

**The influence of shame on status  
consumption with restorative tendency as  
shame response within a Chinese context**

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## **Abstract**

Shame is a universal but painful emotion which is known to most people. Major research reported in the shame literature has focused on the response to shame within the behavioral tendencies of withdrawal (Dickerson, Gruenewald & Kemeny, 2004; Kemeny, Gruenewald & Dickerson, 2004; Tangney, Mashek & Stuewig, 2005), and of externalization (Baumeister, Smart & Boden, 1996; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher & Gramzow, 1992). Recent discussion on shame response suggests that shame also leads to a restorative tendency through self-improvement and enhancement (Gausel, Leach, Vignoles & Brown, 2012). This is a result of most previous studies being conducted within a Western context where cultures devalue shame and see it as a totally negative emotion which should be avoided. Conversely, Eastern cultures are shame-affirming cultures and often see shame as a motivation for improvement.

These different attitudes towards shame and different behavioral tendencies have recently been discussed in the shame literature (Skeikh, 2014). However, Sheikh (2014) provides only a conceptual idea of the shame response of restorative tendency, while lacking support from empirical evidence. This gap is important, yet poorly studied by researchers. To bridge the gap, this research aims to examine shame and its response of restorative tendency by providing qualitative evidence with linguistic examples of a shame restorative tendency.

Further, though existing studies pay significant attention to the role of shame in regulating one's behavior, most consider it in terms of the negativity of withdrawal and externalizing tendencies (Cohen, Wolf, Panter & Insko, 2011; Tangney, et al., 1992; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Few recent studies focus on shame's restorative role in regulating behavior (Tangney, Stuewig & Martinez, 2014). Additionally, most of these studies limit their focus within fields such as psychology (Scheff, 2014) and sociology (Gilbert, 2003). Research on the impact of shame in the consumption field is scarce. Therefore, following recent discussion on shame restorative tendency, and aiming to supplement existing knowledge on shame in consumption behavior, this research adapts self-affirmation theory and self-regulation theory in investigating the influence of shame in the context of status consumption.

The research employs a mixed method using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Incorporating a linguistic corpus analysis, the qualitative approach allows the investigation of the concept of shame and its causes and responses with Chinese and English corpus. Linguistic evidence supports the mainstream view of shame (Tangney, Miller, Flicker & Barlow, 1996; Tangney & Dearing, 2002) where self-attack is a cause of shame, and withdrawal and externalizing behaviors are responses to shame. More importantly, it confirms the alternative response to shame with restorative tendency raised in recent discussions (Gausel, et al., 2012; Sheikh, 2014), and provides substantial examples of restorative behaviors.

Following this, a paper-based survey questionnaire distributed to Chinese consumers (n=210), aims to test the impact of shame on the consumption field with its response of restorative tendency. Stepwise hierarchical regression results highlight the influence of shame on consumer status consumption. It shows that consumers with high shame proneness are more likely to participate in status consumption, but only under the condition of a high independent construal of the self.

To further examine the linkage between shame and status consumption, we then conduct three experimental studies. Study 1 (n=106) aims to investigate the impact of feeling shame on status consumption. Results suggest that the group with aroused feelings of shame demonstrates a higher intention to purchase status products. Study 2 (n=114) aims to test whether shame impacts consumer's preferences for conspicuousness when both products are considered as status products. Results in this study found that consumers with primed shame feelings show a higher preference for status products with high conspicuousness, i.e., loud products. Study 3 (n=125) explores the moderating effect on shame and status consumption due to the relationships between consumers and those who accompany them, i.e., psychological proximity to others. Results suggest that when a consumer is accompanied by someone with whom they have a close relationship, the consumer's feelings of shame are more likely to transfer into status consumption since they place high importance on those significant others

with whom they share psychological proximity, rather than those with whom they have distant relationships.

This research extends the existing literature by testing the influence of shame on status consumption with its restorative tendency. The corpus analysis helps to advance our understanding of shame responses and confirm a restorative tendency as an alternative response to shame, rather than merely the withdrawal or externalizing tendencies drawn from Western literature. This research fills this gap by providing linguistic evidence of restorative actions as a shame response, and provides the preconditions for testing the impact of shame on status consumption in the quantitative approach which follows.

Most importantly, the quantitative part of this research adds to the existing consumption literature with status consumption as a restorative tendency responding to shame. By applying self-affirmation theory and self-regulation theory to build the conceptual model, this research also broadens the theorist's discernment of shame on status consumption by explaining the mechanism of shame with response restorative tendency, which then leads to status consumption. Further, findings from extended studies on the impact of shame on status consumption with conspicuousness and psychological proximity offer insights for advertising agencies or marketing organizations demonstrating the practical implications of shame appeals.

Keywords: Shame, status consumption, restorative tendencies

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## Abbreviations

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<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
<b>ANOVA</b>	Analysis of Variance
<b>CFA</b>	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
<b>CFI</b>	Comparative Fit Index
<b>CCL PKU</b>	Center for Chinese Linguistics, Peking University
<b>EFA</b>	Exploratory Factor Analysis
<b>ESS</b>	Experience of Shame Scale
<b>FLOB</b>	The Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British English
<b>FROWN</b>	The Freiburg-Brown Corpus of American English
<b>GASP</b>	Guilt and Shame Proneness
<b>GFI</b>	Goodness of Fit Index
<b>LCMC</b>	The Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese
<b>JTW</b>	Just the Word
<b>PANAS</b>	The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule -Revised
<b>PFQ</b>	Personal Feelings Questionnaire
<b>RMSEA</b>	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
<b>SP</b>	Shame Proneness
<b>TOSCA</b>	Test of Self-conscious Affect

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*知耻而为人，知耻而后勇 —— 孟子*

To be aware of shame is to be a human, to be aware of shame is to bravely improve ——*Mencius*

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Chapter Overview**

In this chapter, there are major two parts: an introduction to the research and an outline of the whole thesis. In the first part, before explaining the research question and its importance, we provide some general background information about shame and status consumption in China in section 1.1.1. In section 1.1.2, we identify the gap in the existing shame and marketing literature and introduce our research questions. We state the purpose of this research and its potential contributions in detail in section 1.1.3. In the second part of the chapter, section 1.2 provides an overview of the whole thesis and outlines each chapter with a brief introduction of its content.

### **1.1. Introduction to the Research**

#### ***1.1.1. General Background***

According to Benedict (2005), every culture has its own cultural psychologies, and different cultural psychologies lead to different cultural patterns. That is, the culture into which people are born shapes their thinking and behavioral patterns in accordance with their cultural background (Benedict, 2005). In Western societies, the major responses to the emotion of shame are withdrawal and/or externalizing actions such as hiding, escaping, becoming angry or violent (Dickerson, et al., 2004; Tangney, et al., 2005; Tangney, et al., 1996). However, instead of such negative responses, Gausel et al. (2012) find that

shame also leads to a positive response with a restorative tendency, particularly in Eastern Asian cultures. One possible reason for such difference lies in the different attitudes toward the emotion of shame. That is, Asian cultures are often shame affirming cultures whereby they see shame as a motivation for improvement, while most of the Western cultures consider shame to be a totally negative emotion which should be avoided (Sheikh, 2014). In this research, we aim to investigate shame from the restorative perspective within the Chinese context rather than focus on the traditional view of shame seen in much of the Western literature.

Drawing on traditional Chinese philosophy, the awareness of shame is considered to be a strong representation of being a civilized human. It is listed as one of the four major criteria for moral and behavioral standards, along with a sense of propriety, righteousness, honesty, and shame, thus 礼义廉耻 (Li, 2009). According to *Mencius*, “耻之于人大矣” (Shame is something important for people), “人不可以无耻” (A person cannot do without shame) (Legge, 1970). In addition, *Confucian Analects* also identify shame as one of the standards of being a decent officer in ancient China, thus, “行己有耻,使于四方,不辱君命,可谓是矣” (He who in his conduct of himself maintains a sense of shame, and when sent to any quarter will not disgrace his prince’s commission, deserves to be called an officer) (Legge, 2000).

Further, feeling shame is regarded as being insufficient and incompetent, both which need complementation. As stated in *Mencius*, 知耻而为人, 知耻而后勇 (To be aware of shame is to be a human, to be aware of shame is to bravely improve) (Legge, 1970). Here, the awareness of shame, and regulating one’s



behavior with that sense of shame, are regarded as the top priority in terms of one's behavioral standard. Hence, the consideration of restorative behavior, and its link to self-improvement and enhancement, is a common response to shame in China. However, the traditional understanding of the Chinese shame concept is barely recognized in Western shame-related literature. This explains the limited amount of Western research on shame responses with a restorative tendency. In this research, we focus on shame response with restorative tendency and apply this particular behavioral tendency to the consumption field within the Chinese context.

### ***1.1.2. Research Questions***

Emotion impacts behavior in a certain sequence: (1) stimulus event occurring; (2) emotion experienced; and (3) subsequent behaviors (Deci, 1996). Certainly, within this sequence, more complex processes are involved with intuitive appraisals, cognitive interpretations, reflective judgments, and self-regulation, to name a few. As one of the most common emotions experienced by humans, shame shares this sequence with its motivated role from emotion to behavior. For instance, when an individual is confronted with a stimuli event that may cause shame, the emotion of shame may be evoked, subsequently this may influence further behavior in order to reduce, or avoid, the psychological pain experienced. The subsequent behaviors of shame found in previous literature (e.g., Dickerson, et al., 2004; Tangney, et al., 1996) are often withdrawal and externalizing behavioral tendencies. Those studies, conducted within a Western context, neglect an alternative possibility of restorative tendency within a particular cultural background, i.e., in the context of a shame-affirming culture, such as China. Therefore, this research investigates

shame with its causes and responses, especially shame response with restorative tendency, and its role in the consumption field among Chinese consumers.

#### *1.1.2.1. Investigating shame in the Chinese context*

As stated, studies on shame are mostly conducted within the Western context. They place much attention on responses to shame, while studies on the causes of shame often lack of detail and depth (Dickerson, et al., 2004; Gilbert, 1997; Kemeny, et al., 2004; Tangney, et al., 2005). Moreover, researchers propose that shame only leads to withdrawal behaviors through hiding and escaping, and externalizing actions through hostility and violence (Dickerson, et al., 2004; Gruenewald, et al., 2004; Tangney, et al., 1996). However, as most of these studies are conducted within shame-devaluing cultures in the Western context, limited attention is paid to the importance of the investigation of shame with its motivating role in shame-affirming cultures dominant in Asian countries. In shame-affirming cultures, people see shame differently from their Western counterparts. For example, in China, having an awareness of shame is encouraged and it is long believed to be one of the standards of being a decent and respectable person. Moreover, the emotion of shame is valued as a positive force which could motivate individuals to achieve a better self through improvement and enhancement of one's self and behavior. Hence, findings in the Western literature often lack an alternative perspective which views shame from a positive angle. More importantly, even though the feeling of shame is commonly experienced by most individuals, the causes and responses, and also the reasons for corresponding responses, are seldom considered in existing

studies. In order to have a better understanding of shame, especially for shame within the Chinese context, we propose our first research question as:

(1) *What is shame?*

With the following sub-questions:

*1a: What are the major causes of shame? 1b: What are the major responses to shame? What are the actual behaviors for the shame positive response of restorative tendency (1c), as well as the negative behavioral tendencies of withdrawal (1d), and externalizing actions (1e)?*

To answer these questions, we provide a conceptual discussion on shame and then apply an empirical investigation with a qualitative linguistic approach in Chapter 4. This empirical investigation relies on concordance analysis utilizing Chinese and English corpora. Then, the causes and responses are categorized in accordance with shame expressions. Here, the major focus is on Chinese corpora rather than English corpora. Meanwhile, potential differences concerning shame in Chinese and in English contexts are identified for further understanding of shame. The detailed processes and results are presented in Chapter 4.

