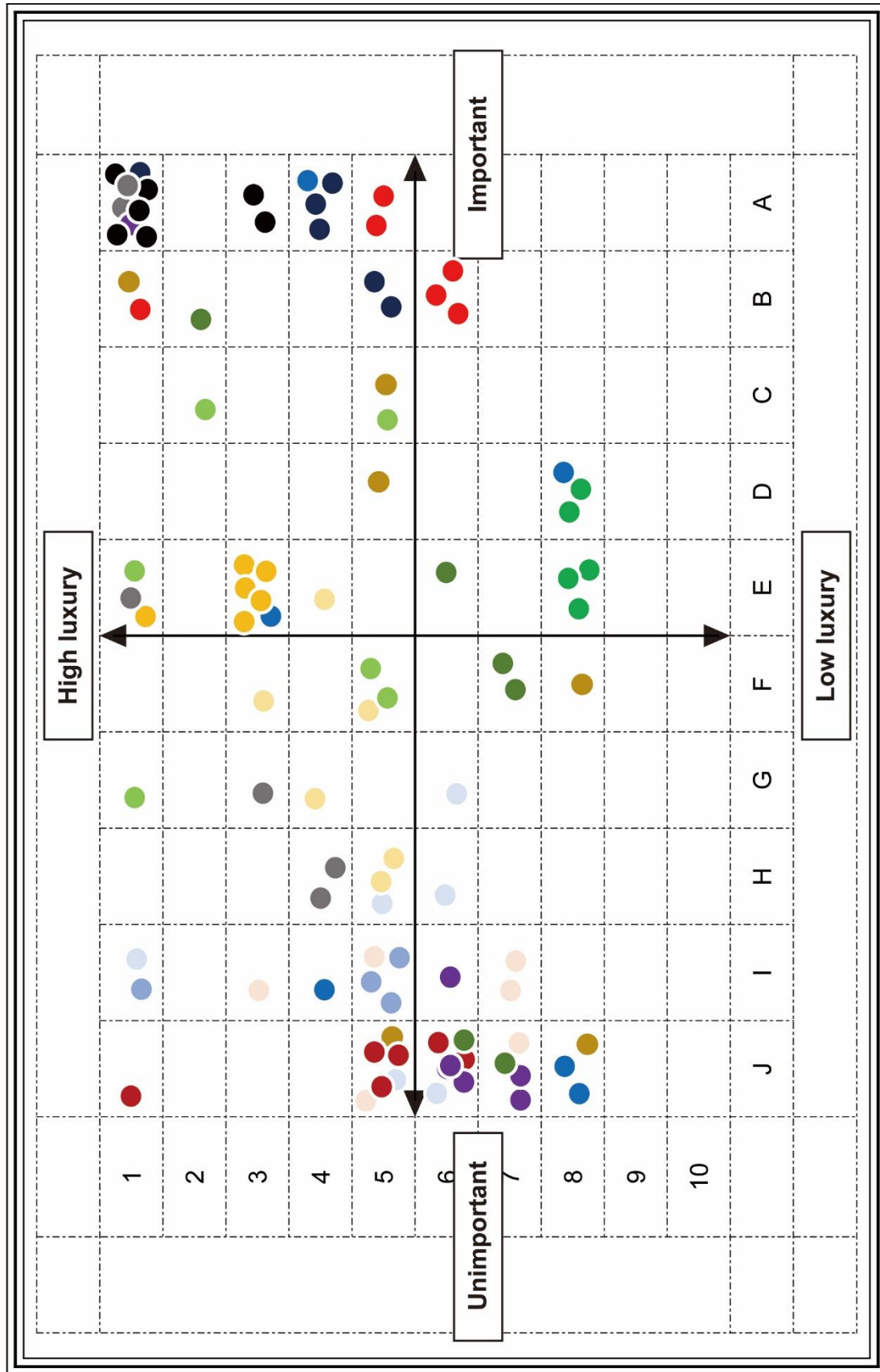


Figure 5.3.8: Analysis section two 20-30 participants

Table 5.3.6: Analysis section two key factors summary

45-55	35-45	25-35		
★★★	★	★	Personal Mianzi	
★★★★★	★	★	Business Mianzi	
★	★★★★	★★★★★	Personal identity	
★★★★	★★	★★★	Power	
★★★★★	★★★	★★★	Control	
★★★★	★★	★★★	Comfort	
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	Dependability	
★★★	★★★	★★★★	New technology	
★	★★★	★★	In-car entertainment	
★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	Exterior Design	
★★	★★★	★★★	Interior design	
★★★★★	★	★	Driver seat space	
★★	★★★★	★★	Back seat space	
★★	★	★	Road noise cancelling	
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	Brand value	
★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	Custom service	
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	Price/budget	-

For T1 40-50 users, the key features that affect their purchase decisions are price/budget, brand value, exterior design, business Mianzi, power, control, comfort, dependability, driver seat space, and customer service. For T1 30-40 users, the key features that affect their purchase decisions are price/budget, brand value, exterior design, personal identity, dependability, backseat space, and customer service. For T1 20-30 users, the key features that affect their purchase decisions are price/budget, brand value, exterior design, personal identity, new technology. Besides, as motioned in Section 5.2, price/budget,



brand value, and exterior design are three universal vital factors for all participants.

Besides, 40-50 participants pay more attention to the car's driving performance factors (e.g., power, control, comfort). However, these factors are unimportant factors for 30-40 and 20-30 participants. Moreover, 40-50 and 30-40 participants pay more attention to the car's dependability, customer service, and space<sup>70</sup>. However, new technology is an unimportant factor for them. In contrast, 20-30 participants pay more attention to the car's new technology factor. However, dependability, custom service, and space of the car are unimportant factors for them. As mentioned in Section 5.2, T1 participants pay more attention to positioning function for personal identity and customer service compare with T2 and T3 participants. However, this section finds that the car's long-term value (e.g., dependability, after-sale custom service) of the car is not the critical needs for 20-30 consumers. This difference is the most significant consumer behaviour difference between 20-30 consumers and 30-50 consumers in China.

#### **5.4 Analysis section three: gender**

This section focuses on the discussion of the cultural meaning difference among different gender. Two compare groups are analysed in this section. Each group involves the participants from the same city tier in china and the same age groups but different genders. Besides, the luxury cars they purchased are in the same luxury level. Overall, the 9 participants<sup>71</sup> in this section illustrated the wide variety of cultural meanings attached to their ILCs (see Table 5.4.1).

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<sup>70</sup> In this section, this study finds that 40-50 only pay attention on driver seat space, 30-40 participants only pay attention on backseat space.

<sup>71</sup> All the participants in analysis section three are already analysis in the previous sections.

Table 5.4.1: Analysis section three groups information

Group	Participants	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
<b>Group 3. A</b>	4	T1	Mixed	35-45	ELC
<b>Group 3. B</b>	4	T1	Male	25-35	ELC

The participants in the analysis section three group A are T1, 30-40, ELC owners who with different gender (see Table 5.4.2):

Table 5.4.2: Analysis section three group A

Participant code one	Participant code two	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
1103	<b>2105</b>	T1	Male	30-40	BMW 325 (ELC)
1104					BMW 320 (ELC)
1108	<b>2109</b>	T1	Female	30-40	BMW 325 (ELC)
1217					BMW 325 (ELC)

**Participant code two 2105:** The key factors for T1 male (30-40) ELC owners: Personal identity, brand value, exterior design.

See Figure 5.3.3: 2105-T1-Male-(30-40)-BMW-ELC<sup>72</sup>.

**Participant code two 2109:** The key factors for T1 female (30-40) ELC owners: Brand value, exterior design, dependability.

See Figure 5.3.5: 2109-T1-Female-(30-40)-BMW-ELC<sup>73</sup>.

<sup>72</sup> See Chapter V Analysis section two group B, page 164.

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter V Analysis section two group C, page 166.

Table 5.4.3: Analysis section three group B

Participant code one	Participant code two	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
1106	<b>2106</b>	T1	Male	20-30	BMW 325 (ELC)
1214					LEXUS IS (ELC)
1215					BMW 325 (ELC)
1109	<b>2110</b>	T1	Female	20-30	BMW 320 (ELC)
1218					LEXUS IS (ELC)

**Participant code two 2106:** The key factors for T1 male (20-30) ELC owners:

Personal identity, brand value, exterior design.

See Figure 5.3.4: 2106-T1-Male-(25-35)-BMW and LEXUS-ELC<sup>74</sup>.

**Participant code two 2110:** The key factors for T1 female (20-30) ELC owners:

Brand value, exterior design, personal identity.

See Figure 5.2.10: 2110-T1-Female-(20-30)-BMW and LEXUS-ELC<sup>75</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> See Chapter V Analysis section two group B, page 166.

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter V Analysis section two group C, page 154.

Table 5.4.4: Analysis section three participants information

Participant code one	Participant code two	City Tier	Gender	Age group	The luxury class of the purchased car
1103	<b>2105</b>	T1	Male	35-45	BMW 325 (ELC)
1104					BMW 320 (ELC)
1106	<b>2106</b>			25-35	BMW 325 (ELC)
1214					LEXUS IS (ELC)
1215					BMW 325 (ELC)
1108	<b>2109</b>			T1	Female
1217		BMW 325 (ELC)			
1109	<b>2110</b>	25-35	BMW 320 (ELC)		
1218			LEXUS IS (ELC)		

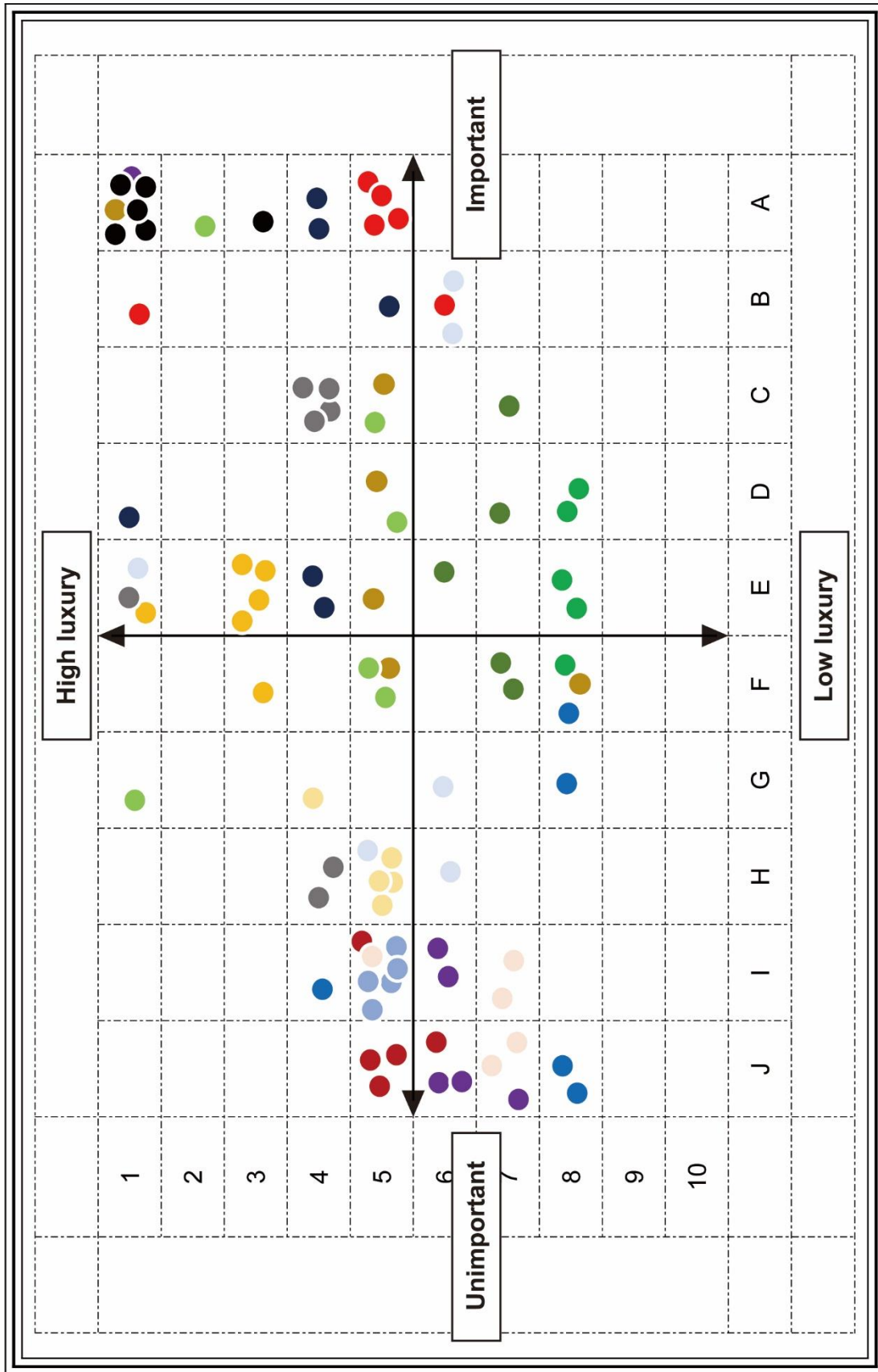


Figure 5.4.1: Analysis section three male participants

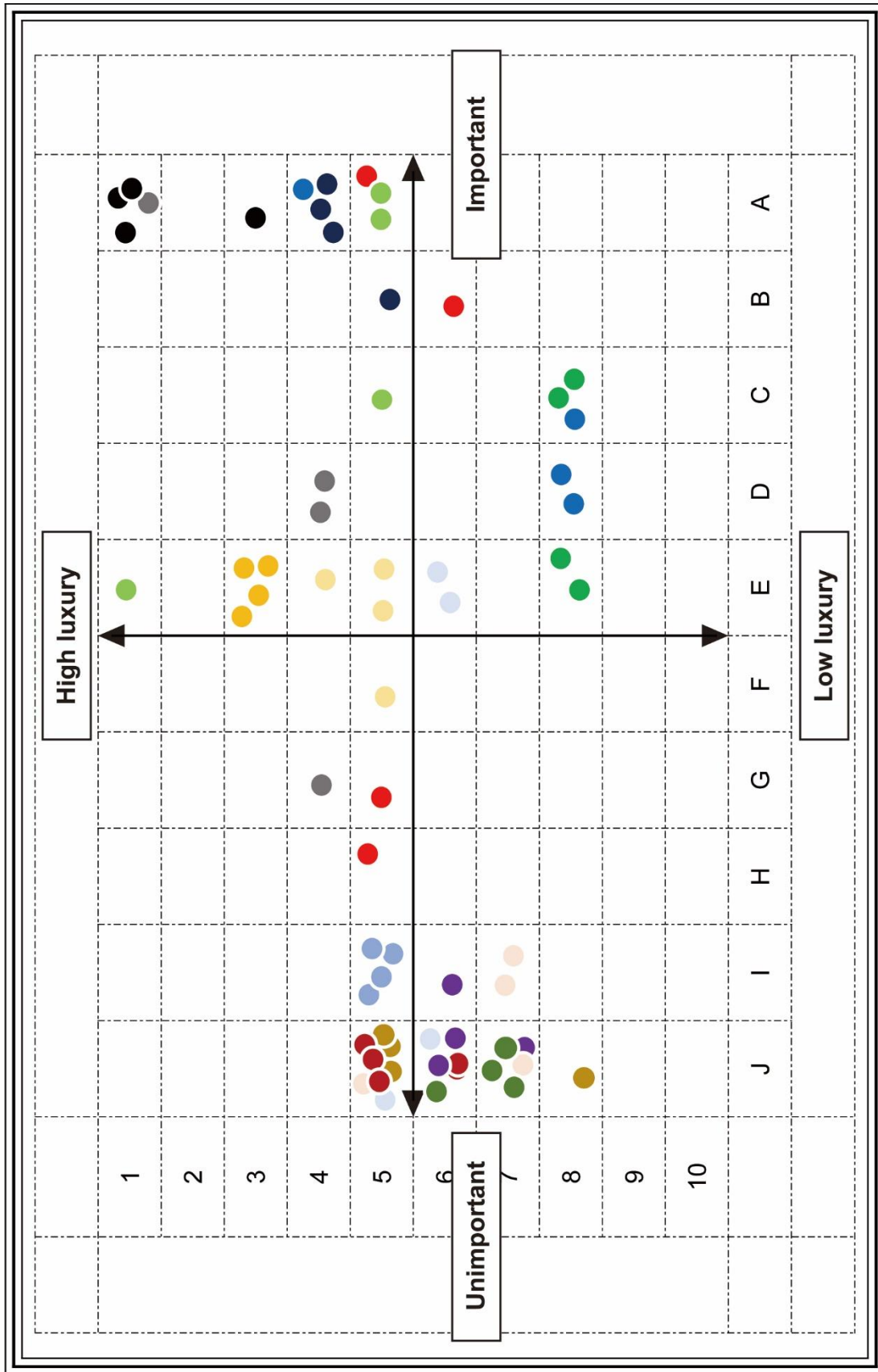


Figure 5.4.2: Analysis section three female participants

Table 5.4.5: Analysis section three key factors summary

Male	Female		
★	★	for personal Mianzi	
★★★★★	★★★★	for personal identity	
★★	★	for business etiquette	
★★★★	★	Power	
★★★★	★★★★	Control	
★★	★★★★	Comfort	
★★★★	★★★★★	Dependability	
★★★★	★★★★	New technology	
★★★★★	★	In-car entertainment	
★★★★★	★★★★★	Exterior Design	
★★	★★★★★	Interior design	
★	★	Driver seat space	
★★★★	★★	Back seat space	
★	★	Road noise cancelling	
★★★★★	★★★★★	Brand value	
★★★★	★★★★	Custom service	
★★★★★	★★★★★	Price/budget	

For T1 male ELC users, the key features that affect their purchase decisions are price/budget, brand value, exterior design, positioning function for personal identity, power, in-car entertainment performance, and customer service. For T1 female ELC users, the key features that affect their purchase decisions are price/budget, brand value, exterior design, dependability, interior design, and customer service. As motioned in Section 5.2, the price/budget, brand value, and exterior design are three universal vital factors for all participants. Besides, all T1 participants pay more attention to the customer service factor than T2 and T3 participants.

The personal preference of positioning function for personal identity, power, and in-car entertainment performance is far more critical than other features for male customers. Compared with female consumers, the car's dependability performance and interior design are not crucial for most male luxury car consumers.

The personal preference of dependability and interior design is far more critical than other features for female customers. Compare with male consumers, the positioning function for personal identity, power, and in-car entertainment performance are not crucial for most female luxury car consumers.

## **5.5 The Cultural meanings of luxury mobility in China**

### 5.5.1 On the denotative level

This study finds that the car's safety and comfort performance is a universal unimportant factor for all participants. All the ELC, MLC, and HLC in this study guaranteed a high standard of safety performance. Also, after-sale costs, oil consumption costs are not necessarily enough to influence the buyer's decision. The reason is that all the ELC, MLC, and HLC users can afford after-sales maintenance costs. The after-sale cost, safety and comfort performance, and oil consumption cost among different luxury cars are too small to strengthen or weaken their market competitiveness.

After the analysis results from three analysis sections in this chapter, the critical factors influencing Chinese luxury car buyers' purchase decisions are summarised.



Table 5.5.1: The denotative level key factors

	Tier 1 Key buying factors	Tier 2 Key buying factors	Tier 3 Key buying factors
ELC	Price, brand value, exterior design, customer service, interior design	Price, brand value, exterior design,	Price, brand value, exterior design,
MLC	Price, brand value, exterior design, custom service, in-car entertainment	Price, brand value, exterior design, back seat space	Price, brand value, exterior design, back seat space, new technology
HLC	Price, brand value, exterior design, control dependability, driver seat space, custom service, in-car entertainment, power.	Price, brand value, exterior design, back seat space,	Price, brand value, exterior design, back seat space, driver seat space, new technology, interior design.

Overall, luxury mobility's denotative cultural meaning can be understood as comfortable, dependable mobility with a high perceived value vehicle such as easily control, enough space, new technology, luxury interior design, and outstanding exterior design. Besides, this vehicle should be supported by excellent customer service. The upper class and part of the middle-class consumer have enough financial capability to consume these productive features of the ILCs.

### 5.5.2 On the connotative level:

Chinese traditional culture believes the family interest is far more significant than personal interest. Ancient China was an agricultural nation. Hunger is a constant survival pressure in an agricultural society. Families need sufficient male member to do the farm work. A single person or small family (fewer than seven members, 1-3 generations, only have 1-2 key workforce) is tough to survive in that time. A sufficient workforce provides an efficient farming method, which could ensure plentiful food. So, the big family (more than seven members, 3-4 generations, usually have more than four key workforces) have the better ability to resist risks (hunger, diseases, and unfortunate). Compared to personal interest, the family's interest is the overall interest of each family member, which is regarded as the most important thing.

Chinese traditional culture also believes the continuity of the family is the most important thing. This continuity mainly reflected how each generation could have a male as the family leader to inherit the family heritage. Thus, in traditional Chinese value, the son has typically higher family position than the daughter, which form the traditional ideology of “man is superior to woman.” The daughter’s children would not follow the family’s surname, so the daughter is not allowed to inherit the family heritage. Families who only have a daughter usually mean the demise of the family. To avoid this situation, families have two solutions: first is bringing up a stepson, letting their son-in-law and daughter’s son follow the family surname.

However, in China, a man follows his wife’s surname is very humiliating. Only the men from an impoverished family would like to be son-in-law who needs to change their surname. At the same time, only wealthy families can choose the second solution. Meanwhile, China is always very conservative about sexual knowledge. Young couples have no understanding of contraceptive measures, and abortion is high-risk surgery for pregnant women. Each family would try

their best to have at least one baby boy, so typically, Chinese families have a large family member number. Having more children means increasing the living cost simultaneously. However, Chinese parents in the past have no other choice to against their old age crisis.

One of the major philosophies of Confucian that affect Chinese culture is filial piety. Parents sacrificed everything includes their individualism (independence, freedom, dream, time, and money), to raise their children. Furthermore, children will also try their best to return and grateful to their parents. Therefore, the life of middle-aged Chinese parents is always callous: on the one hand, they have to take care of their old parents; on the other hand, they need to take care of their young children. Chinese traditional culture believes the continuity of the family is the most important thing.

Confucianism also limits the development of individualism. Confucianism emphasis the individuals should take responsibility according to their social identity and the role in the family. During the pre-Qin period (before 221BC), confusion argues the rulers should take more responsibility and obligation of the five norms (goodness, rightness, ritual, wisdom, credibility) than the people who are ruled. Once Duke Jing of Qi asked Confucius what the effective way to manage states is. Confucius said, "Ruler as the Ruler, Minster as the minster, father as the father, and son as the son." Many studies thought this answer means "always be loyal to the ruler." Le (2003) misunderstand this sentence as "the king is the master of the minister; the husband is the master of wife; the father the master of the son."

The paper disagrees with these arguments, and this understanding and translation are far from the ideology of Confusion. Confucius's answer refers to a ruler should take responsibility first, and then his minister should be loyal to them. A father should take the responsibility first (raise the children, let children

accept education), and then his sons will be filial obedience to their father (father also refers to parents here). Confucianism did not require the low society people to goodness and right; it is always emphasising the ruler, and high society people should take more responsibility and obligation.

Due to the limited development of individualism in Chinese tradition, modern Chinese people have a strong need to express their personality differences, including their clothing, car, and lifestyle. Personal care is one of the essential items to represent a personality.

Overall, the connotative cultural meaning of luxury mobility can be understood as a luxury lifestyle that highlights the buyer's personality, taste, and will. Especially for the people who have enough financial ability, they are mainly consuming an ILC to express their personality and personal taste. Thus, this category of ILC buyers would like to buy the models with rareness. For example, BMW cars are more prevalent in the Chinese public market than Jaguar cars; however, Jaguar has more substantial competitiveness than BMW in this niche market<sup>76</sup>.

### 5.5.3 On the myth level:

Usually, Japanese ILCs have higher reliability and price-performance ratio than German ILCs. Also, the maintenance conditions of Japanese ILCs are not as harsh as German ILC: any automobile repair shop could do the service. However, the small automobile repair shop cannot do maintenance for most German ILCs, especially HLCs. The anti-Japanese sentiment is a common phenomenon in China<sup>77</sup>. Despite the time that has passed since the end of the

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<sup>76</sup> This niche market refers the automobile market for the people who are consuming a car for the personality expression.

<sup>77</sup> Due to several wars between China and Japan, such as the First Sino-Japanese War, the

Second World War, discussions about the Japanese conduct can still evoke powerful emotions. According to a 2017 BBC World Service Poll (2017), China is the most anti-Japanese nation globally. Only 22% of Chinese people view Japan's influence positively (see Figure 5.5.1). However, this study argues that anti-Japanese sentiment and environmental protection awareness are two universal unimportant factors for all participants.

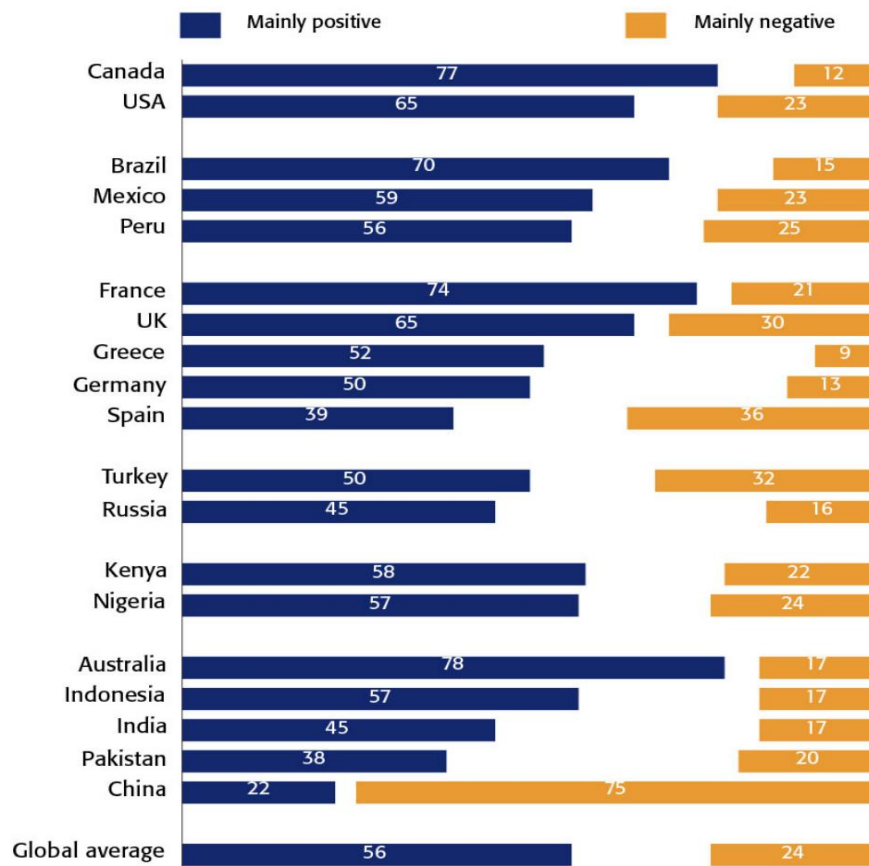


Figure 5.5.1: Views of Japan's influence (Source: BBC, 2017)

In China, if some VIP customers are coming from other places, the culture is that the local business will send a car to pick them up. The luxury class of this

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Second Sino-Japanese War, the Second World War. Also due to the Japan's post-war actions, particularly the perceived lack of a straightforward acknowledgment of such atrocities.

car can reflect the scale and strength of the enterprise. The bigger size and more muscular strength are more likely to gain the trust and opportunities from the VIP customers. However, for most SMEs<sup>78</sup> in China (no matter Tier 1 cities or Tier 2 cities), enterprise properties and personal properties are chaotic. Thus, the private cars of the entrepreneurs and the company employees (especially in the sales industry) have to meet their personal and business needs at the same time. Un-luxury cars, ELCs are not luxury enough to provide a positive image of their enterprise to the VIP customers.