#### *1.1.2.2. Investigating the role of shame in status consumption*

Previous research finds emotion motivates behavior in several domains, and that the impact of emotion on consumption is profound (Bozinoff & Ghingold, 1983; Brennan & Binney, 2010). Studies of emotional appeals, which are recognized as important methods of persuasion, date back to the 1960s (Higbee, 1969). Most researchers focus on negative appeals. It is studies of these emotional appeals that have led to their adoption by marketers as popular

techniques to achieve commercial objectives. When applying shame into the consumption area, it is understood to be shame appeal (Boudewyns, et al., 2013; O’Keefe, 2000). As most of the existing shame literature is derived from the field of psychology (e.g., Gilbert, 2003; Tangney, et al., 2005; Tangney, et al., 2007), limited work has investigated the impact of shame in the consumption field in the Chinese context. This gap is important, but poorly investigated by previous researchers.

Shame research has found that the emotion of shame is often caused by attacks on one’s self (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Dickerson, et al., 2004; Gilbert, 1997; Tangney, et al., 1996), and this attacked and damaged self could be repaired with restorative behaviors (Sheikh, 2014). The restorative behaviors as shame responses are shown in the consumption field as purchasing behavior of status products, as status products have an affirmational function of protecting and maintaining one’s self-integrity (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010). More specifically, products one possesses could reveal one’s self-image. When one feels shame, the self is attacked and self-image is thus defected. In this case, status products, with their social signals, could help restore one’s self and nurse the psychological wound by revealing better social images.

In recent years, China has become the largest market in terms of status consumption. It is reported that Chinese consumers held 28% of the total market share of global status consumption in 2012 (Wang, 2012; Wang, 2012). In 2014, the ratio of Chinese consumers’ luxury consumption rose to 46%, or \$US106 billion (Zhang, 2015). Although China is currently reported to be one of the largest markets for consuming status products, the research on shame and status consumption is limited (Gan, 2007; Wang, 2012; Zhang, 2015). One

possible reason for this is due to the relatively short history of status consumption among Chinese consumers. That is, the emergence of status consumption in China only dates back to early 1980 due to China's unique historical conditions (Guan & Wang, 2003; Yan, 2004). In fact, before the 1990s, there was very little actual status consumption due to the special distribution system with ratio allocation. Although the concept of status consumption of luxury products is seen in China, the behavior of consuming status products was severely limited at that time. Then, with the dramatic development of the economy following the reform and opening-up policy, the consumption of status products in China has rapidly increased over the past three decades.

Another possible reason for the limited research on shame and status consumption in China is due to the recently found shame response of restorative tendency (Gausel, et al., 2012; Sheikh, 2014). As the main stream of shame responses in Western literature are withdrawal and externalizing tendencies, little attention is paid to the restorative tendency, which is commonly found in shame affirming cultures. Consequently, research on the application of shame response with restorative tendency is also limited to few fields, such as psychological, clinical, and managerial domains (Bagozzi, Verbeke & Gavino, 2003; Reid, Harper & Anderson, 2009; Tangney, et al., 2014). Hence, the recent finding of the shame response of restorative tendency, along with the recent boom in status consumption in China, to some extent explains the limited number of studies on shame and status consumption. To fill this gap, this research, therefore, seeks to examine the remaining under-researched questions on shame in the field of consumption: (2) *Does*

*shame influence status consumption among Chinese consumers?* Further, due to the trait of status product with different conspicuousness and the importance of relationships within the Chinese context, we answer this question by investigating several sub-questions, as follows:

*2a: To what extent does shame influence Chinese consumers' status consumption? 2b: To what extent does shame influence status consumption with products of different conspicuousness? 2c: To what extent do relationships with companions at the time of purchase influence the linkage of shame and status consumption?*

These research questions concern the influence of shame on status consumption among Chinese consumers. To provide answers we investigate the relationship between shame and status consumption using a quantitative approach. The inner logic and the incentive mechanism of the impact of this negative emotion of shame on consuming status products is discussed in terms of self-regulation theory and self-affirmation theory in Section 5.1 in Chapter 5. Our first step is to examine the influence of shame proneness on status consumption among Chinese consumers through a survey approach. As shame often relates to one's self, the role of self-construal is also investigated in this step. The second step, with an experimental approach, is to test the impact of the emotion of shame on status consumption, and is discussed in Section 6.2 in Chapter 6. The experimental approach is also applied to test the linkage between shame and status consumption under different conditions with different conspicuousness (Section 6.3), and with different relationships of the consumer with the person by whom they are accompanied (Section 6.4). Detailed processes and results are presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

For ease of reference, the research questions addressed by this thesis are listed in Table 1.1. Their answers provide vital steps towards the enhancement of our understanding of shame within the Chinese context, and its role in status consumption among Chinese consumers. Due to the comprehensive nature of this research, we use a multi-strategy methodology incorporating qualitative and quantitative approaches. In Chapter 4 a qualitative approach is applied to answer the first research question using a linguistic approach of corpus analysis. Quantitative approaches are employed to answer the second research question, Chapter 5 details a survey approach and Chapter 6 details an experimental approach. Detailed chapter outlines are provided in section 1.2.

Table 1.1. Research questions

<b>Research questions</b>	
1.	<p><i>What is shame?</i></p> <p><i>1a. What are the major causes of shame?</i></p> <p><i>1b. What are the major responses to shame?</i></p> <p><i>1c. What are the actual behaviors for the shame positive response of restorative tendency?</i></p> <p><i>1d. What are the actual behaviors for the shame negative behavioral tendencies of withdrawal tendency?</i></p> <p><i>1e. What are the actual behaviors for the shame negative behavioral tendencies of externalizing actions?</i></p>
2.	<p><i>Does shame influence status consumption among Chinese consumers?</i></p> <p><i>2a: To what extent does shame influence Chinese consumers' status consumption?</i></p> <p><i>2b: To what extent does shame influence status consumption with products of different conspicuousness?</i></p> <p><i>2c: To what extent do relationships with companions at the time of purchase influence the linkage of shame and status consumption?</i></p>

### ***1.1.3. Research Contributions***

This doctoral research contributes to the existing literature in the following aspects: first, it *adds to the existing consumption literature with influence of shame response of restorative tendency*. The emotion appeal of shame with its restorative influence in consumption is an under-researched topic. In most Western countries with shame devaluing cultures this topic is neglected as shame is regarded as a negative emotion to which people respond with dysfunctional actions of discharge and withdrawal (Dickerson, et al., 2004; Kemeny, et al., 2004; Tangney, et al., 2005), which is hardly transferable into a behavior of consumption. However, in Eastern shame affirming cultures, such as exists in China, feelings of shame can lead to the intention of purchasing a status product as a response of restorative tendency. As no previous study has investigated the influence of shame on consumption from this aspect, this research offers more insights to theoretical development on both status consumption and the application of shame response.

Moreover, our research also extends the current consumption literature by not only providing a new angle of shame appeal from a restorative perspective, but also offering an opportunity to explore this under-investigated topic for replication. With multi-methodology applied in this study, we *provide potential examples with survey and experimental approaches for replicating the investigation* of shame response with restorative tendency in consumption in other Asian countries with shame affirming cultures. Additionally, previous studies see the independent and interdependent construal of self as motivator for status consumption (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004; Wong & Ahuvia, 1997).



Our research adds to this topic by showing the *independent construal of self* as the *moderator* of shame and status consumption

More importantly, this research not only broadens the theorist's discernment of shame positive response with restorative tendency, but also *offers more insights for advertising agencies or marketing organizations with practical implications*. Practically, marketers could apply shame appeal, or use shame related strategies, in the status consumption market in China by, for instance, promoting how a status product could change one's self-image. Additionally, knowing how consumers react to the feeling of shame in different conditions during status consumption is also fundamental. Creating a more favorable condition for purchasing a status product as restorative tendency, or designing a status product that could better build the consumers self-image, are potential strategies that marketers could adopt.

Further, this research also *advances our understanding of shame responses with an alternative response of restorative tendency, rather than the withdrawal or externalizing tendencies seen in Western studies*. The questions we pose have been comparatively under-researched. Although shame is understood as a universal negative emotion experienced by a large number of people, and is widely studied in psychological and clinical domains, most previous Western studies find the outcome of shame is only externalized actions and results in withdrawal behaviors, so that little attention has been paid to restorative tendency. Hence, this thesis provides a theoretical contribution to shame studies with restorative tendency as its response from an Eastern perspective within Confucian society in China.

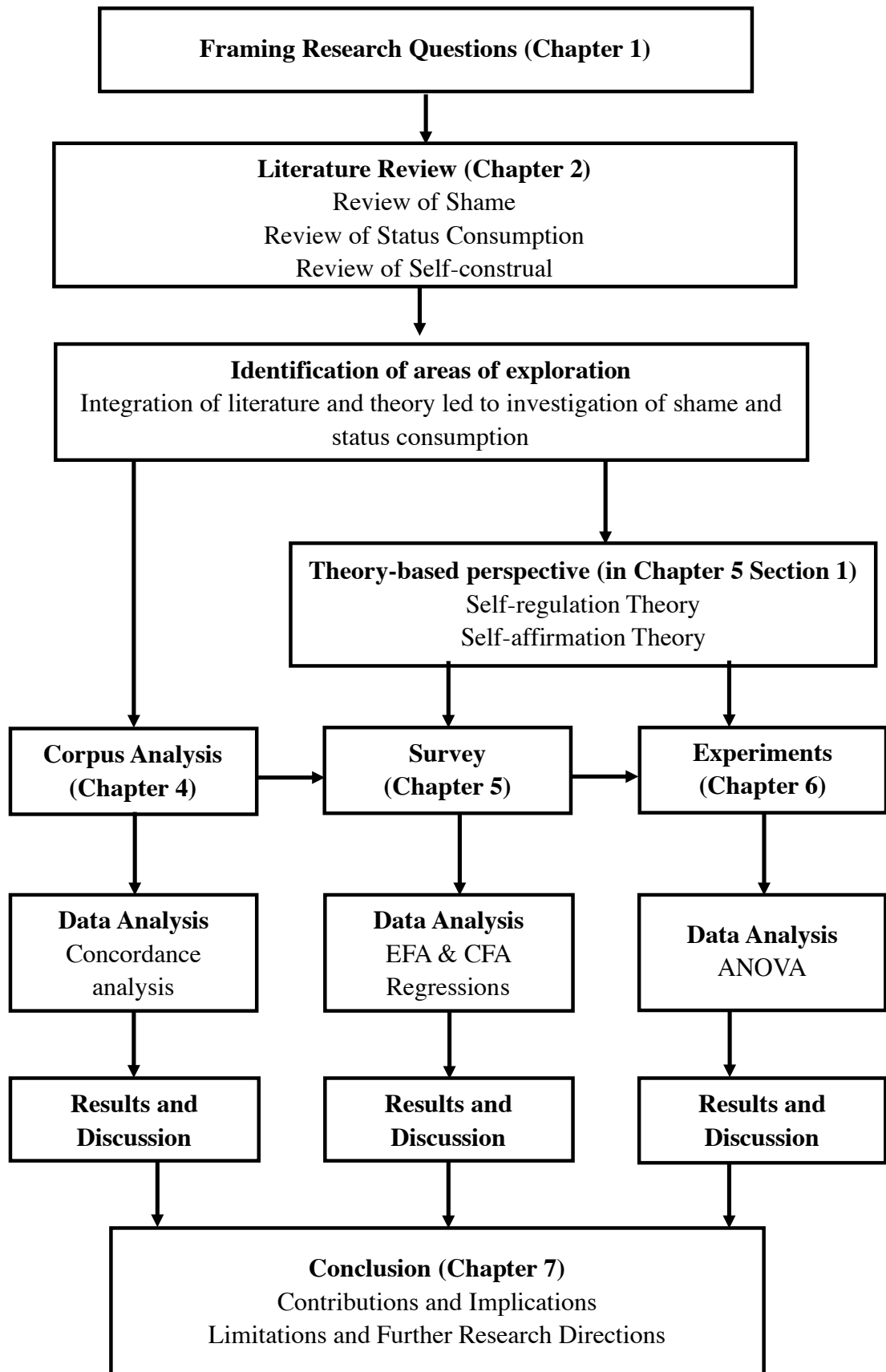
Furthermore, this research *adds to the previous shame studies with restorative tendency with a more general investigation on shame*. Despite the fact that there are some studies of shame with restorative tendency, the amount is still quite limited (Gausel., et al., 2012; Sheikh, 2014). Meanwhile, shame response of restorative tendency still lacks empirical support from a general investigation on shame. Gausel et al. (2012) examined shame within a limited scope from a moral in-group perspective while shame could also be caused by non-moral transgressions. Thus, another major part of shame is cut apart. Further, Sheikh's (2014) study only discusses shame responses conceptually and thus there remains a lack of empirical evidence in this area. Hence, this thesis makes an empirical contribution to the existing research with a more general scope of investigation on shame.