Meanwhile, the super-luxury cars (e.g., Rolls Royce's and Bentley's) show off, which may give an arrogant image to the VIP customers. HLCs and MLCs with backseat space are the best models to meet the business needs. To own a high-grade luxury car is a signifier of the enterprise's more muscular strength or personal ability in Chinese business culture. This culture can be understood as a signifier that signifies polite business etiquette, or business Mianzi.

Overall, the myth of the cultural meaning of luxury mobility can be understood as a clear expression of higher social status. Especially for some people who do not have enough financial capability, they are mainly consuming for the expression of higher social status or Mianzi, rather than for the product's productive value.

### 5.5.3 Summary

Overall, the consuming ILC for luxury mobility has three levels of cultural meaning in modern China:

#### **On the denotative level:**

Luxury mobility's cultural meaning can be understood as comfortable,

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<sup>78</sup> SME refers to Small and Medium Enterprises.

dependable mobility with a high perceived value vehicle such as easy control, enough space, new technology, luxury interior design, and outstanding exterior design. Besides, this vehicle should be supported by excellent customer service. The upper class and part of the middle-class consumer have enough financial capability to consume these productive features of the ILCs. Luxury mobility is expensive mobility that ordinary people cannot afford

**On the connotative level:**

The cultural meaning of luxury mobility can be understood as a luxury lifestyle that highlights the buyer's personality, taste, and will. Especially for the people who have enough financial ability, they are mainly consuming to express their personality and personal taste. Luxury mobility is a way to express personality. Also, Chinese luxury mobility provides better functional features than un-luxury mobility.

**On the myth level:**

On the myth level, the people who can own luxury mobility are usually the rich, the influential people. Own the luxury mobility equal having Mianzi. Luxury mobility is positional goods that can provide a clear expression of higher social status. Especially for the people who do not have enough financial ability, they are mainly consuming for the expression of higher social status, or Mianzi, rather than for the luxury product's productive value. Also, luxury mobility is necessary for business etiquette in some Chinese industries. Compared with un-luxury mobility, Chinese luxury mobility's myth meaning is that it can represent the owner's upper-class social identity.

## Chapter VI Discussion

As mentioned in Chapter V, brand value is one of the most critical factors for the ILC consumer. After the study and analysis in Chapter IV and Chapter V, the author uncovered the three levels of the cultural meaning of “luxury mobility” in Chinese culture. Chapter VI Discussion is structured as follows:

6.1 What is brand? - This section briefly introduced the brand's definition: a brand is a navigation picture in classical time for illiterate people; in the Middle Age, a brand is trademarks that represent high-quality goods produced by a skilled craftsman or a reputable guild.

6.2 Brand equity in branding - This section discussed branding play a significant marketing role because it could create “brand equity.” This study argues that brand equity contains four key elements: Brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand image (brand associations).

6.3 Meaning centred design (MCD) - This section introduced what the Meaning centred design is, and the difference between the Meaning centred design and the User-centred design or human-centred design (HCD). Then this section discussed the significance of MCD in modern design and branding strategy.

6.4 Guidelines for the design and branding strategy - This section proposed five semiotics-based practical guidelines for ILA corporations' design and branding strategies seeking to either break into or improve their existing position in the Chinese automotive market.

### **6.1 What is brand?**

#### 6.1.1 Definition of Brand

The English word “brand” probably arose in the Middle Ages. Riezebos (2002) argues that etymology tells us that it is a degenerate of the old Norse word



brand, which refers to cattle's branding. The Vikings may have spread the word brand in England, which was eventually incorporated into the daily language. The critical attribute of a brand is that it can be identified. Its products or services should have a unique character (e.g., name, logo, slogan, design, identity) dissimilar to its competitors.

Branding is generally used to signify or identify the seller or manufacturer of a product or service (Schultz and Barnes, 2000, p.36). Previous studies define a brand as "simply a product or a service which can be distinguished from its competitors" (Murphy, 1990; Aaker, 1991; Hankinson and Cowking, 1996; Schultz and Barnes, 2000). Traditionally, branding is often considered a part of brand management. Most organisations have placed much more emphasis and management attention on the functional areas of advertising, visual identity design, and public relations than on brand loyalty and brand equity.

In the past 20 years, its strategic role has been recognised both in theory and in practice.

From a marketing perspective, Schultz and Barnes (2000, p.35) argue that "while branding has often been considered a part of the promotion mix, most organisations have placed much more emphasis and management attention on the functional areas of advertising sales promotion, and public relations than on brands and branding." Ries and Ries (1998) believe that branding is the glue that holds a broad range of marketing functions together. According to Schultz and Barnes (2000, p.35), brands, branding, and brand communication must become the most valuable organisational skill for a firm.

### 6.1.2 The history of brand

Brand and branding are not a new concept and new phenomena. Adrian (1992) emphasised that the history of branding can be traced back many centuries before the term acquired its modern usage. The roots of today's brand lie in

Ancient Greece<sup>79</sup> and Ancient Rome times<sup>80</sup>. There are various ways for people to promote their goods (e.g., wines or pots, metal or ointments).

#### 6.1.2.a In the Classical period (5th and 4th centuries BC)

Classical Greece refers to the period of the 5th and 4th centuries BC in Greek culture (Martin, 2013a). Classical Greece had an influential impact on the foundations of Western civilisation. Much of modern Western politics, artistic thought, scientific thought, theatre, literature, and philosophy derives from this period (Warry, 1995). This study believes that brand is a navigation picture for illiterate people in the Classical period.

The people from the wealthy and upper class of Classical Greece were very literate. However, the people who lived at lower levels have no opportunity to accept any academic education. Harris (1989, pp.3-24) states that “In the classical world, even at its most advanced, was so lacking in the characteristics which produce extensive literacy. We must suppose that the majority of people were always illiterate. In most places, most of the time, there was no incentive for those who controlled the allocation of resources to aim for mass literacy.” In ancient Rome, this phenomenon is as same as in Classical Greece. There was no public education at that time. All schools were private, so not everybody (mostly the ordinary) could afford to attend.

In this background, many potential purchasers were illiterate. They would be able to identify a particular product only from a picture (Adrian, 1992, p.13).

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<sup>79</sup> Ancient Greece was a civilisation belonging to a period of Greek history from the Greek Dark Ages of the 12<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries BC to the end of antiquity (c. AD 600).

<sup>80</sup> Ancient Rome was a Roman civilisation from the founding of Rome in the 8th century BC to the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century AD.

Vendors wanted to explain what category of their selling goods is to the illiterate people. A sign, a mark, or a signboard are easier to understand for people who cannot read. Thus, branding's critical function is a navigation picture for illiterate people in the Classical period.

A clear navigation picture helps the illiterate people distinguish which goods a shop is selling (e.g., the illiterate people would not mix a pot shop and a shoe shop up). Riezebos (2002, p.1) argues that “in those days, there were signs of route description shops carved out in stone and there even (brand) marking applied to pieces of silver.” Adrian (1992, p.13) argues that “a butcher’s shop would display a sign depicting arrow of hams; a shoemaker would display a picture of a boot and a dairy would make itself know by a crude sketch of a cow.” Besides, the craftsman signs (in the form of a silver sign or a carved-out sign) are the only identifying methods for the illiterate people. Branding in classical time showed its first factors: it could be identified.

#### 6.1.2.b In the Middle Age

This study argues that the brand is mainly reflected in the Middle Ages' trademarks (476-1492). There are two categories of trademarks used on the product in the Middle Ages: craftsman trademarks and guild trademarks (Riezebos, 2002). Trademark as an early form of branding in the Middle Age is an effective marketing strategy for skilled craftsmen and guild.

In the Middle Ages, the handicraft industry is fast developed. There are two main reasons for the development of the handicraft industry: The first one is the rise of urbanisation after the tenth century. People who have craft skills prefer to become specialised handicraft producers rather than oppressed farmers. A famous commercial city such as Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Cologne, Trier, Strasbourg, Hamburg, Venice, and Genoa provided a vast potential market for artisans. The second reason is the emerging technologies bring many benefits

for the craftsman. For example, at the beginning of the 11th century, people begin using waterpower during handicraft production<sup>81</sup>.

With the accumulation of experience and skills, some craftsmen could produce higher performance products than their competitors. The skilled craftsman begins to leave their signature or a sign on their products, which generally symbolised uniqueness, high-quality, and exquisiteness. The craftsman sign is a method to differentiating their products from other manufacturers. This phenomenon is no more than a method of identification (Riezebos, 2002).

In the late Middle Ages, various handicraft industries evolved from individual business into the Guild. For example, bread in the Middle Age is the staple food for the Europeans. Bakers who adulterate raw materials (e.g., wood residue, peas) would be severely punished. To protect their interests, bakers began to form their guild. The first action was differentiating their bread from other manufacturers with a unified trademark.

A sign, signature, or a unified trademark usually represents a higher reputation for excellence. Consumers will assume the products with trademarks give them more value and bring better profits to the business. Coombe (1996), Dinwoodie (1997), and Heehe (2004) state, “the referent indexed (of the trademark) is often not the source itself but the goodwill associated with that source, in essence, functioning as a guarantee of quality, even the origin is unknown.”

## **6.2 Based on brand equity**

### 6.2.1 What is brand equity?

For businesses, branding plays a significant strategic marketing role because it could create value. Kapferer (2004, p.14) states, “Brand value is the ability of

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<sup>81</sup> For examples: metallurgy, metal manufacturing, and wood processing).

brands to deliver profits.” Traditionally, branding is often considered a part of brand management. In the past 20 years, its strategic role has been recognised both in theory and in practice.

Branding is a meaningless marketing approach to any business unless it can deliver profits or create “brand equity.” Brand equity is a marketing phrase to describe the value of the brand. From the financial perspective, Kapferer (2004, p.10) summarises the definition of the brands and brand equity: Firstly, brands are intangible assets; secondly, brands are contingent assets; thirdly, without benefits, there is no brand value. Aaker (1991, pp.15-16) states that brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand. Aaker (1991, p.16) grouped brand equity into five categories: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations in addition to perceived quality and other proprietary assets-patents, trademarks, channel relationships. Keller (1998) grouped brand equity into two categories: brand awareness and brand image. An obvious contrast between the two studies is: Aaker (1991) believes that brand image belongs to brand associations. However, Keller (1998) states that brand associations are a part of the brand image. This study agrees with Keller: this study argues that brand equity contains four key elements: Brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand image (brand associations).

### 6.2.2 Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to biased purchase behaviour when consumers choose a brand (rather than random). In modern brand marketing, brand loyalty is regarded as the core of a brand’s equity (Aaker, 1991, p.39). The formation of brand loyalty is not entirely relying on the product's quality, reputation, and marketing communication. Brand loyalty is qualitatively different from the other significant dimensions of brand equity in that it is tied more closely to the consumers' characteristics and user experience. Brand loyalty cannot exist without prior purchase and use experience (Aaker, 1991, pp.41-42). The

consumer can be loyal to some brands with low perceived quality (e.g., Coke-Coal, McDonald, IKEA) and not be loyal to some brands with high perceived quality (e.g., Sony Ericsson's smartphone, My Space, Texaco). The previous literature concludes the five-levels of brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991, pp.39-41) suggest in Table 6.2.1:

Table 6.2.1: Five-levels of brand loyalty

<b>Level 5</b>	Committed Buyer
<b>Level 4</b>	Likes the Brand-Consider it a Friend
<b>Level 3</b>	Satisfied Buyer with Switching Costs
<b>Level 2</b>	Satisfied/Habitual buyer - No reason to Change
<b>Level 1</b>	Switcher/Price Sensitive-Indifferent-No Brand Loyalty

Aaker (1991, pp.39-41) states that the bottom loyalty level is the non-loyal buyer who is entirely indifferent to the brand. The brand name plays little role in a purchase decision as non-loyal buyer perceived each brand adequately. Non-loyal buyers will switch brands frequently. Blattberg and Wisniewski (1989) argue that price is a fundamental feature. Because consumers often believe the price and value of a brand and may organise their product category knowledge concerning the price tiers of different brands. They are very sensitive to the prices which lead to they usually will choose the lower-priced products.