In this sense, by addressing the research questions, we are therefore contributing to both the consumption field and the shame literature with shame response of restorative tendency and its influence in status consumption.

## **1.2. Thesis Outline**

The main objectives of this thesis are: (1) to empirically investigate the influence of shame on status consumption among Chinese consumers; and, in doing so, (2) to examine shame within the Chinese context for a better understanding of its causes and responses. To meet these objectives, the thesis is structured in seven chapters. The research process is illustrated in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1. Research Process



Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature concerning the theoretical background of status consumption, shame, and self-construal. First, it provides a definition and a conceptual review of status consumption. Status products are identified as those products which act as a status symbol where the main purpose is to display a consumer's social status. The past 30-40 years have seen rapid development in the consumption of status products in China. Thereby, the chapter continues with an overview of the phenomenon of status consumption in different historical eras, and with a discussion of the motives behind status consumption. Then, the concept of shame is considered where a definition of shame is provided and the expressions used in relation to shame in different languages are identified. Next, causes of shame and response tendencies are discussed. Basically, there are three categories of shame responses: withdrawal tendency; externalizing tendency; and restorative tendency. As the former two responses are widely found in existing shame literature (e.g., Dickerson, et al., 2004; Kemeny, et al., 2004; Tangney, et al., 2005; Tangney, et al., 1996), and the latter is a newly discussed response in relatively few studies (Gausel, et al., 2012; Tangney, et al., 2014), particular attention is paid to the recent findings on shame's responses with restorative tendency by Sheikh (2014). Finally, this chapter provides a theoretical review of self-construal as independent construal of self and as interdependent construal of self. The concept of the self and the role of self-construal are thus discussed. However, this chapter does not provide the conceptual explanation for the link between shame and status consumption. Instead, this is discussed in the hypothesis development in Chapter 5 and in Study 1 in Chapter 6.

Chapter 3 provides a brief discussion on the research philosophy and research methodology of the whole study. The purpose of this chapter is to first discuss the underlying philosophy of the research. Second, a brief introduction to the research design and data collection methods are provided. Moreover, this chapter outlines the methodology employed and the general processes involved to achieve the results which are presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

In Chapter 4, a linguistic method is applied to analyze shame corpora in both Chinese and English. Although recent findings (e.g., De Hooge, Breugelmans & Zeelenberg, 2008; Gausel, et al., 2012; Sheikh, 2014), suggest restorative tendency as an alternative shame response, most investigate this topic conceptually only, with limited empirical support identified. This chapter explores shame causes and responses from a particular linguistic perspective gathered from shame concordances. We classify shame concordance into different categories according to its responses. Results in this chapter support shame responses with restorative tendency by providing linguistic evidence. The restorative tendency also provides fundamental support for the studies detailed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Based on Chapter 4, with restorative tendency as the shame response, Chapter 5 applies this behavioral tendency to the consumption area and provides an exploratory study on the influence of shame on status consumption using a survey approach. First, self-regulation theory and self-affirmation theory are applied to explain the linkage between shame and status consumption. As individuals are often driven by their motives to maintain their self-integrity, the attacked and shame-damaged self could be protected and repaired through the self-affirming and self-repairing function of the consumption of a status

product. The influence of self-construal on status consumption is also assessed in this chapter. Though only weak linkage is found between shame and status consumption, independent construal of self is found as a positive moderator for shame and status consumption. As this survey approach only examines the linear relationship, the direct causal relationship between shame and status consumption is explored in Chapter 6 using an experimental approach.

There are three empirical studies in this thesis and each one builds on the previous one. Thus, Chapter 6, based on the findings of the survey, takes a closer look at the impact of shame on status consumption. Three experimental studies provide empirical insights into: (1) the impact of shame feelings on status consumption; (2) the impact of shame on status products with different conspicuousness; (3) the impact of shame on status consumption when the consumer accompanied by others with whom they have a different relationship in terms of closeness. Results in this chapter show that consumers' feeling of shame result in a higher intention to purchase status products. Moreover, where more than one status product is available for selection, but each has different conspicuousness, consumers with shame feeling are more fond of loud products, i.e., those with high conspicuousness. Furthermore, consumers are more likely to purchase status products when accompanied by friends or relatives with whom they have a close relationship, rather than those with relatively remote relationships, such as acquaintances or strangers. Importantly, the results provide worthwhile information for theorists to broaden the discernment of shame, and for marketers to pay more attention to the application of shame response with restorative behavior tendency.

Chapter 7 provides a conclusion to the whole thesis, and explains theoretical contributions and practical implications. Furthermore, potential limitations are highlighted and directions for further research suggested.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter provides an overview of the literature dealing with status consumption (section 2.1), shame (section 2.2), and construal of self (section 2.3). First, we build the definition of status consumption from a thorough review of the existing literature. The historical background of status consumption among Chinese consumers is systematically reviewed and motives for status consumption are summarized. Then, this leads to a demonstration of shame related expressions in both Chinese and English. As recent discussions on shame response state that shame may lead to restorative tendency, this thesis focuses on shame response with its restorative tendency and its impact on the consumption field. Therefore, restorative tendency as a shame response is carefully reviewed, along with the causes of shame (self-attack) and alternative responses to shame with withdrawal and externalizing tendency. Additionally, construal of self is reviewed from its origin with the concept of the self to its role in cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes. This comprehensive understanding of the construal of self allows us to better specify its role in mediating and regulating shame through consumption behavior of status products. Further, section 2.4 introduces self-affirmation theory and self-regulation theory and how they explain the phenomenon that suggests one regulates the shame of a defected-self through status consumption in China. The concepts and details discussed in this chapter lay the foundation for the empirical approach of corpus analysis which follows in Chapter 4, and the research models and hypotheses set out in Chapters 5 and 6.



## **2.1. Status Consumption**

### ***2.1.1. Definitions of Status Consumption***

#### *2.1.1.1. Background of status consumption*

The concept of status consumption originates with Western countries when Veblen's (1899/1994) *Theory of the Leisure Class* outlined behaviors surrounding the consumption of luxury products with status signals. Veblen (1934) considered this consumption pattern to be conspicuous consumption. However, established researchers, including Veblen himself, (e.g., Banerjee & Duflo, 2007; Han, et al., 2010; Mason, 1984; Mazzocco, et al., 2012; Veblen, 1899/1994) suggest that consumers purchase luxury products beyond their utility function; their purchase behavior also includes the purpose of displaying one's social rank and status. As research has found that the consumption of luxury goods is "not for their inherent objective or subjective value, but to signal social status" (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010, p.564), this behavior pattern is also addressed as status consumption since the act of acquiring a luxury product conspicuously is to pursue social status and inherent prestige (Han, et al., 2010; Len, et al., 2012).

In previous research, three labels for the behavior of consuming luxurious products with status signals have been applied: i.e., status consumption (see Chao & Schor, 1998; Goldsmith, Flynn & Kim, 2010; Kim & Jang, 2014; Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara, 2012); conspicuous consumption (see Amaldoss & Jain, 2005; Lee & Shrum, 2012; Mason, 1984; Rucker, Glinsky & Dubois, 2012; Veblen, 1899/1994); and luxury consumption (see Dubois & Duquesne, 1993; Li, Li & Kambele, 2012; Monkhouse, et al., 2012; Wiedmann,

et al., 2007). However, some researchers (e.g., Han, et al., 2010; Griskevicius, et al., 2010; Mazzocco, et al., 2012) often use these labels interchangeably to describe the behavior of consuming luxury goods.

In this study, the term status consumption is used because we mainly focus on the consumption of luxury brands with a social status purpose. The term helps to describe such behavior more precisely. Moreover, Phau and Teah (2009) also suggest that the term status consumption better describes the behavior concerning luxurious products among Chinese consumers as their major purchase intention tends to be status seeking.

#### *2.1.1.2. Defining status consumption*

Definitions of status consumption differ (see section 2.1.1.2.1) and there remains no favored one. However, building on those already made, here status consumption is defined as *a consumption behavior that is motivated by both one's personal desire and social surroundings to maintain or improve their social standing through consuming products with high visibility of symbolized signals for social status.*

##### *2.1.1.2.1. Definitions with different perspectives*

The literature provides numerous definitions for status consumption. It is often defined as status consumption from a characteristic perspective (Monkhous, et al., 2012; Wiedmann, et al., 2007), a phenomenological perspective (Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara, 2012; Rucker & Glinsky, 2008), and a motivational perspective (Eastman, et al., 1999; O'Cass & Frost, 2002). We

categorize these definitions with different perspectives and detail them in Table 2.1 below.

Definitions from the characteristic perspective mainly focus on the description of traits of status products, such as traits of displaying one's social status, bringing hedonic enjoyment, high conspicuousness, exclusive uniqueness, and good quality (Monkhous, et al., 2012). Definitions from this perspective often simply pile the different characteristics of status products together and lack a scientific overview of the consumption pattern which categorizes the different characteristics.

In definitions made from a phenomenological perspective, emphasis is often placed on an overall picture of this specific behavior pattern. However, these definitions often lack consistent details and show only part of each characteristic. That is, in these definitions, researchers only mention either the social visibility of the products (Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara, 2012) or the status signal (Rucker & Glinsky, 2008), but not the whole picture.

In definitions made from a motivational perspective, status consumption is often defined by an overview of the consumption pattern with motivation processes, which are either internal stimulation through self-motivation, or external stimulation through social surroundings (O'Cass & Frost, 2002). In this dissertation, we build on the definition made from both phenomenological and motivational perspective, demonstrating an overall picture of status consumption and combining the two stimulations with both internal and external motivations.