The second loyalty level is consumers who have fixed consumer behaviours and preferences. They are at least not dissatisfied with the brand they choose. However, the second layer consumers will have an appropriate reason to switch the brands when the competitive brands have significant incentives. They still do not have loyalty to a particular brand.

The third loyalty level is that consumers are quite satisfied with the choosing

brands. More importantly, these consumers are aware it will have a particular risk when switching to another brand. Aaker (1991, p.40) states, “to attract these buyers, competitors need to overcome the switching costs by offering an inducement to switch or by offering a benefit large enough to compensate.” The awareness of “switching risk” symbolise these consumers have a particular loyalty to a specific brand or a few brands.

The fourth loyalty level is consumers who generate an emotional dependence on brands. Their preference may be based upon an association such as a symbol, a set of user experiences, or a high perceived quality (Aaker, 1991, p.40). To consumers at this level, some brands are assumed as their friends that could trust and rely on that they would not easily switch to another brand. Consumers themselves also cannot explain why some powerful brands are so vital for them, especially if they have a long-term relationship with them.

In the top loyalty level, a brand is the most influential factor influencing the consumers’ purchase behaviour. “They (committed consumers) have pride in discovering and being users of a brand. The brand is significant to them either functionally or as an expression of who they are” (Aaker, 1991, p.41). Another phenomenon is that committed consumers will recommend the brand to others. Consumers are loyal to the brand because the brands provide extremely high functionally value and create a concept or an idea. Aaker (1991, p.41) concludes, “a brand that has a strong group of extraordinarily involved and committed customers might be termed a charismatic brand.” A powerful brand such as Apple company in 2014, which has the top loyalty level, could even become a specific fetish or belief to their committed consumer. The most reliable brands, the ones with extremely high equity, will have many committed customs. When a substantial commitment level exists, it can be relatively easy to detect because it usually manifests itself in many ways (Aaker, 1991).

In the top loyalty level, a brand is the most influential factor influencing the consumers' purchase behaviour. "They (committed consumers) have pride in discovering and being users of a brand. The brand is significant to them either functionally or as an expression of who they are" (Aaker, 1991, p.41). Consumers are loyal to the brand because the brands provide extremely high value (functional and positional) and create a concept or an idea. A powerful brand such as Apple company in 2014, which has the top loyalty level, could even become a specific fetish or belief to their committed consumer.

Increase brand loyalty is significant for the development of the firm. Aaker (1991, p.39) states that as brand loyalty increases, the customer base's vulnerability to competitive action is reduced. There are three reasons that brand loyalty is the core of brand equity: firstly, brand loyalty adds value to the brand. Its finally improves the future profit of the firm. It is one indicator of brand equity that is demonstrably linked to future profits since brand loyalty directly translates into future sales (Aaker 1991, p.39). Secondly, brand loyalty could reduce the marketing budget, and effortlessly attract new customers. Finally, high-level brand loyalty could delay the time when consumers want to switch to the competitor's brand. The brand could have more time to improve its competitive ability, such as develop new products and marketing strategies.

### 6.2.3 Brand awareness

Brand awareness is a potential buyer's ability to recognise or recall that a brand in a particular product category (Aaker 1991, p.61). It also refers to the familiarity strength of a brand in the consumers' memory. The brand could utilise this strategy to increase market competitiveness and brand loyalty of a brand.

Most non-loyal buyers are lazy to do research when they need to buy the product. During the buying process, the consumer will often select a group of brands to consider. In these situations, brand awareness will provide them with



a consideration set. Usually, the first brand that the consumer recalled in a particular category has achieved the “top-of-mind” awareness, which often is the leading brand in the market category. If the brand does not achieve the recall in the consumers' mind, it will not be consideration set. Undoubtedly, the brand with strong brand awareness also has a substantial market share in its product category.

Brand recognition is a lower brand awareness level, which means a person does not have a strong link between the brand and the product class. Brand recall refers to a higher brand awareness level, which means a person could recall some brand belongs to a specific product category. The firm should use extensive advertising to promote their brand awareness if they are a new brand in the industry. Keller (1998, p.92) states, “brand awareness is necessary, but not always sufficient, step in building equity. Other considerations, such as the image of the brand, often come into play.”

This paper also believes that a brand with strong brand loyalty also has strong brand awareness. Because another attribute of brand loyalty is that committed consumers will recommend the brand to others (their friends, colleagues, neighbourhoods, family members). When a substantial commitment level exists, a brand can be relatively easy to detect because it usually manifests itself in many ways (Aaker, 1991). Thus, promoting brand loyalty is also prompting brand awareness. Aaker (1991, p.41) concludes, “a brand that has a strong group of extraordinarily involved and committed customers might be termed a charismatic brand.” The highest level of brand awareness is that people began to use a brand name as a verb in communication. For example, “Google it,” “Skype with my parents,” “Hoover the carpet,” and “Photoshop that picture.”

#### 6.2.4 Perceived quality

Perceived quality refers to the customer form a subjective judgment of the brand according to their demand conditions. The decision is based on a comprehensive analysis of relevant (formal or informal) information. Aaker (1991, p.85) states, “perceived quality can be defined as the customer’s perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service concerning its intended purpose, relative to alternatives.” Keller (1998) also discussed the perceived quality in “perceived quality is a product strategy rather than brand equity itself.”

As previous sections discussed: powerful brands always provide extremely high functionally value. New or weak brands typically only have a small or tiny market share compared to the traditional leading brand. Perceived quality is an intangible, overall feeling about a brand. However, it usually will be based on underlying dimensions, including characteristics of the products to which the brand is attached reliability and performance (Aaker, 1991, p.86). In another situation, some consumers have the motivation to find information that could help them evaluate brand quality. In this case, perceived quality plays a central role that affects the purchase decision. Aaker (1991, p.89) provides insights on how perceived quality does create profitability:

1. Perceived quality influencing market share;
2. Perceived quality influencing price;
3. Perceived quality has a direct impact on profitability in addition to its effect on market share and price;
4. Perceived quality does not affect cost negatively.

Customers observe the quality and product quality might differ. When perceived quality is higher than product quality, it will reduce brand loyalty; when perceived quality is lower than product quality, it will increase brand loyalty.

Although perceived quality plays an essential role in attracting new potential consumers, a brand's priority is to maintain the quality value of their product.

#### 6.2.5 Brand image (brand associations)

##### 6.2.5.a Definition and types of brand associations

Keller (1998) argues that in the now-classic definition of a brand: a brand is a set of mental associations, held by a consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service. According to Keller (1999, pp.93-102), brand associations are the other information linked to the brand in consumers' memory. The section begins by discussing the three types of brand associations: Attributes, benefits, and attitudes. The first significant type of association is attributes. Attributes are those defining features that characterise a product or service (Keller, 1999, p93).

Attributes are consisting of product-related attributes and non-product-related attributes. Due to the budget limitation of research and design, it is hard to obtain a competitive advantage through the product-related attributes. Keller (1999, p93) states that non-product-related attributes may affect the purchase or consumption process but do not directly affect product performance.

With the development of the marketing mix and brand management, non-product-related attributes play an increasingly important role. Usually, non-product-related attributes refer to price, user imagery (i.e., what type of the person uses the product and service), usage imagery (i.e., where and under what kinds of situations the product or services is used), feeling, and experience, brand personality.

The second significant type of association is benefits. Benefits are the personal value and meaning that consumers attach to the product or service attributes - what consumers think the product or service can do for them and what it

represents more broadly (Keller, 1999, p99).

The most abstract and highest-level type of association is attitude. Wilkie (1994) states that brand attitude refers to consumers' overall evaluation of a brand. Keller (1998, p. 100) regards, "brand attitude is the basic factor that formed consumer behaviour." According to Fazio et al. (1986), attitude strength has been measured in psychology by the reaction time to evaluate requirements about the attitude object: Individuals who can determine an attitude object quickly are assumed to have an amicable attitude. Attitude association is essential because they often form a miniature of brand image.

#### 6.2.5.b The definition of brand image

Brand image is a set of associations. Aaker (1991, 110) states, "associations represent bases for purchase decisions and brand loyalty." Brand image is a personal mental picture of a brand shared by a group of people (Keller, 1998; Riezebos, 2002; Kappfer, 2004). Aaker (1996) states, "the image of the brand is the perception the brand consumer. The goal of working strategically with the brand image is to ensure that the consumer holds strong and favourable associations of the brand in their minds."

Compared to the brand identity, the brand image focuses on describing the "impression" from the consumer's perspective. The strength, favourability, and uniqueness of brand associations play an essential role in determining the differential response that makes up brand equity, especially in high involvement decision settings where consumer motivation and ability are sufficiently present. For example, in the automobile industry: BMW' is attached to an image (Brand benefits associations): cars with the highest driving pleasure. Mercedes-Benz conjures another image (Brand benefits associations): the best automobile manufacturer in the world.

The brand image aims to create value. To achieve that, the strength of connection to the brand node reaches a certain degree to affect the purchase decision. Keller (1999, p.103) states that brand associations' strength is a critical determinant of what information will be recalled by consumers and affect their brand decisions.

According to the study of Keller (1999), knowing that the top factor affects the strength and recall ability of a brand image is user experience, followed by price and quality. The company-influenced source is often the weakest associations and thus may be the most easily changed. For example, marketing advertising is a weaker method to promote brand image than personal recommendations. Keller (1999, p.103) states, "the success of a marketing program is reflected in the favourability of brand image. When consumers believe that the brand possesses attributes and benefits that satisfy their needs and wants such that a positive overall brand attitude is formed." Favourability includes both negative and positive associations.

#### 6.2.5.c Brand personality

The brand could have a personality like a person. It can be characterised as being "cool," "childish," "interesting," or "honest." Abrams (1981) argues that "brand personality reflects how people feel about a brand rather than what they think the brand is or does." A brand with an actual personality can provide consumers with an illusion that feeling the brand is "what I want." This illusion also increases consumers' repeated purchase behaviour, which finally increases brand loyalty to the top level. Plummer (2000) argues that "brands may also take on personality traits similar to people." Hankinson and Cowking (1996, p.1) argue that "distinctiveness may reflect a brand's position relative to the competitive set or its personality (a unique combination of functional attribute and symbolic values) or both, and Successful brands are those who meet the needs and aspirations of a defined target market."

Brand personality could be affected by any aspect of marketing programs such as advertising, packaging, or slogan. The firm should have clear marketing of the Four Ps<sup>82</sup> to branding a brand personality. For example, blackberry always targets the businessmen market, which results in its brand personality is earnest and reliable. If its brand personality switches to adorable or childish, brand loyalty will rapidly vanish. The brand personality must match the target audiences' personality; otherwise, it will reduce brand equity. Successful brands are those who can align their proposition (the combined positioning is personality) with a segment of consumers who have shared physical and psychological needs. (Hankinson and Cowking, 1996, p.11). Brands are important and valuable because they provide a "certainty" as to future cash flows. As all businesses need such certainty in order properly to plan, invest and develop, it is clear that brands play a critical strategic role in a large number of companies (Aaker, 1991, p186)

Each successful brand has its unique attribute that its competitors can never imitate. BMW has been Mercedes-Benz's market opponent for the last 80 years. Both of them experienced World War I, World War II, and the changes of the government. Both of them come from Germany and focus on the high-end market. However, BMW's brand personality is entirely different from Mercedes-Benz's. The consumer will never mix BMW and Mercedes-Benz up because they are unique brands that provide enough information to be identified.

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<sup>82</sup> The Four Ps of marketing is the significant factors that are involved in marketing and branding (especially positioning). They are the product, price, place, and promotion of a good or service.

### 6.2.6 Summary

This study argues that brand equity contains four key elements: Brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand image (brand associations). Branding aims to promote brand equity to increase brand value.

Brand loyalty refers to biased purchase behaviour when consumers choose a brand (rather than random). Brand loyalty is qualitatively different from the other significant dimensions of brand equity in that it is tied more closely to the consumers' characteristics and user experience. Increase brand loyalty is significant for the development of the firm. Firstly, brand loyalty adds value to the brand and finally improves the firm's future profit. Secondly, brand loyalty could reduce the marketing budget, and effortlessly attract new customers. Finally, high-level brand loyalty could delay the time when consumers want to switch to the competitor's brand. Brand loyalty is the most influential factor that influences consumers' purchase behaviour.

Brand awareness also refers to the familiarity strength of a brand in the consumers' memory. The brand could utilise this strategy to increase market competitiveness and brand loyalty of a brand. Undoubtedly, the brand with strong brand awareness also has a substantial market share in its product category. This paper also believes that a brand with strong brand loyalty also has strong brand awareness. Because another attribute of brand loyalty is that committed consumers will recommend the brand to others. Thus, promoting brand loyalty is also prompting brand awareness.

As previous sections discussed: powerful brands always provide extremely high functionally value. New or weak brands typically only have a small or tiny market share compared to the traditional leading brand. Most importantly, customers observed the quality and product quality might differ, which will bring both adverse effects and positive impact. Although perceived quality plays an

essential role in attracting the new potential consumer, a brand's priority is to maintain its product's quality value.

Brand image is a set of associations. Compared to the brand identity, the brand image focuses on describing the “impression” from the consumer's perspective. The strength, favourability, and uniqueness of brand associations play an essential role in determining the differential response that makes up brand equity, especially in high involvement decision settings where consumer motivation and ability are sufficiently present. The brand could have a personality like a person. The company-influenced source is often the weakest associations and thus may be the most easily changed.

### **6.3 Meaning centred design (MCD)**

User-centred design or human-centred design (HCD) is a valuable research method for improving corporations' market competitiveness (Norman, 1998). HCD is a repetitive mode of inquiry, which leads to incremental or market-pulled innovation. Each generation of the result builds on the experience that learned from the previous results (Norman and Verganti, 2014).

Respect the consumer's needs is necessary for any design issue; however, always taking the consumer as the starting point could strangle the potential creativity of the products. Verganti (2008) claim that HCD keeps the result within the smaller boundaries, as it is limited by the consumer's observation and time limitation. Almquist and Lupton (2010) argue that design research is a study of things, not people. Therefore, incremental or market-pulled innovations have a noticeable leak that consequently affects long-term interest. As a result, radical innovation is significant for a brand as it provides larger boundaries for the potential creativity of the products and service. Norman and Verganti (2014,



see Figure 6.3.1) argue that the three main types of radical changes are: the changes in technology (e.g., the invention of aircraft, internet, and the personal computer); the changes in meaning (e.g., the meaning of watch changed from a tool to a fashion accessory); the changes in both the technology and meaning (e.g., Wii, iPhone).

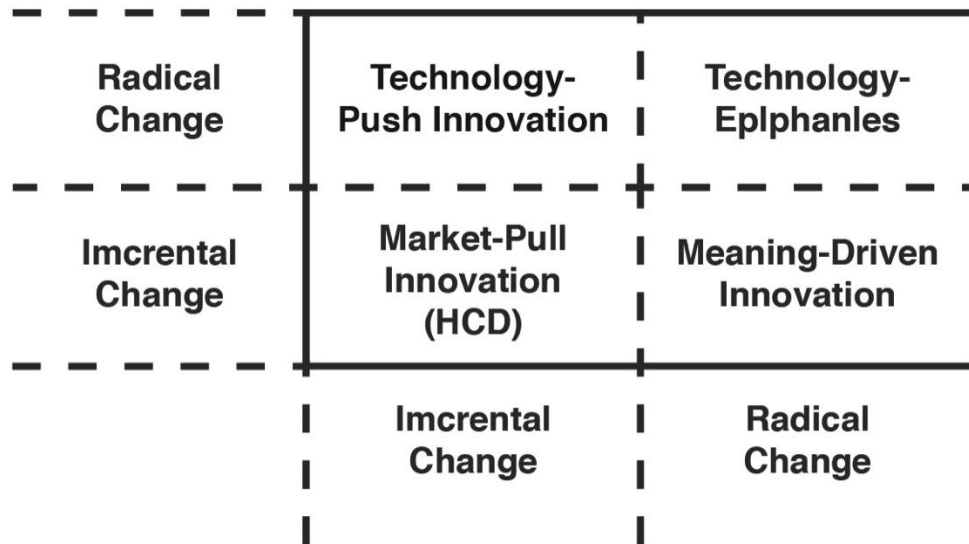


Figure 6.3.1: Four types of innovation

(Source: Norman and Verganti, 2014, p.79).

Norman and Verganti argue that consumers may resist radical innovation because they do not accept radical changed behaviour or cognition (Norman and Verganti, 2014). To uncover the cultural meaning is an effective method to solve this problem as the radical innovations lead by meaning centred design (MCD) is rooted in the cultural context. Compared with HCD, MCD is the design research method that takes the meaning as the starting point. Consumers will instantly accept this kind of radical innovation because the meanings are originated from the given culture. MCD focuses closer on the meaning that consumers received rather than their requirements and observation of the consumers. Norman and Verganti (2014, p.79) argue that a design research approach that combines the HCD and MCD will be (see Figure 6.3.2):

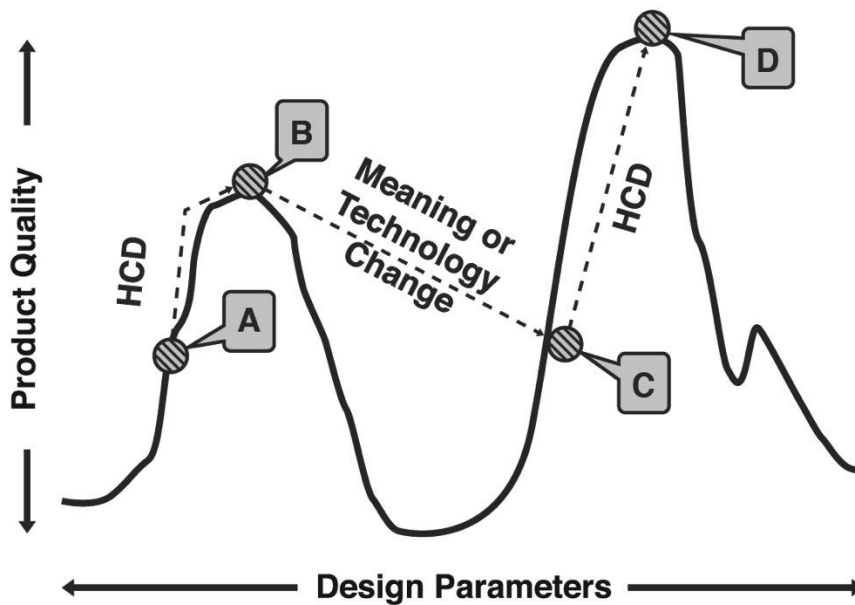


Figure 6.3.2: HCD and MCD

(Source: Norman and Verganti, 2014, p.79).

Norman and Verganti (2014, p.96) argue that “design-driven research can indeed lead to radical innovation of meanings. The research must be directed toward new interpretations of what could be meaningful to people. Famous innovative brands, such as Mini, Nintendo, or apple, innovation is not just relying on HCD. The success of Apple Company is based on the deep understanding of radical innovation (e.g., the *click wheel* of iPod Classic 4th generation; the iOS operating system; multi-touch screen of iPhone 1; the *MagSafe* of MacBook). In conclusion, understanding the meaning of luxury mobility is valuable not only for enhancing short-term competitiveness but also for creating a long-term profit. Thus, this study will propose MCD guidelines for the design and branding strategy.

## **6.4 Guidelines for the design and branding strategy**

This research is conducted by understanding the cultural meanings of “luxury mobility” in China via semiotics. The research objectives are to investigate this phenomenon from a semiotic perspective and explain how the cultural meanings of “luxury mobility” and consumers’ attitudes, preferences, and automobile choices are connected in China. In Chapter V, the author analysed and compared the collected data. By this, this study uncovered the denotative and connotative meaning of “luxury mobility” in Chinese culture. In Chapter IV, by reviewing the ancient Chinese literature about Chinese traditional ideology and mobility, the myth meaning of “luxury mobility” in China is defined. In this section, this study develops five semiotics-based practical guidelines for the design and branding strategies of ILC corporations seeking to either break into or improve their existing position in the Chinese automotive market.

### **Guideline 1: Re-evaluating key buying factors in the Chinese ILA market**

According to McKinsey & Company (2012, p.9), the key buying factors cited by the ILC buyers include safety, brand, powertrain technology, and exterior. This study develops the arguments that in the Chinese luxury automobile market, safety and powertrain technology is not crucial buying factors. This study finds that the car's safety and powertrain technology performance are two universal unimportant factors for all participants. All the ELC, MLC, and HLC in this study guaranteed a high safety performance standard. Developing the safety and powertrain technology degree is still beneficial for increasing the brand value; however, the ILA consumers will not be attracted by these two features. The study argues for branding strategy, ILA brand should promote the perceived value, rather than the quality value of its products.

As mentioned in Chapter V, Chinese culture attaches great importance to etiquette due to traditional Confucianism ideology. Sometimes, the buyer’s

family members (such as buyer's parents, kid, friends) will take a ride with them for mobility. For business etiquette, sometimes the buyer's VIP customer will take a ride. Sometimes the buyers have to use a design driver if they are drunk after social entertainment. Thus, the interior space (especially backseat space) must be sufficient to ensure comfort. The sufficient back seat space will improve ILA brands' market competitiveness, especially in the MLC saloon market.

ILA brand also should emphasise new technology, high dependability, luxury interior design, and outstanding exterior design features within its commercial campaign, advertising, and promotion strategy. These features are the top factors that consumers perceived as valuable. Promoting these features as branding and design strategies can make consumers perceived a high brand value. Consequently, these branding and design strategies can help improve the brand awardees among the target audience.

### **Guideline 2: Focus on the transition of Chinese consumer behaviour**

In the future, the competitiveness of the current mainstream market models will gradually weaken, especially in the ELC market. In the ELC market, most models from mainstream ILA brand have a low price/performance ratio. ELC, MLC buyers attached the cultural meaning of Mianzi in ILCs, this phenomenon is widespread in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. While Tier 1 cities' participants showed a transition: compare to luxury consuming for Mianzi, they start to consume the value of offerings. They attached cultural meanings intelligent, low-key, and individuality to ILCs.

These new meaning of luxury mobility will weaken the mainstream ILA brands' market share. Because of the mainstream ILA brands (e.g., BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Audi) are offering ordinary products in the Chinese market. This change is a great business opportunity for European and American ILA brands to improve their market shares in Tier 1 cities. Suppose the European and

American ILA brands can have a strong brand awareness among Chinese Tier 1 consumers. In that case, their overall competitiveness in the Chinese market will also be improved.

### **Guideline 3: Maintain the quality**

Although perceived quality plays an essential role in attracting new potential consumers, a brand's priority is to maintain the quality value of their product. Chinese consumers believe that brand is the guarantee of quality. Thus, to promote (e.g., advertising) offerings' quality (performance and dependability) for the ILA market, it is an in-effective marketing strategy for an ILA brand. To maintain offerings' quality is the best promotion for brand awareness in the Chinese market. This study agrees with ILA buyers are “strongly influenced by word of mouth, Internet search results, special events, and product displays at stores” (McKinsey & Company, 2012, p.9). Thus, the promotions should focus on interior design, space, new technology, and comfort. Besides, the new technologies mean core market competitiveness for any ILA brand. This study recommended that the ILA brand keep researching and developing the newest technology to maintain its core competitiveness (e.g., powertrain technology, noise cancellation, and automatic driving).

### **Guideline 4: The behaviour of the sales in dealership**

Most Chinese ILC buyers will only visit the dealership two or three times during the whole purchasing process. Their first visit is usually for inquiry, and the last visit is for paying and picking up the car. The introductions and sales speeches in dealerships rarely can change consumers' purchasing decisions. However, a satisfied price promotion is an essential feature for all ELC, MLC, and HLC buyers. Moreover, the sales' attitude could affect consumers' purchasing decisions positively or negatively. The sales with a passionate attitude will make consumers have a positive impression on the brand. ILC buyers intensely dislike the sales with an arrogant attitude, long waiting time, and bundled sales

strategy. The malicious behaviour of the sales in the dealership will make the buyer refuse to consume their ILCs.

#### **Guideline 5: Customised service**

The demand for potential users of luxury cars is diverse. During the purchasing decisions process, usually, the buyers will determine their primary needs. On this basis, they will choose the model according to their personal preferences. With a high degree of free customised services, users can utilise their budget more efficiently. This design and brand strategy will significantly help the ILA brand's competitiveness in the ELC and MLC markets. However, the total time of production and transportation should not exceed three months. Most luxury car users (especially HLC users) are impatient (again, this strategy is more effective in the ELC and MLC markets). Customers observe the quality and product quality might differ. When perceived quality is higher than product quality, it will reduce brand loyalty; when perceived quality is lower than product quality, it will increase brand loyalty. Although perceived quality plays an essential role in attracting new potential consumers, a brand's priority is to maintain the quality value of their product.

# Chapter VII Conclusions

## 7.1 Summary

This research develops the statements that for a British ILA brand, China is now a vital part of its global growth. The sales in China plays a significant role in deciding its overall strength in the worldwide market. ILA brands are competing fiercely in China. By the end of 2010, nineteen ILA brands are battling for the Chinese market's supremacy; each of these brands is keen to enhance their share of the profitable Chinese market. The available evidence seems to suggest that the market competitiveness of British ILA brands is insufficient, compared with the German and Japanese ILA brands.

With the rapid technological development, it becomes much more expensive to create a distinct competitive advantage for intentional corporations through the factors of price and quality (Martin, 2009; Manning, 2010). In this situation, design and branding offer an extra dimension for consumers to measure the brand's value and offerings. Therefore, the discussion of ILC brands' design and branding strategies in this research is valuable as they offer a practical approach to enhance an ILA brand's market competitiveness.

Semiotic analysis is a useful and practical approach in this research, as from a semiotic perspective, culture plays a role in generating meanings through signs (Sapir 1956; Mick, 1986). Thus, any consumer behaviours (and their drivers) in a given culture can hold some meaning. Meaning refers to the signified meanings generated from signs and their sign "sign vehicle" (signifiers and representamen, described in Chapter II). After the meaning of "luxury mobility" in Chinese culture is comprehend, British ILA corporations could improve their current design and branding strategies and finally improve their market competitiveness in the Chinese market. This study agrees with the definition of

culture from a cultural-anthropological perspective: culture is the shared and learned behaviour patterns held by a community or group of people (Tylor, 1874, Useem, et al., 1963). Therefore, there is an obvious potential for British ILA brands to understand how design and branding play the roles for developing competitiveness, by understanding the cultural, or semiotic meaning of “luxury mobility” in China. This research is conducted by understanding the cultural meanings of “luxury mobility” in China via semiotics.