Table 2.1. Definitions of status consumption

<i>Perspective of the definitions</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Characteristic	Monkhouse, et al. (2012, p.649)	“Consists of several underlying components” with “high quality”, “hedonic values”, “conspicuousness”, “uniqueness” and representativeness of an “extended-self”
Phenomenological	Longman American Dictionary (2000, p. 296).	The act of buying a lot of things, especially expensive things that are not necessary, in a way that people notice
	Rucker & Glinsky (2008, p.259)	“the behavior of those who purchase unnecessary luxuries as a means of displaying their wealth and status”
	Podoshen, Li & Zhang (2011, p.18)	“a behaviour in which an individual displays wealth through a high degree of luxury expenditures on consumption and services”
	Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara (2012, p.1409)	“Status consumption is a consumer consumption pattern that ordinarily manifests only with publically visible products”
Motivational	Eastman, Goldsmith & Flynn (1999, p.48)	“The motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer or symbolize status for both the individual and surrounding others”
	O’Cass & Frost (2002, p.70)	One of the “specific behavioral patterns” through which purchase decisions are navigated by consumers’ “self-concept”
	Shavitt, Torelli & Wong (2009, p.262)	Consumption that “engage identity-based motives with symbolized values”, which represent one’s “social classifications or reference groups”

#### 2.1.1.2.2. Building on the definition of status consumption

Previous literature provides definitions of status consumption through both internal (e.g., intrinsic personality) and external stimulation (e.g., extrinsic social environment) (Goldsmith, et al., 2006; Han, et al., 2010; O’Cass & Frost, 2002). Internal stimulations indicate the purchase a product for one’s own taste, preferences, and motivations of self-expression (Aaker & Schmitt, 2001; Shavitt, et al., 2009; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998), while external stimulations indicate purchases are made due to the influences of social norms, such as the effect of interpersonal relations with a particular reference group (Kim & Jang, 2014; Rucker, et al., 2012). Following a comprehensive review of status consumption in Eastman, Goldsmith and Flynn’s (1999) study, status consumption is defined as “the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolize status both for the individual and surrounding significant others” (p.48). Here, the definition of status consumption uses the term ‘conspicuous consumption’. Actually, many researchers (e.g., Baezoki, Tavakol & vahidnia, 2014; Griskevicius, et al., 2010; Han, et al., 2010; Kastanakis & Balabannis, 2014; Mazzocco, et al., 2012; Monkhouse, et al., 2012; Rucker & Glinsky, 2008) use both terms interchangeably in their studies, although a few others (e.g., O’Cass & Frost, 2002; Shukla, 2008) suggest that they have different focuses. The terms are used interchangeably because not only is there significant overlap in their definitions, but also in the actual purchase behaviors of consumers and the characteristics of the products as well.

When defining status consumption to be for the purpose of enjoying the experience of displaying wealth through purchasing a product, rather than the utility of that product, researchers (e.g., Eastman, et al., 1993; Goldsmith, et al., 2006; Mason, 1984; O’Cass & McEwen, 2004) place great emphasis on the social function of status products and argue that “the more a consumer seeks status, the more he/she will engage in behaviors, such as the consumption of status symbols, that increase their status” (Eastman, et al., p.3). Hence, the decision on status consumption is often combined with an intrinsic desire to gain social prestige through products which contains social signals, a personal preference of displaying products with high social visibility and good quality, as well as extrinsic influences from the social surroundings. As a result, we define status consumption as *a consumption behavior that is motivated by both one’s personal desire and social surroundings to maintain or improve their social standing through consuming products with high visibility of symbolized signals for social status.*

### ***2.1.2. Status Consumption in Different Historical Eras in China***

The origin of status consumption in Western countries is traced to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Veblen, 1899/1994). In the early social structure of a pre-capitalist feudal in Western world, only the nobility class were classified as consumers for the purpose of status (Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2006). In modern society, the upper and middle classes are considered to be the major participants in status consumption. Their strong economic power, and the stability of social groups in certain classes, enables and motivates them to purchase luxury products. Individuals in certain classes may follow the

behavior of other social members, even in their daily lives, such as eating, wearing, and buying products from similar brands (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004).

Meanwhile, in China the phenomenon of status consumption only dates back to the early 1980s. This is due to unique historical events which are discussed in detail in the following sections. According to Podoshen, et al. (2011) and Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara (2012), it is the rise of materialism and industrialism that has resulted in a surge in the consumption of status products. The concept of status consumption was restricted during the unique historical period which occurred under Maoism and the Cultural Revolution. However, the implementation of China’s Reform and Opening-up Policy provided an opportunity for status consumption to emerge in China. In recent years, it has surged significantly with the trend of globalization where Chinese consumers are less restricted and have become relatively wealthy.

Knowing the historical background of status consumption in China helps us to better understand not only the phenomenon of consuming behavior on status products among Chinese consumers generally, but it also provides a glimpse of the reasons for the explosion of status consumption over such a short period of time within the specific cultural background of China. In the next section we sketch an overview of the phenomenon of consuming status products in China. Additionally, we discuss the underlying reasons for the phenomenon with reference to the influential, historical events.

#### *2.1.2.1. Cultural revolution era (1966-1977)*

The Cultural Revolution Era is the period during which consumer behavior in China was most severely disrupted at the personal level (Podoshen, et al.,

2011). It was a time of drabness in terms of consumption, and uniformity was a general social recognition. For example, clothing often lacked style and both men and women were encouraged to wear similar uniforms. Moreover, commodity supply was extremely scarce at this time. In order to deal with this scarcity, the Chinese government introduced a purchase ticket system (票证制度: *piao zheng zhi du*). That is, Chinese consumers could only use purchase tickets, rather than money when purchasing all kinds of products. Tickets were distributed according to a ratio allocation and each ticket could only buy the corresponding product (Zhang, 2003). The purchase tickets became the hard currency of the time so that even if one had money, products could still only be purchased with a ticket.

In this way, consumers' choices were highly restricted under Maoism during Cultural Revolution Era. Even common commodities were scarce at the time, not to mention status products. Actually, even the concept of status consumption was not fully perceived by Chinese consumers and, consequently, there was basically no status consumption in that period of strict government control.

#### *2.1.2.2. Economic reform era (1978-1993)*

During the Economic Reform Era, when the government applied the Reform and Opening-up policy, consumption behavior was less disruptively controlled. However, the purchase ticket system did not come to an end at this point. The purchase of some products still required a purchase ticket, rather than money, and this situation continued until the early 1990s due to the scarcity of some specific commodities. The purchase ticket system ended in



1993 with the gradual development of China's economy, and as basic supplies became less scarce (Lang, 1999).

With implementation of the Reform and Opening-up policy in 1978, an increasing abundance of products became available to consumers and this, consequently, created more consumption among Chinese consumers. Accordingly, there was a rapid increase in the consumption of expensive Western products, although the consumption choices remained relatively limited when compared to those available to Westerners. Moreover, the reform and opening-up policy not only introduced Western products, it also gave rise to the Western way of consumption (Podoshen, et al., 2011). More importantly, it allowed Chinese consumers to have a stronger sense of being "modern" and of "fashion". Chinese consumers began to understand the concept of status consumption. As a result, status consumption, as well as the concept of status consumption, began to emerge in China during the Economic Reform Era, although the actual consumption behavior for status products among Chinese consumers remained quite limited.

#### *2.1.2.3. Globalization era (1994-present)*

With a rise in wealth in the newly open economy, and with globalization in the 1990s, there has been a faster rise in the consumption of status products among Chinese consumers. This significant surge in popularity of status products is not only a result of the convergence of Western influence with new ideologies and product categories, but is also due to the traditional Chinese value concerning the concept of face, which stands for social prestige through personal achievement in terms of wealth, reputation, and power

(Wang & Lin, 2009; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Status products with social signals are considered to be a way to advertise one's wealth, reputation, or power.

During this time of booming economic development, there has been an emergence of newly rich consumers who desire to show their wealth and social status through status consumption. Further, with their cultural background of shame, Chinese consumers strongly object to being negatively evaluated and often place high importance on their possessions, which can represent their social status. Therefore, they are strongly motivated by the desire to impress others with status products (Tang & Tong, 2012). In addition, the sense of powerlessness experienced during the period of the Cultural Revolution and the Economic Reform Era strengthens their desire to consume exquisite and luxurious products, and to display their status with the acquired status products (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008; Rucker, et al., 2012).

More importantly, with the consequences of these specific historical events in China, the research of status consumption was very limited during the Economic Reform Era, and even non-existent during the Cultural Revolution. It is after the Economic Reform Era of the 1990s that a gradual trend began of related topics on status consumption being studied and published in China. By the early 2000s a substantial number of studies on status consumption start to appear in Chinese journals (Guan & Wang, 2003; Tan & Si, 2004; Zhang, 2004; Yan, 2004). However, most of those studies focus on status consumption as an emerging phenomenon, seldom has dug into the impact of this unique cultural background and, related this phenomenon to the concept of shame with its restorative response. Hence, investigating status

consumption, especially within shame affirming culture in China, has the potential to contribute greatly to the current literature on status consumption.

### ***2.1.3. Status Consumption and Its Actuations***

#### *2.1.3.1. Social hierarchy and social identity in status consumption*

There is an abundance of literature, often attached to status consumption, which concerns the role of social hierarchy (Dubois, et al., 2012; Mazzocco, et al., 2012) and social identity (Li, Li & Kambele, 2012; Shavitt, 1990; Shavitt, et al., 2009). Researchers (e.g., Chauhuri & Majumdar; 2006; Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara, 2012) demonstrate that there is a need for conformity with one's desire and one's self-image. In the case of status consumption, an acquisition and possession of status signaling objects often represents an upper standing in the social hierarchy. The social signal of the status products, which is the impression adhered to within certain social norms, is of great importance if one desires to convey a good image to the public. One result of this is that consumers tend to conform to their desire for social status via their possessions, which reveals their self-image. Furthermore, researchers (e.g., Dickerson, et al., 2004; Lee & Shrum, 2012), suggest that this also results from people's innate need to avoid social exclusion. However, a sense of social inferiority often creates a distinct threat from the human need to exclude others from a certain social group. This aversive situation, concerning low rank in social hierarchy, eventually fosters a strong desire for social status (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008; Rucker, et al., 2012).

In previous literature, status consumption is considered as a consumption that is majorly driven by social class and standards within the reference group. Veblen (1934) also suggests that the phenomenon of consuming status products conspicuously is related to social class and prestige, and the behavioral pattern is often shaped by conventional rules within certain groups. Mason (1984) shares a similar view and argues that consumers seeking status products are sensitive to social class and that their satisfaction often comes from the reactions of the other members within their social group. Moreover, for consumers in ambiguous or adverse situations, they often turn to a reference group for social conformity, where there are standards for the appropriate portrayal of image to which a good group member should refer (Chauhuri & Majumdar, 2006).

However, it is important to clarify that although the desire for social status plays a fundamental role in status consumption, it is not accurate to view the behavior of consuming status products as only belonging to the wealthy (Eastman, et al., 1999; Mason, 1984; Miller, 1991). Actually, consumers may seek to purchase status goods even when with low social status or in low rank of their social class. The product types of status consumption may vary from actual possession of a product, to a specific service (e.g., an expensive dinner), or even a paid experience (e.g., a luxurious vacation). More surprisingly, in Mazzocco et al.'s (2012) study, it was found that consumers from low status groups actually have a stronger desire for high status products.

Additionally, status consumption is not only impacted by changes in social hierarchy and social norms, but changes in one's social identity or social norms may also change their behavior in consuming status products (Johnson,

1988). For example, during the pre-capitalist feudal period, only the nobility class were considered as consumers in status consumption. However, with the evolution of social structure, a group of middle class consumers experienced a sudden change in their social identity and became the so-called 'new rich' who soon began to participate in status consumption. Moreover, as Mason (1984) suggests, the new rich are often more willing to spend money on status products since they have a strong intention to consume conspicuously to show their new-found status.