This research used qualitative research methods, and the interview is selected as the most appropriate method for qualitative data collection in this study. Interviews are beneficial for getting the story behind a participant’s experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information about the topic. Among the three leading types of the interview (i.e., structured interview; semi-structured interview; unstructured interview), this research will apply the semi-structured interviews method. With the scope of the data collected explores, this strategy ensures that the depth of respondents’ experiences.

This research is conducted by understanding the cultural meanings of “luxury mobility” in China via semiotics. The research objectives are to investigate this phenomenon from a semiotic perspective and explain how the cultural meanings of “luxury mobility” and consumers’ attitudes, preferences, and choices are connected in China. The research will deconstruct in a broader sense and mainly focus on the discussions of design and brand strategies for ILA corporations. Therefore, this research will identify the syntagmatic mobility and useful paradigm of luxury artefacts associated with mobility in China. The study will develop a semiotics-based practical guideline for the design and branding strategies of ILA corporations who are seeking to either break into or improve their existing position, in the Chinese automotive market. This overall aim was approached through a set of individual research objectives outlined in the introduction chapter of this thesis.



The research objective 1 is to explain how the cultural meanings of “luxury mobility” and consumers’ attitudes, preferences, and choices are connected in China. The research will deconstruct in a broader sense and mainly focus on the discussions of design and brand strategies for ILC corporations. Therefore, this research will identify the syntagmatic structure of mobility and useful paradigm of luxury artefacts associated with mobility in China.

In the spring of 2016, 30 semi-structured interviews (consisting of two axes) were undertaken with Chinese ILC users to explore the cultural meanings of “luxury mobility” in China via semiotics. Interviews are beneficial for getting the story behind a participant’s experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Each interview lasted around one hour. In Chapter V, by analysing and comparing these interviews, the denotative and connotative meaning of “luxury mobility” in China is defined. In Chapter IV, by reviewing the ancient Chinese literature about Chinese traditional ideology and mobility, the myth meaning of “luxury mobility” in China is defined.

Overall, the consuming ILC for luxury mobility has three levels of cultural meaning in modern China:

On the denotative level:

Luxury mobility’s cultural meaning can be understood as comfortable, dependable mobility with a high perceived value vehicle such as easy control, enough space, new technology, luxury interior design, and outstanding exterior design. Besides, this vehicle should be supported by excellent customer service. The upper class and part of the middle-class consumer have enough financial capability to consume these productive features of the ILCs. Luxury mobility is expensive mobility that ordinary people cannot afford.

On the connotative level:

The cultural meaning of luxury mobility can be understood as a luxury lifestyle that highlights the buyer's personality, taste, and will. Especially for the people who have enough financial ability, they are mainly consuming to express their personality and personal taste. Luxury mobility is a way to express personality. Also, Chinese luxury mobility provides better functional features than un-luxury mobility.

On the myth level:

On the myth level, the people who can own luxury mobility are usually the rich, the influential people. Own the luxury mobility equal having Mianzi. Luxury mobility is positional goods that can provide a clear expression of higher social status. Especially for the people who do not have enough financial ability, they are mainly consuming for the expression of higher social status, or Mianzi, rather than for the luxury product's productive value. Also, luxury mobility is necessary for business etiquette in some Chinese industries. Compared with un-luxury mobility, Chinese luxury mobility's myth meaning is that it can represent the owner's upper-class social identity.

The research objective 2 is to develop a set of semiotics-based practical guidelines for the design and branding strategies of ILA corporations who are seeking to either break into or improve their existing position in the Chinese automotive market.

This study finds that the car's safety and powertrain technology performance are two universal unimportant factors for all participants. These two features will not attract the ILA consumers. The study argues for branding strategy, ILA brand should promote the perceived value, rather than the quality value of its products.

As mentioned in Chapter V, Chinese culture attaches great importance to etiquette due to traditional Confucianism ideology. Sometimes, the buyer's family members (such as buyer's parents, kid, friends) will take a ride with them for mobility. For business etiquette, sometimes the buyer's VIP customer will take a ride. Sometimes the buyers have to use a design driver if they are drunk after social entertainment. Thus, the interior space (especially backseat space) must be sufficient to ensure comfort. The sufficient back seat space will improve ILA brands' market competitiveness, especially in the MLC saloon market.

In the future, the competitiveness of the current mainstream market models will gradually weaken, especially in the ELC market. In the ELC market, most models from mainstream ILA brand have a low price/performance ratio. ELC, MLC buyers attached the cultural meaning of Mianzi in ILCs, this phenomenon is widespread in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. While Tier 1 cities' participants showed a transition: compare to luxury consuming for Mianzi, they start to consume the value of offerings. They attached cultural meanings intelligent, low-key, and individuality to ILCs.

Although perceived quality plays an essential role in attracting new potential consumers, a brand's priority is to maintain the quality value of their product. Chinese consumers believe that brand is the guarantee of quality. Thus, to promote (e.g., advertising) offerings' quality (performance and dependability) for the ILA market, it is an in-effective marketing strategy for an ILA brand. To maintain offerings' quality is the best promotion for brand awareness in the Chinese market. Thus, the promotions should focus on interior design, space, new technology, and comfort. Besides, the new technologies mean core market competitiveness for any ILA brand.

Most Chinese ILC buyers will only visit the dealership two or three times during the whole purchasing process (the first visit is usually for inquiry; the last visit

is for paying and picking up the car). The introductions and sales speeches in dealerships rarely can change consumers' purchasing decisions. However, a satisfied price promotion is an essential feature for all ELC, MLC, and HLC buyers. Moreover, the sales' attitude could affect consumers' purchasing decisions positively or negatively. The sales with a passionate attitude will make consumers have a positive impression on the brand. ILC buyers intensely dislike the sales with an arrogant attitude, long waiting time, and bundled sales strategy. The malicious behaviour of the sales in the dealership will make the buyer refuse to consume their ILCs.

The demand for potential users of luxury cars is diverse. During the purchasing decisions process, usually, the buyers will determine their primary needs. On this basis, they will choose the model according to their personal preferences. With a high degree of free customised services, users can utilise their budget more efficiently. This design and brand strategy will significantly help the ILA brand's competitiveness in the ELC and MLC markets. However, the total time of production and transportation should not exceed three months. Most luxury car users (especially HLC users) are impatient. Customers observe the quality and product quality might differ. When perceived quality is higher than product quality, it will reduce brand loyalty; when perceived quality is lower than product quality, it will increase brand loyalty. Although perceived quality plays an essential role in attracting new potential consumers, a brand's priority is to maintain the quality value of their product.

## **7.2 Recommendations for future work**

This section outlines some recommendations for future work, which have become notable during the research activity:

### 1. Correlating findings with a larger population of ILC users

This research benefited from taking a qualitative and interpretive approach; through a broader scope of discovery and exploration with Chinese ILC buyer's experience. This study interviewed 30 participants. It is quite challenging to find ideal participants that matched all the requirements in a limited time. However, 30 participants are the right sample size for this study. Besides, the future study can be improved if they recruit more participants than this study. For example, they can:

1. Recruit more participants from other Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities in China;
2. Recruit more female ILC buyers in China;
3. Recruit some participants who are super luxury users in China;
4. Recruit some participants who are T1 city, male, 45-55 ELC and MLC buyers;
5. Recruit some participants who are T1 city, female, HLC buyers.

### 2. The testing of design and branding principles

Within this research; a set of design and branding principles were developed according to the cultural meaning of luxury mobility identified in Chapter IV and V. Despite this, these principles only represent the first iteration with a limited participant. As such, a testing phase benefits the development of design and branding principles, potentially working with ILA dealers or marketing managers in Chinese ILA companies (e.g., having a focus group) to discuss the design and branding principles. The ideal ILA dealers could be BMW, Jaguar and LEXUS. The best choice could be Jaguar, as their market competitiveness is far weaker than BMW and LEXUS.

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# Appendices

## Appendix I: Information Sheet

### Information Sheet

**Research Title:** The semiotics of luxury mobility in Chinese culture and the implications for the design and branding of international corporations

*You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and its involvement. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask the researcher (Shang Shi) if anything is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.*

#### 1. **What is the purpose of the project?**

This research is conducted by understanding the cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" in China via semiotics. The research objectives are to investigate this phenomenon from a semiotic perspective and explain how the cultural meanings of "luxury mobility" connect to the consumers' attitudes, preferences, and choices in China. The research will deconstruct in a broader sense and mainly focus on the discussions of design and brand strategies for ILA corporations. Therefore, this research will identify the syntagmatic structure of mobility and useful paradigm of luxury artefacts associated with mobility in China. The study will develop a semiotics-based practical guideline for the design and branding strategies of ILA corporations who are seeking to either break into or improve their existing position, in the Chinese automotive market.

#### 2. **Why have I been chosen?**

This study selects you as the participants in this research because you have recently

bought a luxury car. The study will involve up to 30 participants who are the recently first-hand international luxury automobiles (e.g., BMW, Jaguar, and Lexus). All participants are selected from 4 cities in China: Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Dalian. The participation criteria' age groups focus on 20-30, 30-40 and 40-50.

**3. Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form). You are free to stop the interview at any time if you do not wish it to continue. You may also skip any question during the interview, but continue to participate in the rest of the study.

After taking part in the interview, you can withdraw your participation from the study until February twenty-eighth, 2018. You do not have to give a reason. If you decide to withdraw from the study, you can tell us whether you are happy to use the information obtained up to that point. If you are not, any information you have given will be destroyed, and you will not be contacted by us again.

**4. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be asked to participate in a one-to-one interview if you decide to volunteer, which will take approximately 50-80 minutes. All the participants will be interviewed separately. The researcher would like to ask 4-5 open-ended questions about your experience using your luxury automobile. If you choose to participate, the researcher will organise a convenient time according to your schedule and preferences.

**5. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?**

With your permission, I will audio record the interviews in order to accurately capture what is said. The recordings will be transcribed, but your name will not be included in the transcriptions (all the recordings will be transcribed before December 2016). The recording and transcription will be kept on a password-protected computer (the audio recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study). You can request a copy of the

interview transcriptions if you wish. If someone opts out of the audio recording, the researcher will take notes of the interview instead of recording them.

The researcher will use these data for a PhD thesis and may be used for the future presentation. The audio recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis and illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

**6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

This research does not anticipate any disadvantages or risks of taking part in this project.

**7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that the data I get from the interview will be helpful to develop the better design and branding strategies of international luxury automobile corporations.

**8. Will my taking part in this project be kept anonymous?**

All the information that the researcher collect about you during the research will be kept strictly anonymous. At no time will your actual identity be revealed. You will be assigned a random numerical code. The code file linking the code to your name will be kept on a password-protected computer. The code key will be destroyed at the end of the study. Only the lead researcher will have access to the code file, which will be stored separately from your interview record. You will not be identified in any reports or publications without your express permission.

**9. What type of information will be sought from me, and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?**

We require information relating to your experience when you are using your luxury

automobile (such as what it is like for you, your thoughts, feelings, and situations, events, places, and people connected with your experience). The data we get from the interview will help us to achieve the research project's objectives.

#### **10. Who is organising/ funding the research?**

The University of Leeds is sponsoring the research. This study is self-funded by (Shang Shi). Shang Shi is a PhD Candidate at the University of Leeds, school of design.

#### **Contact for further information**

Thank you for taking the time to read through the information. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like further information.

Researcher: Shang Shi

<http://www.design.leeds.ac.uk/people/shang-shi/>

[sdss@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:sdss@leeds.ac.uk)

(+44) 07541642158;

Supervisor: Dr Kishore Budha

<http://www.design.leeds.ac.uk/people/kishore-budha/>

Email: [K.N.Budha@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:K.N.Budha@leeds.ac.uk)

(+44) 0113 343 3715

Supervisor: Professor Vien Cheung

<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/design/staff/235/dr-vien-cheung>

Email: [T.L.V.Cheung@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:T.L.V.Cheung@leeds.ac.uk)

+44(0)113 343 5590

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet  
and for considering taking part in the study

## Appendix II: Participant Consent Form

### Participant Consent Form

**Research Title:** The semiotics of luxury mobility in Chinese culture and the implications for the design and branding of international corporations

<p><b>Consent to take part in</b> the semiotics of luxury mobility in Chinese culture and the implications for the design and branding of international corporations</p>	<p>Add your initials if you agree</p>
<p>I confirm that I have read and understood the Research Participants Information Sheet version number ___ dated ___/___/___ explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.</p>	
<p>I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw up until February twenty-eighth, 2018, without giving any reason and without any negative consequences.</p>	
<p>If I decide to withdraw from the study, I can tell the researcher whether I am happy to use the information obtained up to that point. If I am not, any information that I have given will be destroyed. Besides, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.</p>	
<p>I understand that my responses will be kept strictly anonymous. I permit members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.</p>	
<p>I agree with the audio recordings collected from me to be used in future research and educational activities.</p>	



I agree with the transcriptions of the data collected from me to be used in future research and educational activities.	
I agree to participate in the above research project and inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of the lead researcher	Shang Shi
Signature	
Date	

### Appendix III: An example of interview transcription

<b>A: Personal profile</b>	
<b>Participant code</b>	1112
<b>Living city</b>	Shanghai
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Age group</b>	35-46
<b>The luxury class of the purchased car</b>	MLC
<b>Occupation</b>	Business owner
<b>The main field of business</b>	Pipeline construction

<b>B: The purchased luxury car profile</b>	
<b>Purchased model</b>	LEXUS ES 300h
<b>Purchased time</b>	January 2016
<b>Original budget</b>	400,00-600,000 RMB
<b>Main task or activities</b>	Personal mobility
<b>Main passengers</b>	Buyer himself
<b>Time for made decision</b>	Three days
<b>Dealership visits</b>	Once
<b>Other owned luxury cars</b>	LEXUS ES 300 for eight years

**Q: May I ask what your recently purchased luxury car is?**

A: The luxury car that I recently purchased is LEXUS ES 300h. I purchased it last month. I have been driving my last car for eight years. The condition of my old car is still good, but it is too old. I also think it is time to change a new car to leave my old car to my stuff. So, they can use it for any business activities.