Furthermore, a change in cultural structure may also impact consumers' propensity to status consumption (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993). That is, accompanied by cultural change, cultural norms and identities may also be changed and the formerly established culture standards may be broken. With newly established standards, there comes a shift from the old to the new cultural norms. Importantly, this has become the particular phenomenon happened in Asian society in recent years, especially in China, since Chinese consumers tend to spend more money on status products due to their economic changes and increased buying power (Podoshen, Li & Zhang, 2011). China has experienced both social order change and cultural change during the past forty years. With the Reform and Opening-up policy, a number of the new rich consumers now seize the opportunity to benefit from the rapid global economic growth. Their purchasing power is increasing dramatically and they are willing and able to show their newly established status with their high buying power.

### *2.1.3.2. Motives for status consumption*

Consumers have different motives for the purchase of status products as they pursue their personal goals. Previous studies find status consumption is mainly motivated from two perspectives: extrinsic stimulation of one's desire for status, fame, and/or satisfaction generated by visibility to other social members and with appraisal from the relevant social class (Engel, et al., 1968; Johnson, 1988; O'Cass & McEwen, 2004); and intrinsic stimulation of one's desire for pleasure, for fulfilling sensory gratification, and the intention to maintain congruency of self-concept and social identity (Fromkin & Snyder, 1980; Mazzocco, et al., 2012; Piron, 2000; Sirgy, 1982; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998).

#### *2.1.3.2.1. Extrinsic stimulation with social motives of status seeking*

Extrinsic goals are other focused motives, such as the desire for other's praise and appreciation (Sheldon, et al., 2004; Truong, 2010). In status consumption, such extrinsic motivations are often one's need for social status and recognition. In works by Mason (1984) and O'Cass and McEwen (2004), status consumption is seen to be stimulated by class difference with the purpose of displaying wealth and generating social status. The satisfaction of their consumption is often generated through the reactions of others, especially with appreciation and appraisal.

Researchers have long suggested that the desire for status is a motivator for products with luxurious brand names (Monkhouse, et al., 2012; Phau & Teah, 2009). With an aim of being seen and appreciated, public attention and visibility are considered as important constructs in status consumption. In

Piron's (2000) study, the usage of status products often takes place in public places where it is easily witnessed by other individuals, instead of in a private setting with less noticeability. Podoshen, Li and Zhang (2010) share a similar view and suggest that only with public witness and recognition can the purpose of status generating other's recognition and appreciation be achieved.

Not only does the extrinsic desire of generating status help in maintaining and improving one's social position, it also relates highly to social inferiority and powerlessness by altering these aversive situations. That is, social inferiority and being powerless often evoke a sense of threat to one's position in the social hierarchy and during social interactions. When one is at the lower end of the social hierarchy ladder, or confronted with negative social evolutions, a sense of inferiority can be evoked. Meanwhile, status often represents one basis of power and brand image often indicates one's self-image. In this situation, material commodity with social signals helps fix one's social position with an appealing image and social prestige (Smith, et al., 2010). As a result, products associated with status signals help compensate the feeling of powerlessness, and those with a sense of social inferiority often have a strong desire to increase, or maintain, their social standing by the consumption of a status product (Rucker, et al., 2012).

The behavior of the consumption of status products also reveals the consumption pattern of significant others in reference groups. Scholars such as Wong and Ahuvia (1998), Brewer, (1991) and Shukla (2008) suggest that the products consumers purchase not only represent their self with an appealing image and the aim to generate status and fame, but also to achieve appraisal, or even to maintain an affiliation with significant others and

reference groups. Here, the role of significant others in the reference groups are of vital importance. This is due to the extrinsic desire to be accepted and valued. Hence, certain “socially-sensitive consumers” may tend to buy products with visible images of obvious social connotations (Mason, 1984, p. 26). From this perspective, status products are often consumed in “social and public visible surrounding” with other consumers’ as witnesses (Piron, 2000, p. 309).

#### 2.1.3.2.2. Intrinsic stimulations with the motive of pleasure seeking

Intrinsic stimulations are motives with autonomous reasons (Troung, 2010). In the case of status consumption, they often focus on the self with a personal meaning, such as pleasure and hedonic enjoyment brought about by consuming the status products. While some previous studies of status consumption place heavy emphasis on extrinsic goals from the perspective of social class and status generation in public surroundings and visibility of the status products (Engel, Kollat & Blackweel, 1968; Johnson, 1988; O’Cass & Frost, 2002; O’Cass & McEwen, 2004; Rucker, et al., 2012), others focus more on intrinsic personal aspirations from the psychological perspective in terms of one’s identity and self-concept (Brewer, 1991; Piron, 2000; Shukla, 2008; Sirgy, 1982; Troung, 2010; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998).

According to previous literature, status products often provide hedonic enjoyment and sensory gratification with their exquisite design and aesthetic beauty (Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2006; Hwang & Kandampully, 2012; Veblen, 1934). This seeking of hedonic pleasure is seen as intrinsic desire with non-cognitive motives (Monkhouse, et al., 2012). Wong and Ahuvia (1998)



find that this intrinsic motive in consuming luxurious status products, with self-focused pleasure seeking and emotional gratification, are mostly found among Western consumers. Meanwhile, they find that consumers from Confucian cultures among Asian countries focus more on those status products which carry public meanings, rather than private meaning with hedonic experience.

Apart from the function of pleasure seeking, a need to countervail for conformity within the self is also identified as a reason for status consumption. That is, one's self concept and social identity should be consistent with their position in certain social groups. As status products are seen as a subtle and unconscious expression of one's self, previous studies (e.g., Brewer, 1991; Fromkin & Snyder, 1980; Shukla, 2008) suggest that possessions help individuals to define, express, and protect their self and their social identity as well. According to Onkvisit and Shaw (1987), protecting and maintaining the self-concept, or the symbolic self, is "the base purpose of all human activity" (p. 15). Thus, when the self is under attack or being negatively evaluated, consumption of symbolic products of status becomes an approach used to protect the self (Shukla, 2008; Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Additionally, as status products are seen as one's expression of the self, the congruency between self-identity and the image of the product often offers a legitimate signal of building a certain social self-identity with "possession-related imageries" (Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2006, p. 3; O'Cass & Frost, 2002).

## **2.2.Shame**

### **2.2.1. Shame Definition**

#### *2.2.1.1.Defining shame as an emotion*

##### 2.2.1.1.1. Definition of shame

Shame is a self-conscious emotion. For the emotion itself, it is often recognized as a subjective feeling or condition that is characterized by a painful mental state and biological reactions. Previous literature sees shame as a painful emotion. Experiences of shame are often miserable and suffering (Leeming & Boyle, 2004; Scheff, 2014;). Thus, it is defined as “the consequence of an evaluation of failure in relation to individual standards when a *global* evaluation of the self is made” (Bouderwyns, et al., 2013, p.812).

This definition highlights shame as a negative emotion with two important psychological stages. First, it indicates the external cause of the shame emotion. That is, the feeling of shame is a result of pressures that result in a failure to meet one’s standards. In other words, emotional or behavioral pressures, attached to potential threats of transgression from rules in social groups and social hierarchies, leads to the experience of the shame emotion (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Dickerson, et al., 2004). At this stage, the failure is regarded as the incident that could possibly cause the feeling of shame. Whether the individual will feel shame depends on their personal psychological traits of shame proneness, which are discussed in section 2.2.1.2. Thus, in this research, I address shame as feeling of shame and shame proneness as one’s personal trait that prone to shame.

Secondly, the definition refers to the internal nature of the shame feeling, which is the attack on one's self. At this stage, the failure of meeting particular standards is transferred into a global evaluation of failure of one's self. Gilbert (1997) and Tangney, et al. (1996), for example, argue that the main attributes of shame experiences are the social threats to the attacked and threatened self. Bedford and Hwang (2003) support the threatened-self view on shame and suggest that the shame feeling is evoked when one fails to achieve a "wished-for self-image" (p. 128) through events which cause the loss of one's social status or acceptance. For instance, the experience of self-scrutiny may result in the failure to pursue a wished-for self-image by finding one's self transgressions.

Moreover, these two stages often occur almost simultaneously. Social threats, such as negative evaluations and social rejections from certain social groups under public exposure, are believed to be major determinants of shame experiences. Meanwhile, one's self is attacked with such negative evaluations. The feeling of shame is aroused when one's behavior is in conflict with common social standards or moral values and this transgression causes emotional pain.

#### 2.2.1.1.2. Shame as a public and private emotion

Generally, the feeling of shame is a psychological phenomenon with a painful state that leads to a torturous rumination on the negative aspects of one's self (Leeming & Boyle, 2004). This negative aspect of the self often reflects a defected self with negative self-evaluation, which comes from the disagreement of others' opinions of one's public image, views, or behaviors.

As a result, the feeling of shame is often experienced through an external and public judgment from others who give negative appraisals (Ho, et al., 2004; Sheikh, 2014; Tangney, et al., 1990). Lewis (1971) and Bedford (2004) find that most shame experiences occur through exposure of the self to public disapproval, and this painful exposure may lead to a torturous self-rumination on negative aspects of the self. Research also provides empirical evidence that supports the notion that the shame condition with implicit public exposure amplifies this negative feeling (Smith, et al., 2002).

Additionally, the feeling of shame is also a reflection of one's cognitive perception when one fails to meet social norms (Dickerson, et al, 2004; Kemeny, et al., 2004; Smith, et al., 2002). For instance, it relates to a sense of rejection (e.g., failure to be accepted by certain social groups /social group rejection), or being inferior (failure to compete with others within the group /low social rank). According to Dickerson, et al. (2004) and Gilbert (1997), maintaining one's social inclusion or position within a social group, and avoiding out-group persecution, is regarded as an innate motivation in both humans and animals. The feeling of shame is the unfortunate outcome if one fails to achieve social recognition.

With these notions, it seems that shame is an emotion driven by public exposure. However, the feeling of shame reaches beyond an affective reaction to public negative evaluation. It may be acquired privately without any audience, since one's self can be exposed not only to other individuals, but also to an "internalized observing other" as well (Tangney, et al., 1990; Tangney, et al., 1996). For example, in Bedford's (2004) study, no audience is required for one to experience the feeling of *xiu kui* (羞愧, a strong feeling of

shame). Interviewees in this study claim that they feel shame if they are not performing well in their jobs, no matter whether their performances are observed or not. In this situation, the feeling is experienced when one discovers a negative aspect of self through self-assessment. The mechanism of the shame feeling which occurs in private will be discussed in detail in section 2.2.3.1.1.

As a result, although the notion of defining shame as both a public and private emotion may seem contradictory, the fact that this feeling occurs most often in the public setting does not exclude its possibility as the result of a private act. Actually, it may be experienced both in public settings, under the influence of public appraisal and exposure, and in private settings, through one's own self-assessment and evaluation.

#### *2.2.1.2. Defining shame proneness as a personal trait*

Clinical observations find that when facing negative situations, some people are more likely than others to respond with the emotion of shame (Lewis, 1971). Researchers (Dickerson, et al., 2004; Tangney, 1990) name this personal psychological trait as shame proneness. A substantial literature has addressed the salient importance of individuals' proneness to shame and investigated the impact of shame proneness in domains of behavioral motivation and intrapersonal process, amongst others (Do Hooge, et al., 2008; Niedenthal, et al., 1994; Tangney, et al., 2014; Wiltermuth & Cohen, 2014).