**Q: What was your original budget? Have you ever considered any other models/brands with this budget?**

A: The original budget was around 400,000-600,000 RMB (equals 40,000-60,000 pounds). By the way, my last car is also LEXUS ES 300. I did not consider any other models/brands.

Besides, a Hybrid car contains many new technologies. It is quite fun to try new technologies. Lexus is very competitive in the Hybrid car field.

**Q: Why? Why not other brands? Or other models from LEXUS?**

A: As you know, I would not consider a high-end luxury car with this budget. This car is just for daily transporting. I prefer a sedan because the sedan is more comfortable than an SUV. The outlook of Lexus ES 300h is outstanding and unique. I like it very much.

Besides, it is significant for a Shanghai citizen to be easier to find a parking place. I was a LEXUS ES300 owner for eight years. So, I know and trust LEXUS a lot. LEXUS car is famous for its stability. Besides, one of my university roommates works in the Shanghai LEXUS dealership. This condition makes things easier. I got the best price promotion from him. Most importantly, all the LEXUS hybrid cars can get six years free after sell service; this makes everything even better.

**Q: What information did you seek before and during your purchase?**

I did not. I was a LESUS ES300 user, and it completely satisfied me. So, when I was planning to change a new car, I call my university roommate to ask if there any new version of the LESUS ES300. He told me LEXUS ES300h. I decide on that day and pay the money two days later. So, the whole purchase process was speedy.

I always make a quick decision. I do not have enough time to do research. I used to make a house buying decision in Shanghai in just one week. Compare with a house, the price of the LEXUS ES 300h is a piece of cake.

I want to mention that my car noise cancelling is perfect, but it is not very important. I did not know this when I buy it.

**Q: Will your family members give you any suggestions that can affect your decision?**

A: No, my wife always trusts me.

**Q: What were the features most important in your purchase decision?**

A: Stability, brand, comfort, elegant interior design, and body design. I do not care about power. At this level, I think E.S. 300h is my best choice. The first thing is that I trust LEXUS. The cars made by LEXUS always have outstanding stability. In the last few years, I also have been driving other popular middle luxury models such as BMW 5 series or Audi A6 series. In the same luxury level, German luxury cars have less stability and comfort. Besides, their interior design is a disaster compare with LEXUS ES 300h. They have better controlling and power, but these two factors are not critical factors for me.

**Q: LEXUS has an attractive sales promotion for all buyers: 4 years of free after-sale service for regular car buyers and six years of free after-sale service for Hybrid car buyers. Is this promotion affect your purchase decision?**

A: Yes, this promotion can save a lot of after-sale service costs. However, the most critical part for me it saves my time. Free after-sale service means they do not make any money from after-sale service. So, I do not need to make different decisions. This promotion will save a lot of energy and time for me. The value of this part is more critical than the cost-saving part.

**Q: How about oil consumption?**

I will say the oil consumption will never be a key buying factor for middle luxury buyers' owners. I still choose the Hybrid ES 300h because my curiosity told me that it is more fun to buy a Hybrid. The oil consumption of Hybrid E.S. 300h is very low. Honestly, I also did not think about environmental protection issues.

**Q: What are the main weaknesses that you identified in your LEXUS ES 300h?**

A: I am very clear about what is my need. I need an elegant, comfortable middle-class luxury car with good stability for daily transpotting. I will use it for at least six years, so LEXUS ES 300h is a perfect choice. It is quite hard to say that one weakness affects my derision.

**Q: How about the in-car entertainment feature?**

A: It is OK. Usually, I do not use it. However, my Kid sometimes will use it to watch the cartoon.

**Q: How about the in-car space?**

A: It is fine. The backseat space is enough, even though I do not take the passenger a lot. The driver seat space is sufficient for me.

**Q: Will the Boycott Japanese goods activities affect your user experiences when you are using the last LEXUS ES300? Such the Will Boycott Japanese goods activities in 2012.**

A: Boycott Japanese goods activities happen quite rarely in Shanghai. Even during Boycott Japanese goods activities in 2012, there was rarely a Japanese car damaged during that time. The people who would like to damage Japanese cars are foolish; they are just a group of ignorant criminals. I never consider this factor when I buy these two cars.

**Q: How about Mianzi? Do you need to buy a high-end Luxury car to add *Mianzi* to yourself or your firm, or for business etiquette?**

A: Maybe in Tier 2 or Tier 3 cities, people still need to buy a high-end Luxury car to tell other people how rich they are, how much money they can make. Nevertheless, Shanghai is a very international city; people think differently. For personal mobility, Shanghai people always consider what their primary needs are. Like me, I do not need to buy a high-end Luxury car to add the Mianzi. I can show my identity through other methods. I would not buy a 2-door sports car because I have passed my 20's. I also do not have a sports car dream since I am young. The tangible benefits are most important for me, so I choose the LEXUS 300h. Besides, LEXUS has a good brand value that I can trust.

My firm has a high-end Luxury car for business etiquette, and I also hired a professional driver, so I do not need to worry about it. Another culture in China is that all small firms in some industries need to buy a high-end Luxury car to add *Mianzi* to themselves and their firms. This culture may work worldwide, but I think in this situation, the high-end Luxury car is more like a tool of production rather than a tool of

transporting.

**Q: Do you also use any other luxury mobility (e.g., by train, by flight)?**

A: In our firm, all the employees can only take economics class flights or trains when they need business travelling. I also just take economics class flights or trains when I need business travelling. For a small firm, it will be too luxurious to use none-economics class trainspotting for business travelling. Of course, we do not consider the travelling cost for some business travelling unless the economics class is sold out.

**Q: Even for travelling aboard?**

A: Maybe in some particular circumstances, the firm will buy the business class flights for the employees, but these circumstances are still rare. Usually, our employees will have enough time to have a rest after they arrive. However, Suppose I organise a family trip for the holidays. In that case, I will always choose a first-class flight for transporting and 5-star hotels for a living. On the one hand, I can afford the price; on the other hand, I always try my best to let my family members enjoy the holidays.

**Q: How often will you organise a family trip for a holiday?**

A: Probably once a year, you see, it is not expensive for me. The first-class flight and 5-star hotels provide more value for my family. You do not need to queue up like others in the terminals and having more seat space on the flight. I instead spend more money than a terrible transporting experience that ruins the trips. Overall, the transporting cost is just a small part of the whole travelling cost. Five-star hotels are safer, comfortable, and clean. There is no reason to saving money here. It is a holiday.

**Q: I see. Thank you very much for accepting my request for this interview today. This research cannot be finished without your generous help!**



## Appendix IV: Dynasties in Chinese history

Time	Last Years	Name			Period of
c. 2070- c. 1600 BC	c. 470	<b>Xia Dynasty</b>			<b>Xia, Shang, Zhou</b>
c. 1600- c. 1046 BC	c. 500	<b>Shang Dynasty</b>			
c. 1046- 256 BC	c. 791 or c. 868	<b>Zhou Dynasty</b>	<b>Western Zhou</b>	1046-771BC	
			<b>Eastern Zhou</b>	Spring and Autumn 770 -476 BC	
				Warring States 476-221 BC	
221- 207 BC	14	<b>Qin Dynasty</b>			<b>Qin, Han</b>
206- 202 BC	5	<b>Western Chu</b>			
202 BC- 220 AD	405	<b>Han Dynasty</b>	Western Han202 BC-9 AD		
			Eastern Han25-220 AD		
220- 280 AD	61	<b>Three Kingdoms</b>			<b>Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties</b>
266- 420 AD	156	<b>Jin Dynasty</b>	Western Jin265-316 AD		
			Eastern Jin317-420 AD		
420- 589 AD	170	<b>Northern and Southern Dynasties</b>			

581- 618 AD	38	<b>Sui Dynasty</b>		<b>Sui, Tang</b>
618- 907 AD	289	<b>Tang Dynasty</b>		
907- 960 AD	54	<b>Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Five Dynasties</b>		
960- 1279 AD	319	<b>Song Dynasty</b>	Northern Song 960-1127 AD	
			Southern Song 1127-1279 AD	
1271- 1368 AD	98	<b>Yuan Dynasty</b>		
1368- 1644 AD	276	<b>Ming Dynasty</b>		<b>Ming, Qing</b>
1644- 1912 AD	268	<b>Qing Dynasty</b>		

## Appendix V: Ancient Chinese text and its author

Time	Name of text	Author	
		Name	Time
The Spring and Autumn 770-476 BC	A classic of Filial Piety (孝经)	Confucius(孔子)	179-104 BC
	Book of Documents (尚书)		
	Book of Rites (礼记)		
Warring States 476-221 BC	Mencius (孟子)	Mencius (孟子)	372-289 BC
	Xunzi (荀子)	Xun Kuang (荀子)	c. 310-c. 235 BC
	Han Feizi (韩非子)	Han Fei(韩非)	c. 280-c. 233 BC
Warring States c. 239 BC	Lüshi Chunqiu (吕氏春秋)	Lü Buwei (吕不韦)	c. 291-235 BC
Western Han 202 BC-9 AD	Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals 春秋繁露	Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒)	c. 310-c. 235 BC
	Liwei· Hanwenjia (礼纬·含文嘉)	[Unknow]	[Unknown]
Western Han c. 94 BC	Records of the Grand Historian (史记)	Sima Qian (司马迁)	c. 145-86 BC
Eastern Han 25-220 AD	Bai Hu Tong (白虎通义)	Ban Gu (班固)	32-92 AD
Eastern Han c. 111 AD	Book of Han (汉书)		

Northern and Southern Dynasties 420-589 AD	Hou Hanshu (后汉书)	Fan Ye (范晔)	398-445 AD
	Zhushi (塵史)	Wang Dechen (王得臣)	1036-1116 AD
Southern Song 1127-1279 AD	Zizhi Tongjian (资治通鉴)	Sima Guang (司马光)	1019-1086 AD
1593	Yuanshu Zaji (宛署杂记)	Shen Bang (沈榜)	1540-1597 AD

## Appendix VI: Semiotic Thinking Group

The information of 443 members in Semiotic Thinking Group (LinkedIn, 2015)

	Name	Title
1	Karen M.	President, Morgan Search International, leading talent specialists for insights (market research), strategy & innovation,
2	Anthony C.	Branding & Marketing Communications   Rio Tinto, Singapore
3	Suki Bains	Owner & Creative Semiotician at Make sense - Semiotically driven concepts, Reading, United Kingdom
4	John Murphy	Semiotician at Simpson Carpenter Ltd, London, United Kingdom
5	Hamsini Shivkumar	Owner, Leapfrog Strategy Consulting, Gurgaon, India
6	Xiaojing Huang	YANG DESIGN Strategic Director, writer, speaker, Shanghai City, China
7	Natalie Edwards	Director at Canopy - Semiotics & Cultural Insight, London, United Kingdom
8	Xingzhi ZHAO	Peircean Semiotician & Cultural Analyst, Chengdu, Sichuan, China
9	Richard Leslie	Chief Strategy Officer, Savannah, Georgia Area
10	Heather McQuaid	Principal, Human-Centred Design, London, United Kingdom
11	Vladimir Djurovic	CEO at Labbrand - Brand innovations, Shanghai Suburb, China
12	Uri Baruch	Strategy Director at The Partners, London, United Kingdom
13	Tim Stock	Co-Founder/Managing Director

14	Francesco Mangiapane	Research assistant in Semiotics at Università degli Studi di Palermo, Palermo Area, Italy
15	Bev Corwin	Consultant, United States
16	Sandra Pickering	Brand, Strategy & Innovation consultant, speaker and Founder of opento.com - brand experts online, on-demand., Slough, United Kingdom
17	Tayana Borges	Marketing/ Branding Personal Care, Hair Care & Skincare, Nottingham, United Kingdom
18	Thierry Mortier	Semiotic Architect - 記号論 の 建築家, Gent Area, Belgium
19	Rebecca Allen	Japanese Marketing & Culture Consultant, Yokohama, Kanagawa, Japan
20	Naima Ourahmoune	Associate Professor in branding and consumer research at NEOMA Business School - Campus Reims, Paris Area, France
21	Bianca Cawthorne	Founding Director at Butterfly London, Twickenham, United Kingdom
22	Shalini Rawla	People gazer and behaviour addict, the critical consumer diagnostics and intelligence, Mumbai Area, India
23	Charles Leech	Semiotic Multidisciplinarian, Toronto, Canada Area
24	Hugh Bateman	Planner + Brand Strategist + MBA, London, United Kingdom
25	Shreyanka Basu	The hypnotherapist, Epiphany Nurturer, Narrative Consultant, Co-creation Champion, Management Educator, Qualitative Explorer, New Delhi Area, India
26	Archita Varma	Qualitative Research Consultant, New Delhi Area, India
27	Jan Brejcha	Business developer and consultant with a passion for human-machine interaction, Czech Republic