In this research, shame refers to the feeling of shame, which is an emotion. Shame proneness, however, refers to an individual's personality trait (Cohen, et al., 2011). That is, shame proneness is considered to be one's tendency to

feel shame when one's self is threatened, rather than the feeling of shame at a specific moment. Thus, for those individuals with high shame proneness, they may have a higher frequency of experiencing the feeling of shame as they have a richer perception of the emotion of shame. In this case, they may also have a higher tendency to respond to the feeling of shame for eliminating, or even avoiding the painful experience.

Additionally, previous literature (Gilbert, 1994; Gruenewald, et al., 2004; Tangney, 1990; Tangney & Dearing, 2002) convincingly shows that people with high shame proneness are also highly likely to experience the feeling of shame in terms of frequency as well as intensity. Hence, many existing studies (Cohen, et al. 2011; Kemeny, et al., 2004; Tangney, et al., 1996; Tangney, et al., 2005; Tangney, et al., 2014) measure shame using a shame proneness measurement as there is a response equivalence between the two. For example, in Allan, Gilbert and Goss's (1994) study, and in a replicated study by Rusch et al. (2007), the respondents with actual experiences of the emotion of shame are also found to relate closely to states of inferiority, anxiety, and anger. Studies applying shame proneness measurements find similar results and suggest that individuals who are highly prone to shame are also more likely to feel inferiority, anxiety, depression, and anger (Harder, et al., 1992; Tangney, et al., 1992; Tangney, et al., 1994).

### ***2.2.2. Shame in Chinese and English***

This section provides an overview of shame expressions. It reviews shame-related expressions in both Chinese and English from previous research (Li, et al., 2004; Shaver, et al., 1992; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). We mainly

focus on shame expressions in the Chinese context and so this review will contribute to the thesis through conceptual support for the selection of expressions for the corpus analysis in section 4.1 in Chapter 4.

### *2.2.2.1. Shame expressions in Chinese*

The concept of shame plays a vital role in Chinese culture. It is believed to be one of the major criteria for moral and behavioral standards, which are *li*, *yi*, *lian* and *chi* (礼义廉耻, sense of propriety, righteousness, honesty, and shame). In Chinese culture, the concept of shame takes its origin from ancient China during the *Shang* dynasty (BC1600-BC1046). At that time, knowing shame and responding to it with good turns was perceived as noble behavior. This concept has been enriched in following dynasties so that shame is considered to be the basis of one's existence (Yang, 2013). In guidelines for behavioral standards from both traditional Chinese philosophy with *Mencius* (BC250~BC150) and *Confucian Analects* (AD 50) and modern guidelines with *Concept of Honor and Disgrace* (AD 2006), shame is regarded as an important emotion that leads to individuals' self-examination and motivates socially or morally desirable behaviors. With this rich perception, the concept of shame is deeply rooted among Chinese people.

#### *2.2.2.1.1. Related terms in Chinese shame expressions*

The expressions of shame in the Chinese language are very complex (Yau, 1988). There are more than 100 terms for the expression of different levels of the shame feeling in Chinese (Li, Wang & Fischer, 2004; Shaver, et al., 1992). For example, in Li, Wang, and Fischer's study (2004), they examine the expression of shame from core shame expressions such as, "*xiu* (羞, shame),

*chi* (耻, disgrace), *ru* (辱, humiliation/shame), *can* (惭, sense of shame for one's wrongdoing), *kui* (愧, shame/guilt)", to extended shame expressions that relate to "*lian/mian/yan* (脸/面/颜, face)" (p.773). In addition, combinational terms extended from the core shame expressions, such as *xiu chi* (羞耻, shame-disgrace), *xiu kui* (羞愧, shame-guilt/conscience) *xiu fen* (羞愤, shame to anger/shame with resentment) which simply translate into English as "shame", are also terms used to express intense feelings of shame. These terms are also used as expressions for the feeling of shame in Shaver et al.'s. (1992) study. However, the expressions *can* (惭, sense of shame for one's wrongdoing) and *kui* (愧, shame/guilt) are more related to guilt, which is often caused by one's wrong behavior, rather than shame, which is often caused by one's defected self (Bedford, 2003; Dickerson, et al., 2004). As pervious researchers (Tangney, et al., 1996) state that shame and guilt are actually two distinct emotions, the expressions *can* (惭, sense of shame for one's wrongdoing) and *kui* (愧, shame/guilt) are thus excluded from the shame category in this study.

For shame expressions of *lian/mian/yan/rong* (脸/面/颜/容, face), related expressions are *lian shang wu guang* (脸上无光, no honor on face), *diu lian* (丢脸, losing face), *mei mian zi* (没面子, losing face), *yan mian wu cun* (颜面无存, losing face/decisively humiliated), *wu di zi rong* (无地自容, cannot find any place to hide from shame). (Li, et al., 2004). Shame and face are closely related in the Chinese context (Yau, Chan & Lau, 2009). When one is losing face, one will spontaneously arouse the feeling of shame (Yang, 2006). Thus,



Chinese often use face-related expressions to express their emotion of shame. For the expression of face, there are four different characters, which are *lian* (脸, face), *mian* (面, face), *yan* (颜, face) and *rong* (容, face). Although the four characters have the same meaning (face), they actually have different connotations (Leung, et al., 2003; Yang, 2013). Consequently, the face-related expressions for the shame feeling also have different connotations in terms of the particular words/characters used in each term. Here, *yan* (颜, face) and *rong* (容, face) is often used in written materials or in formal situations, while *lian* and *mian* are more likely to be used in oral communications or informal situations. For example, the shame expression of *yan mian wu cun* (颜面无存, losing face/ decisively humiliated) is often used to express an intense feeling of shame in formal conditions. Additionally, in spite of *lian* (脸, face) and *mian* (面, face) being used in similar conditions with similar indications of one's dignity and self-respect from a social perspective, they actually carry different connotations. *Lian* (脸, face) refers to approval or respect from the individuals' moral perspective, while *mian* (面, face) refers to affirmations and appreciation for one's achievement, power, or possessions (Leung, et al., 2003). In other words, *lian* (脸, face) is a term more related to self-dignity and morality, while *mian* (面, face) is a term more related to social recognition. Thus, although *diu lian* (丢脸, losing face) and *mei mian zi* (没面子, losing face) are used interchangeably to express one's feeling of shame during daily life, the former tends to indicate a shame feeling due to moral transgressions, and the latter tends to indicate a shame feeling due to non-moral transgressions.

In Chinese expressions for the shame feeling, most are composed of terms which relate to core shame and face (Yang, 2013). In addition, there are other shame expressions that do not relate to core shame or face. These expressions are *nan wei qing* (难为情, ashamed, shy, or embarrassed depending on context), *nan kan* (难堪, ashamed or embarrassed depending on context), *bu ti mian* (不体面, disreputable/indecency), *bu guang cai* (不光彩, disreputable) and *bu hao yi si* (不好意思, slightly shameful/embarrassed/fear of losing face) (Li, et al., 2004; Yang, 2006). These expressions are often used to describe the feeling of shame with less intensity.

#### 2.2.2.1.2. Different intensity of shame emotion in shame Chinese expressions

Actually, the rich expressions of shame related terms in Chinese create a variety of description of the shame feeling at different stages (Yang, 2006). The expressions for different levels of intensity of the shame feeling may be categorized into three stages, those that represent an extremely strong feeling of shame, a mild stage of shame, or a slight stage of shame.

The expressions of the shame condition which represent extremely strong feelings of shame are often those that include core shame terms, such as *xiu* (羞, shame), *chi* (耻, disgrace) and *ru* (辱, humiliation/shame) (Yang, 2013). Thus, shame expressions such as *xiu chi* (羞耻, shame) or *chi ru* (耻辱, humiliation/shame) are used to describe an intense feeling of shame. Furthermore, expressions that include face terms, such as *yan mian wu cun* (颜面无存, losing face/decisively humiliated) and *wu di zi rong* (无地自容, cannot find any place to hide from shame) are also used to describe a strong

feeling of shame. Thus, shame expressions which carry a high intensity of the shame feeling are often composed of core shame terms, or expressions, which include face characters, such as *yan/rong* (颜/容, face), which are used for formal conditions and written materials.

Moreover, for shame descriptions which carry a mild stage of such negative feelings, the expressions are *lian shang wu guang* (脸上无光, no honor on face), *nan wei qing* (难为情, shy or embarrassed or ashamed depending on context) and *nan kan* (难堪, ashamed or embarrassed depending on context) and *bu guang cai* (不光彩, disreputable) and so on.

In addition, Chinese people use shame expressions to express the feeling of a slight condition of shame with high frequency (Li, et al., 2004; Yang, 2006). Expressions such as *diu lian* (丢脸, losing face), *mei mian zi* (没面子, losing face) and *diu mian zi* (丢面子, losing face) are very frequently used in daily life for expressing such feelings. In fact, the number of shame expressions for the feeling of a slight condition of shame is relatively large. Other expressions that Chinese people often use to describe this slight shame feeling are *bu hao yi si* (不好意思, shy/embarrassed/fear of losing face), *diu ren* (丢人, being disgraced/losing face), *chu yang xiang* (出洋相, bring shame on oneself/make a fool of oneself) and *chu chou* (出丑, bring shame on oneself).

#### 2.2.2.2. *Shame expressions in English*

Benedict (2005) suggests that every culture has its pattern and people from different cultures shape their thinking, expressions, and behavioral patterns in accordance with the culture into which they are born. Confucian cultures are

considered to be shame-based cultures while most Western cultures are regarded as guilt-based cultures. With this difference in cultural base between Confucian societies and Western countries, the perception and understanding of the concept of shame is accordingly different. That is, the feeling of shame among Western people is experienced with less frequency, and the concept of shame in Western cultures is understood with less complexity (Shaver, et al., 1992). As a result, people from Western cultures often have a less rich perception of shame. Instead, they often have a better understanding of the concept of guilt.

In addition, English is a language that is widely used in many Western countries where a guilt-based culture exists. Consequently, in English, there are fewer shame related expressions in terms of both quantity and complexity than in Chinese. Indeed, while there are more than 100 expressions in Chinese used to express shame (Li, et al., 2004), there are less than ten shame-related expressions in English (Gausel & Leach, 2011; Tangney & Dearing, 2002;). Moreover, in terms of complexity, identified expressions for describing the feeling of shame in English are relatively limited. For example, the core word for expressing the feeling of shame in English is simply *shame*, with several extended expressions, such as *shameful*, *ashamed*. Apart from expressions with the core shame word, there are few related expressions. They include *disgrace/d*, *insult/ed*, *humiliate/d*, and *humiliation* (Lewis, 1992; Retzinger & Scheff, 2000). More importantly, in contrast to the complex shame expressions seen in Chinese, few expressions describe the feeling of shame with a different intensity, or in different contexts in English. In this study, we mainly focus on shame expressions within the Chinese context to investigate

the influence of shame with its response of restorative tendency on status consumption among Chinese consumers.

### ***2.2.3. Causes of and Responses to Shame***

#### *2.2.3.1. Causes of shame*

Shame is widely accepted as a self-conscious emotion with an affective state of being painful, miserable, and uncontrollable (Dickerson, et al., 2004; Gruenewald, et al., 2004). The emotion of shame often involves the perception that one is considered to be a “bad” person. Previous literature has conceptualized this feeling of shame as a global negative evaluation of the self (Tangney, 1990; Tangney, et al., 1990; Tangney, et al., 1996). In shame, the entirety of one’s self is attacked and, thus, the self is often damaged and defected. In terms of morality issues of shame, which is often aroused with one’s transgression of the self, both moral and non-moral transgressions may lead one to experience shame.