<b>28</b>	Anna Bamford	Senior Brand Strategist, London, United Kingdom
<b>29</b>	Rekha Pamani-Gulati	Partner at Bespoke Property Consultants and Independent Marketing and Branding Professional, Mumbai Area, India
<b>30</b>	Sasha Dzhuras-Dotta	Marketing Director Consumer Lifestyle, Philips UK & Ireland - leading the transition to consumer-focused marketing, London, United Kingdom
<b>31</b>	Kasper Bergholt	-  E-marketing, Folkekirkens Nødhjælp, Copenhagen Area, Capital Region, Denmark
<b>32</b>	Nicolas Jung	Sémiologue / Directeur conseil, Paris Area, France
<b>33</b>	Rajesh Kurup	Managing Director at Millward Brown, Gurgaon, India
<b>34</b>	Mariah Hartman	Director at Space Doctors, Brighton, United Kingdom
<b>35</b>	Jake Pearce	Marketeer - Eudoo - Voice of the Future NZ & Australia, Sydney Area, Australia
<b>36</b>	Jamie Gordon	Cultural Strategist: Powering Brands with Human-Centered Growth, Greater Atlanta Area
<b>37</b>	Steven Wallis	Group Head of Culinary Innovation at Two Sisters Food Group, London, United Kingdom
<b>38</b>	Konstantinos Kontinos	Head of New Business and Consumer Insights, United Arab Emirates
<b>39</b>	Asif Noorani	Founding Partner at Permission Ventures, London, United Kingdom
<b>40</b>	Marie Lena Tupot	Consumer insight expert in search of the underdog with real bite, Greater New York City Area
<b>41</b>	Debbi Evans	Founder, Lovelace & Carter Ltd, London, United Kingdom
<b>42</b>	Steve Verba	Real insight demands both breadth and depth of knowledge and experience., Cleveland/Akron, Ohio Area

43	Fiona McNae	CEO, Space Doctors, Brighton, United Kingdom
44	Arun Michaelsen	Senior Research Consultant at DLI Market Intelligence, Copenhagen Area, Capital Region, Denmark
45	Alan Mills	Global Head of Cultural and Qualitative Investigation at Hall & Partners, London, United Kingdom
46	Gary Whitlock	Director of Creative Services, Blue Shield of California, San Francisco Bay Area
47	Balasubramaniam R	Entrepreneur, Chennai Area, India
48	Sarah Jane Johnson	Senior Market Researcher and Brand Strategy Consultant, Toronto, Canada Area
49	Oliver Perrin	Communications Consultant • Brand Strategy • Semiotics • NPD/Innovation • Cultural Research • Positioning, Greater Atlanta Area
50	ILARIA FORTE	CATALYST FOR CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION, Hamburg Area, Germany
51	Rupin Jayal	Partner Benefit Consulting, New Delhi Area, India
52	Panos Dimitropoulos	Cultural Insights Associate Director at Added Value, Shanghai City, China
53	Mark Thorpe	Brand, innovation and commercial strategy - Board Director at Truth Consulting, London, United Kingdom
54	Amrita Brad	Account Manager at Accord Group Ltd, London, United Kingdom
55	Amit Kumar Shrivastava	Helping brands identify their core insight and idea to tell powerful stories across media, Mumbai Area, India
56	Malcolm Evans	Independent Consultant in Semiotics & Cultural Insight Editor of Semionaut, Brighton, United Kingdom
57	Ricardo Nogueira de Castro Monteiro	Project Manager - Principal Investigator at Project of Research: Semiotics and the construction of identity, São Paulo Area, Brazil



<b>58</b>	Laura Oswald	Research Director and Consultant, Marketing Semiotics Inc., Greater Chicago Area
<b>59</b>	José Luis Kanarek	Founder and director at Proyecto Noesis, Mexico City Area, Mexico
<b>60</b>	Gavin Mackintosh	Digital Designer at Bray Leino Limited, Exeter, United Kingdom
<b>61</b>	Liza Makarov	Innovation Consultant, London, United Kingdom
<b>62</b>	Laura Williams	Innovation Consultant: design thinking and business strategy, London, United Kingdom
<b>63</b>	Andreea Niculescu	Research Director at TNS Middle East and Africa, United Arab Emirates
<b>64</b>	J. Duncan Berry	Principal, Applied Iconology, Inc., Barnstable/Yarmouth, Massachusetts Area
<b>65</b>	Taylor Standlee	Director of Business and Culture at Grey Group, San Francisco Bay Area
<b>66</b>	Paulina Goch-Kenawy	Semiotician, Contract Teacher at University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Freelancer, Warsaw, Masovian District, Poland
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<b>70</b>	Leslie X Hallam	Qualitative Director, Oxford, United Kingdom
<b>71</b>	João Paulo Cavalcanti	Knowledge and Innovation Consultant, São Paulo Area, Brazil
<b>72</b>	Alina Stepan	Managing Director, Ipsos Research Romania, Romania

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<b>74</b>	Alan Casey	Co-Founder and CEO, Vietnam
<b>75</b>	Padma Ramaseshan	Research Director at Unboxed Consulting, United Arab Emirates
<b>76</b>	Stefania Gogna	International Independent Semiotician - Marketing Researcher, Italy
<b>77</b>	Ashutosh Tiwari	Executive Vice President & Head, International Marketing & Innovation at Godrej Consumer Products Limited, Mumbai Area, India
<b>78</b>	John Wise	Senior Director - Cultural Insights & Brand Strategy at Kelton, Greater New York City Area
<b>79</b>	Milena Hristova-Markova	Qualitative Team Leader at Consumer Experiences Division of GfK Bulgaria, Bulgaria area
<b>80</b>	Greg Rowland	Founder of The Semiotic Alliance, London, United Kingdom
<b>81</b>	Babita Baruah	Senior Vice President and Executive Business Director, JWT Delhi, Gurgaon, India
<b>82</b>	Adam Stasiak	Partner at People Research, Copenhagen Area, Capital Region, Denmark
<b>83</b>	Isabella Wong	Qualitative Research Executive at Simpson Carpenter Ltd, London, United Kingdom
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<b>85</b>	Dee de Lara	Cultural Insights   Youth Culture   Media   Strategy, Greater New York City Area
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<b>87</b>	Borislav Gueorguiev	Professor at New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria

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<b>92</b>	Sakina Pittalwala	Director at Firefly Millward Brown, Mumbai Area, India
<b>93</b>	Sarah Booth	Audience Researcher at Auckland War Memorial Museum, New Zealand
<b>94</b>	Antonio Paolo	Strategic Planner & Semiotician at Adacto, Siena Area, Italy
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<b>100</b>	Meenu Kapoor	Consumer Insights- Qualitative, Kenya
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<b>102</b>	Guido Mercati	Epiphanies hunter, United Kingdom
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115	Paula Magariños	Culture and Communications Research /Ethnography, Semiotics, Applied Research, Argentina
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118	Konrad Collao	Partner, Craft, London, United Kingdom
119	Sue Bell	Market & Social Researcher. Qualitative Research, Semiotics, Plain Language specialist. Principal: Susan Bell Research, Sydney Area, Australia
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121	Roxanne Mosavar	Director at Flamingo, London, United Kingdom

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<b>125</b>	John McGarr	President, Toronto, Canada Area
<b>126</b>	Pranoti Sheldenkar-Thakur	Communication and Strategic Planning Professional, Pune Area, India
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<b>128</b>	Shaveta Bhardwaj	Group Account Director at Millward Brown, Mumbai Area, India
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157	Sandy Santra	IT services provider: Analyst, Architect, Presenter, Project Manager, Supervisor, Trainer, Greater New York City Area
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167	Priya Gaur	Consultant MR, Other
168	Andrea Zannini	Head of Qualitative at Beyond Research, Italy

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<b>176</b>	Sarah Clark	Design Manager at Precipice Design, Twickenham, United Kingdom
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<b>187</b>	Pedro M. Azevedo Rocha	Visual Thinker   Information Analyst   Data Scientist   Semiotician, Porto Area, Portugal
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<b>197</b>	Maria Alexandra Salamanques Amiel	Project Director at Space Doctors, Brighton, United Kingdom
<b>198</b>	Oksana Orlenko	Client Service Director at Kwendi Impact Studies, Ukraine
<b>199</b>	Jaikishan Menon	CSD at Ogilvy & Mather, Mumbai Area, India

<b>200</b>	Anila Khosla Shrivastava	Founder and Principal Consultant at IdStats Research & Consultancy, Singapore
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<b>205</b>	Sabah Sheesh Ahmed	Market Systems Specialist, Bangladesh
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<b>207</b>	Giorgio Sirtori	Business coordinator, Lecco Area, Italy
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<b>209</b>	Ruli Himawan Nugroho	Senior Manager of Strategic Planning at PT. Dentsu Strat, Greater Jakarta Area, Indonesia
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<b>212</b>	Paolo Dossi	Semiologo, Parma Area, Italy
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<b>235</b>	Hazel Barkworth	Cultural Insight Associate Director at Added Value, London, United Kingdom
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<b>238</b>	Moowa Masani	Director at Reach Consumer Insights, Cape Town Area, South Africa
<b>239</b>	Andrea Basanti	Senior Strategist at Big Green Door, London, United Kingdom
<b>240</b>	Valeria De Luca	Doctorante en sémiotique chez Université de Limoges, Paris Area, France
<b>241</b>	Ellen Wong	Head of Insight, Hong Kong
<b>242</b>	Jerry Clode	Founder, House of Jezmo, São Paulo Area, Brazil
<b>243</b>	Pankaj Gupta	Product Manager at XOLO Smartphone (Lava International Limited), Noida Area, India
<b>244</b>	Claire Parham	Head of Truth Asia, Singapore
<b>245</b>	Simone Barbieri	Research Executive at Ipsos, Milan Area, Italy
<b>246</b>	Ludmilla Veloso [LION]	Co-founder Eyso, São Paulo Area, Brazil
<b>247</b>	Aimee Lewis	Creative Strategist at Design Bridge, Singapore
<b>248</b>	Marina Simakova	Senior qualitative researcher at O+K, Russian Federation
<b>249</b>	Arlene Tucker	Teacher at H&S International School, Finland

<b>250</b>	Graeme Smith	Business Owner at Cearnag Ruadh (Red Square), Southampton, United Kingdom
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<b>252</b>	Rakesh Kumar	Chairman, Global Firefly Board, Firefly Millward Brown, United Arab Emirates
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<b>269</b>	Mariane Cara	Semioticista e Planejamento Estratégico at Comunicara, São Paulo Area, Brazil
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<b>275</b>	Jackson Lo	Consumer Insights, China
<b>276</b>	Tom Edwards	Senior Digital Strategist at Arnold Furnace, Sydney Area, Australia
<b>277</b>	Shipra Bhatt	Associate Vice President at Quantum Consumer Solutions Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi Area, India
<b>278</b>	Théophile Granier	Planneur stratégique chez Altaïr Communication, Morocco
<b>279</b>	Michelle Hamden	Business Director at Design x Space, Greater New York City Area
<b>280</b>	Janet Dakota	Lecturer at Nov Bulgarski Universitet, Bulgaria
<b>281</b>	Frederik Stjernfelt	Professor, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen Area, Capital Region, Denmark
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<b>286</b>	Chris Barnham	Director at Chris Barnham Research and Strategy Limited, Kingston upon Thames, United Kingdom
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<b>290</b>	Anita Kasabova	associate professor in philosophy, mediator, Bulgaria
<b>291</b>	George Ng	Assistant Director, Collaborative Practice & Development, Singapore
<b>292</b>	Alexandra-Sasha Gallova	Insights Manager at Money Advice Service, Redhill, United Kingdom
<b>293</b>	Anju Cherian	Director/ Program Evangelist at Baby Sensory India, United Arab Emirates
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<b>304</b>	Elena Grigorieva	researcher at Tartu University, Estonia
<b>305</b>	Ervin Ha	Business Development Director, Singapore
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<b>314</b>	Emilia Pavlova	Graphic designer, Bulgaria
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<b>319</b>	Rasika Batra	Senior Consultant at IMRB International, Gurgaon, India
<b>320</b>	Isha Ghodgaonkar	Experienced Strategic Marketing Graduate Looking for Brand Management & Marketing Planning Role, Mumbai Area, India
<b>321</b>	Antje Weißborn	Senior Project Director of Happy Thinking People, Berlin Area, Germany
<b>322</b>	Victor Ayedun-Aluma	A reader at the Department of Mass Communication, University of Jos, Jos, Nigeria, Nigeria
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<b>324</b>	Mark Berg	Director of Operations, Sign Salad Ltd, London, United Kingdom
<b>325</b>	Dimitar Trendafilov, PhD	Assistant professor at New Bulgarian University and Managing Partner at "Brand In Trend" Research and Consulting Agency, Bulgaria
<b>326</b>	Faiza Sadiq (Jobsøgende, Job seeker.)	Experienced procurement/marketing manager, Teacher., Central Region, Denmark
<b>327</b>	Daniele Dodaro	Co-founder & Market Researcher at Squadrati, Milan Area, Italy
<b>328</b>	Anthony Mathé	Follow Anthony
<b>329</b>	Julie Cole	Director at Cultureplay, Perth Area, Australia
<b>330</b>	Shuting Li	Researcher & Brand Strategist, Greater New York City Area
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<b>333</b>	Meghan Cridland	PhD. Candidate in Ethnology at Lund University, Lund, Sweden
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<b>335</b>	Jill Pate	User Researcher at HM Government, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom
<b>336</b>	Maria - ilia Katsaridou	PhD. Student at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Brussels Area, Belgium
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