##### *2.2.3.1.1. Shame and self-attack*

There is a substantial literature which suggests that the feeling of shame arises from an attacked and defective self (Gausel & Leach, 2011; Gausel, et al., 2012; Ho, et al., 2004; Tangney, 1990; Tangney, et al., 1990; Tangney, et al., 1992; Tangney, et al., 1996; Sheikh, 2014). With this attack and disapproval of the self, the shame feeling comes with a sense of being small, inferior, worthless, and powerless. Gilbert (2003) suggests that there are three types of self that link to shame, the self in symbolic representations, the self in theory of mind, and the self in meta-cognition.

Symbolic representations refer to the notion that an individual sees and imagines an object as the self and then judges and evaluates the self according to this object (Gilbert, 1998). In this case, that object is symbolized as one's self and feelings of shame may arise when the symbolic representation of one's self is attacked and/or disapproved. According to Lewis (1971) and Lewis (1992), in shame, one's objectionable behavior often reflects a defective and objectionable self. When such objectionable behavior is disapproved, one's self is consequently disapproved and attacked (e.g., I did a bad thing/I lack capacity, so I am a bad/incompetent person). Here, self belongs to the category of self in symbolic representations where the self is both the agent and the object of one's negatively observed or disapproved image. Moreover, apart from behavior, one's appearance, possessions, and personal attributes, such as values, preferences, and judgments, can all represent the object that symbolizes one's self.

In terms of the self in theory of mind, this actually indicates that an individual perceives and understands the evaluated self-image in others' minds (Byrne, 1995; Gilbert, 1998). When one thinks about how other people evaluate their self-image through their behavior, appearance, or personal attributes, they anticipate others' evaluations of their selves. The feeling of shame is aroused when they perceive an evaluation of a devalued and substandard self-image. For instance, the feeling of shame often reflects one's concern for others' opinions (e.g., I recognize that I am as the other sees me/I noticed that others see through me/I think other people consider me to be a failure as an individual) (Bagozzi, et al., 2003; Sartre, 1956; Sheikh, 2014). In shame, the

evaluation of one's self in the minds of others is often taken as a true reflection of flaws in one's self.

Self in meta-cognition refers to the ability to understand, judge, and reflect one's self in one's own mind (Gilbert, 2003). Edelman (1981) and Tangney et al. (1990) argue that although shame is often principally seen as a public emotion, individuals actually can feel shame when they are in private. That is, the feeling of shame occurs as a private emotion and is aroused through self-reflection rather than public exposure. In this case, the emotion of shame is aroused with a self-evaluation of a devalued and defected self in meta-cognition by oneself, rather than by other individuals, or devalued by "internalized observing others" (e.g., I realize that I am a bad/incompetent person) (Tangney, et al., 1996). Thereby, self in meta-cognition explains the situation of shame feelings in private and provides conceptual support for the notion that the emotion of shame can be felt when one is alone. That is, such threat to the self comes from one's internalized observer with its own standards, rather than from exposure to others' negative evaluations.

#### 2.2.3.1.2. Transgressions of morality

As the feeling of shame associates with one's transgressions of the self, it is often recognized as an emotion that relates to morality. However, scholars argue that the feeling of shame could result from both one's moral transgressions and non-moral transgressions (incompetence) (Smith, et al. 2002). Interestingly, traditionally the Chinese view of the shame concept shares a similar point and identifies transgressions in shame with *yi ru* (义辱, one's morality is negatively evaluated/shame with transgressions in moral

standards), and *shi ru* (势辱, one's capacity is negatively evaluated/shame with transgressions in capacity) (Yang, 2013).

#### 2.2.3.1.2.1. Moral transgression in shame

Shame has long been recognized as a moral emotion (see Gilbert, 2003; Tangney, et al., 2007). Substantial evidence supports this notion that the feeling of shame relates to moral transgressions (e.g., Bedford, 2004; Bedford & Hwang, 2003; Ghorbani, et al., 2013; Tangney, et al., 1992; Tangney, et al., 1996). Smith et al. (2002) find that morality plays an important role in the feeling of shame, especially with implicit public exposure. In the shame condition with moral transgressions, the feeling of shame is aroused when the transgression suggests a bad and defected self (Declerck, et al., 2014).

This also meets the traditional Chinese view of shame where *yi ru* (义辱) refers to the feeling of shame that is aroused in a condition that transgresses one's moral standards. Here, *yi* (义) indicates moral merits and standards of having good virtues, being ethical and kind, being wise and being appropriate. When one lacks such merits, or transgresses such standards, one's self is considered defective and the feeling of shame is aroused accordingly.

A typical example of shame with moral transgression, or *yi ru* (义辱), is seen in Bedford's (2004) research where individuals may feel shame when there is a failure to obtain one's ideal self, or to maintain one's personal identity. Such transgressions often come from two potential violations. The first is that one fails to attain an ideal state with a perfect self and this violates one's wish for moral standards, e.g., one feels shame when one fails to be the best one could



be. The second comes from an actual transgression of one's moral standards, which is a violation of one's commitment to be morally appropriate.

#### 2.2.3.1.2.2. Non-moral transgressions (Incompetence) in shame

The process of shame feeling through non-moral transgressions may be quite different from that occurs in the case of shame feeling with moral transgressions. When there is a situation of inferiority or incompetence, one may be confronted with social disapproval. Although such inferiority and incompetence may not be related to any moral component, this social disapproval may cause the feeling of shame with one's awareness of a substandard self (Smith, et al., 2002). Hence, with the nature of the shame emotion, caused by an attacked and defected self, the feeling of shame may also be aroused in conditions of non-moral transgressions (incompetence).

In addition, Smith et al.'s (2002) view of shame with non-moral transgression (incompetence) is also consistent with the traditional Chinese shame concept of *shi ru* (势辱), which indicates the feeling of shame that is aroused by a condition of lacking power, status, or prestige (Yang, 2013). *Shi* (势) here means one's social capacity for being powerful, having high status and prestige. As noted in Lebra's (1971) study, "shame is characterized in conjunction with status occupancy" (p.241), the situation of a lack of power, status, or prestige is also similar to the uncontrollable condition of being inferior and incompetent. With the view of *shi ru* (势辱), one's exposure of a lack of power, status, or prestige produces a sense of inferiority, accompanied by an awareness of a substandard and defective self. Such exposure to the sense of being inferior also leads to an uncomfortable feeling of shame.

Examples of shame with non-moral transgression (incompetence), or *shi ru* (势辱), is the shame feeling of reputation loss, or power loss, caused by transgression issues in social interactions ( Bedford, 2004; Bedford & Hwang, 2003). This damage to one's reputation or power is often accompanied by social disapproval, degraded status, and rejection from community. In such situations, one may be blamed, or may self-blame, where one is held responsible for incapacities and lack of competence. This blame is not associated with violation of any moral standards, but still leads to negative and painful feelings. However, most of the previous literature focuses on shame through moral failure (Dickerson, et al., 2004; Gausel & Leach, 2011) whilst studies on shame through non-moral transgression (incompetence), or *shi ru* (势辱), are relatively few.

In this study, we aim to investigate the impact of shame feeling in the consumption area, which can be caused by a sense of being inferior due to the lack of status products. These products often contain status signaling and the feeling of shame with incompetence in power, status, or prestige can be restored through the consumption and possession of status good which could represent one's prestige and social status.

#### *2.2.3.2. Responses to shame*

As one of the most important human emotions, shame affects one's personal behavior, both in Western and Eastern cultures as one's bodily features or behaviors can also be part of one's emotional expressions (Kemeny, et al., 2004). Existing studies find that the responses of this disgraced and demeaned feeling of shame are often behaviors with withdrawal tendencies, to which

one responds by disappearing, escaping, or hiding, and externalizing tendencies, responded to with anger, hostility, or even violence (Dickerson, et al., 2005; Gruenewald, et al., 2004; Kaufman, 1989; Tangney, et al., 1990; Tangney, et al., 1996). These behavioral tendencies are also seen as the main stream of shame responses in the previous literature.

However, different from Western cultures, where shame is seen as a negative emotion, shame in Chinese culture is perceived as an emotion that could lead to good turns. That is, in addition to the traditional view of behavior with withdrawal and externalizing tendencies as shame responses, a few recent studies also find that shame may lead to restorative tendencies with pro-social actions of improvement and enhancement (De Hooge, et al., 2010; Gausel, et al., 2012; Sheikh & Janoff-Bulman, 2010). One possible reason for this is the different perception of shame in different cultures (Sheikh, 2014). Western cultures are often *shame-devaluing*, where the feeling of shame is often perceived as a totally negative emotion which should be avoided. While in Eastern cultures, which are *shame-affirming*, the emotion of shame is often considered as a motivator for self-improvement through positive and proactive behavior.

Within this background, most previous studies conducted in Western cultures show shame is regarded as a negative emotion that is often responded to with maladaptive reactions, such as withdrawal and externalization tendencies (Gruenewald, et al., 2004; Tangney, et al., 1992; Tangney, et al., 1996). Therefore, less adaptive reactions with restorative tendencies as a shame response were found in these studies within such Western context. However, in parts of Asia, such as in China, shame is valued as a positive motivation

that promotes restorative behaviors through “self improvement and prosocial actions” (Sheikh, 2014, p.387). This is because negative affects may lead individuals to take strategic actions to change their unfavorable conditions and thus shame may lead individuals to seek a better self (Schwarz, 1990; Schwarz & Clore, 1996). As a result, with the aim of repairing a damaged and defected self-image, individuals with feelings of shame, especially in shame affirming cultures, are more likely to choose restorative behavior with self enhancement activities as a response. In this thesis, we mainly focus on shame response with restorative tendency and its application in the consumption field through the purchase of status products, rather than through withdrawal or externalizing tendencies. This will be discussed further in the hypothesis development sections of Chapters 5 and 6.

#### 2.2.3.2.1. Shame response with restorative tendency

##### 2.2.3.2.1.1. Behavioral consequence with restorative tendencies

The discussion on shame response with restorative tendencies is a new trend in shame study. Most previous studies focus on the shame responses with withdrawal and externalizing tendencies (Gruenewald, et al., 2004; Kaufman, 1989; Tangney, et al., 1996; Tangney & Dearing, 2002), which are introduced in sections 2.2.3.2.2 and 2.2.3.2.3. Very few studies have paid attention to the restorative tendency as a shame response. The issue of responding to shame with restorative behavior is first mentioned in De Hooge et al.’s (2008) study. Then, Gausel et al. (2012) illustrate this particular restorative behavior tendency as a shame response in their research, but only focus on in-group rather than general shame situation. More recently, the restorative tendency draws attention in shame studies by Declerck et al. (2014), Sheikh (2014) and

Tangney et al. (2014). This rising amount of research finds that shame motivates restorative tendencies of repair, restore, and reform, both at an individual level (De Hooge, et al., 2008; De Hooge, et al., 2010), and at a group level (Declerck, et al., 2014; Gausel, et al., 2012), as well as within both the Western (Tangney, et al., 2014) and the non-Western contexts (Bagozzi, et al., 2003; Sheikh, 2014).

Bagozzi et al. (2003) suggest that although the feeling of shame is caused by similar sources and for similar reasons, through threat to and attack of the core self, the responses in Western and Eastern cultures are different. In their cross-cultural research which compares salespeople in the Netherlands (Western culture, shame-devaluing), and in the Philippines (Eastern culture, shame-affirming), they find that Dutch salespeople are more likely to react to shame occasions with withdrawal actions as a strategy to protect the self. Salespeople from Eastern cultures are more likely to decouple the feeling of shame with adaptive strategies, such as improving their skills or appearance, which represents a better self. Meanwhile, for individuals from Eastern cultures, shame is considered a signal of disruption to harmony. In this case, dealing with shame through adaptive action is seen as a repair of the damage to the relationship, as well as to harmony. In Heine et al.'s (2001) study, it was found that constructive consequences, such as placing greater emphasis on the importance of the tasks allocated, and putting more effort into diagnostics, were prompted after failure on a task among Japanese participants. However, this was not the case among North American participants in the study. Furthermore, more evidence of shame with restorative tendencies is found in ethnographic and qualitative research by Menon & Shweder (1994).

In addition, some recent studies in the Western context begin to uncover the restorative response of shame with pro-social actions. In Niedenthal et al.'s (1994) study, participants show they are more willing to change themselves in a shame-related event. However, it is unclear in this study whether shame leads to restorative tendencies. Direct evidence of repairing the damage caused by shame in order to achieve harmony is found within the medical domain. Harris and Darby (2009) find shame feelings in physician patients and that with this shame the patients behave differently, with both positive and negative solutions. Some patients feel ashamed and they just stop seeing doctors, while others see shame as a motivation to improve their health conditions. Such two faces of shame are also found in Tangney et al.'s (2014) study. They find both constructive consequences and destructive results as a shame response among recidivists. Moreover, such restorative tendencies with self-enhancement and pro-social action are also found in Norway in Gausel et al.'s (2012) study.

#### 2.2.3.2.1.2. Reasons for restorative tendencies

Reasons for responding to shame with pro-social action are a sense of defect in the self and need for recognition/social inclusion when one feels inferior. When one has the sense of defect in the self, the most obvious approach to redress such condition is to make restitution (Leach, et al. 2002). With restorative behaviors, such a damaged and defected self can be redeemed with a re-established image. Such restorative tendencies of self-improvement often appear under two conditions: in collectivist contexts with a shame-affirming culture, such as Asia, North Africa, and Eastern Europe; and in in-group contexts with shame-devaluing cultures in Western countries (Sheikh, 2014;

Sheikh & Janoff-Bulman, 2010). Additionally, it is regarded as both human and animals' innate motivation to maintain their social inclusion or their position within the social group, and to avoid out-group persecution (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Gilbert, 1997). However, the feeling of shame is often accompanied by social rejection. In order to fulfill social needs with social acceptance, one may choose to cater to significant others and respond to the feeling restoratively. Hence, such restorative tendency with self enhancement requires (1) acknowledgement of self-defect and (2) a request for recognition.

#### 2.2.3.2.2. Shame response with withdrawal tendency

##### 2.2.3.2.2.1. Behavioral consequences with withdrawal tendencies

Much of the previous literature suggests that the behavioral consequence of shame is withdrawal behaviors, which include hiding, escaping, and disappearing (Gilbert, 2003; Tangney, et al., 2005; Thomas, 1997). This represents the mainstream findings of research into shame response. In addition, strong evidence shows that withdrawal tendencies as shame responses are prevalent in both the Western and the non-Western literature (Bedford & Hwang, 2003; Dickerson, et al., 2004).

The shame response through inhibitory behavioral tendencies is widely studied in Western literature. Studies find that shame is a feeling based on inhibition and a major potential response to shame is withdrawal (Gruenewald, et al., 2004; Kaufman, 1989; Tangney, et al., 1996). Moreover, those who endure the objectionable affective feeling of being inferior, want to escape or even to “sink into the floor and disappear” (Tangney, et al., 1996). This desire,

or behavior, as an outcome of a shame experience, which is withdrawing or disengaging, is not only concerned with the desire to escape from the annoying and objectionable situations or scenarios, but it also indicates a desire to escape from the unpleasant and painful emotion.

Withdrawal tendency as a shame response is also widely found in previous non-Western literature. Bedford and Hwang (2003) find that persons with shame experience often “want to avoid all contact with others, preferring to hide at home” (p.137). A follow-up study, using ethnographic interviews in Taiwan, also found that interviewees often have a physical need to hide from everyone when ashamed (Bedford & Hwang, 2004). Further, in Bagozzi et al.’s (2003) research, although salesmen from the Philippines were more likely to react to shame situations with adaptive strategies and self enhancement, they also experienced an urge to hide, as did their Western counterparts from the Netherlands.

#### 2.2.3.2.2.2. Reasons for withdrawal tendencies

The main focus of shame experience is threat and attack to one’s self, and a possible reaction to this is withdrawal. Thus, a withdrawal tendency is considered as a self-defensive approach to the feeling of shame. Reasons for responding to shame with withdrawal tendencies are feeling rejection and being concerned about condemnation. One may feel both physically and psychologically isolated in the shame experience when rejected by others. In this situation, one would be more likely to maintain distance from others and, thus, be more willing to choose withdrawal tendencies, using hiding and escaping as shame responses. Moreover, the experience of shame is often followed by potential condemnations (Gausel, et al., 2012; Scheff, 2013). The



condemnation may come from both significant others and/or from oneself. By withdrawal behaviors, one may feel that it is possible to escape from the condemnations and then defend the self.

#### 2.2.3.2.3. Shame response with externalizing tendency

##### 2.2.3.2.3.1. Behavioral consequences with externalizing tendencies

A large group of correlational and experimental studies find that shame is associated with behavioral tendencies which include hostility, anger, and violence (Baumeister, et al., 1996; Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2008; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Sheikh (2014) addresses such behavioral tendencies as externalizing tendencies of shame, and sees these responses as over reactivity.

Most of the research on shame and externalizing tendencies are found in the Western context. Baumeister et al. (1996) suggest that externalizing tendencies with hostility and violence are the dark side of shame. According to Tangney, et al.'s (1991, 2000) TOSCA, which is one of the most widely used measurements for shame proneness, individuals' shame proneness is positively correlated with anger, aggression, and blame (Scheff & Retzinger, 1991). Follow-up studies find that the externalization of blame mediates the relationship between shame and anger among recidivists (Stuewig, et al., 2010; Tangney, et al., 2014). Furthermore, males are found to have a higher tendency to respond to shame with externalizing behaviors, such as greater irritability, physical and verbal aggression, and resentment towards others (Harper, et al., 2005; Reid, et al., 2009). School children are another group that positively relate shame to externalizing tendencies. Casual linkage

between shame and hostility are found among teenagers in Australia as well as in Sweden (Aslund, et al., 2009; Heaven, et al., 2009).

Cross-cultural studies also suggest that shame is related to externalizing consequences in non-Western contexts, although to a less extent than in Western contexts. Furukawa et al. (2012) found that children from North American and Japanese groups showed positive linkage between shame and anger, while such a positive relationship was not found for children from a Korean group. Another cross-cultural study compared children from Nepal and North America (Cole, et al., 2006). Nepalese Tamang children are found to be less likely to express anger in response to shame. One possible reason for lower externalizing tendencies as a shame response is the high acceptance of the concept of group and collectivism. That is, individuals often seek harmony and, thus, are more likely to avoid externalizing tendencies, such as aggression and blaming seen in the non-Western context.

#### 2.2.3.2.3.2. Reasons for externalizing tendencies

Reasons for responding to shame with externalizing tendencies are assertion of one's own self and ignorance of the values of others. When individuals respond to shame with externalizing behaviors, they often attribute the cause of such negative events to external factors, rather than examining their own self. Thus, when the self is attacked, they are more focused on asserting the self and disapproving of others devaluation. Individuals with high collectivism place greater value on interpersonal relationships with other social members and more likely to maintain social harmony, thus they less tend respond to shame with externalizing behaviors (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, ignorance of others triggers one's negative emotion of

shame with immediate response regardless of any concern for other people. Therefore, more externalizing tendencies may occur when harmony and interpersonal relationships are not valued.

### **2.3. Construal of Self**

Construal of self refers to the divergent views that people hold about the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). It represents the degree of a person's engagement or disengagement from an interpersonal relationship, and often plays a major role in regulating one's psychological processes and behaviors as well (Kitayama & Markus, 1990; Shweder, 1990). Understanding the nature of the construal of self allows us to better specify its role in mediating and regulating shame through the behavior of the consumption of status products in this research. Hence, we present a thorough review on the construal of self in this section. Further, conceptual connections between the construal of self and status consumption are discussed in section 5.2 in Chapter 5.

#### ***2.3.1. Concept of The Self***

##### *2.3.1.1. Universal and divergent aspects of the self*

In order to have a better understanding of the concept of the construal of self, we begin with the concept of the self. There are different aspects of the self which can be understood from its universal and divergent aspect. Neisser (1988) and Markus and Kitayama (1991) address the self within a universal aspect as an ecological self. Here, the ecological self also refers to the self with physical existence. A typical example to explain this physically existing

ecological self is, “I am the person here in this place, engaged in this particular activity” (Neisser, 1988, p.3).

Beyond the universal aspect of the physical self, there is a divergent aspect, which is perceived as the self from a psychological perspective (Cross & Madson, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). It is characterized as “a complex, dynamic system which reflects ongoing behavior and which also mediates and regulates this behavior” (Cross & Markus, 1990, p.728). This psychological, inner self often includes one’s perception, awareness of one’s behaviors, internal activities (e.g., flow of thoughts), and inner attributes (e.g., feelings and preferences). In this study, only the psychological sense of self is considered.

#### *2.3.1.2. The two selves in psychological self*

For the self with psychological existence, there are two selves we consider here, the private and the collective self. According to Fenigstein et al. (1975) and Triandis (1989), the private self refers to a cognition concerned with the view of self via an inner aspect that involves personal attributes, emotional states, and behaviors which often indicates an independent tendency of the self. However, the collective self refers to the cognition concerned with the view of self via a relational aspect that relates to the group which often suggests an interdependent tendency of the self. These two aspects of the psychological self are similar to the concept of self-construal through independent construal of the self, which values one’s personal traits with inner attributes like thoughts and feelings, and interdependent construal of self, which values one’s collective traits with connectedness, a sense of belonging, and relationships (Cross, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994).

Additionally, the private self and collective self are studied both from the cultural and the individual perspective. From the cultural perspective, previous studies (e.g., Stigler, et al., 1990; Triandis, 1989) suggest that culture influences the development of these selves. That is, individualist cultures often encourage the development of the private self, which places more emphasis on an individual's personal traits and tastes as well. Meanwhile, collectivist cultures often encourage the development of the collective self, which values collective groups and relationships. Researchers (e.g., Cross, 1995; Cross & Madson, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) also support the cultural perspective of this private and collective self-concept with a consistent view of self-construal through independent construal of self being more dominant in individual cultures, and interdependent construal of self more dominant in collective cultures. Other studies also find that respondents from individual cultures, like North American, are more developed in their private selves, while those from collective cultures, such as China and Korea, are more developed in their collective selves (Trafimow, et al., 1991; Yamaguchi, et al., 1992). However, although we compare the two aspects of self with collectivism and individualism, which is a bipolar construct, the private and collective self are actually two dimensions that can co-exist.

From the individual perspective, one could either be a person with a well-developed private self or a well-developed collective self. Individuals who have a well-developed private self cognitively value their own attributes primarily, whereas those who have a well-developed collective self focus more on collective attributes like group interest and others thoughts and feelings. Moreover, besides the above cases which concern either the private

or the collective self, a more frequent phenomenon in the real world is that such private and collective selves could be both well developed and coexistent (Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1994). For example, individuals with both a well-developed private and collective self may find their personal attributes of having their own thoughts, preferences, and feelings are as important as the collective attributes of accepting suggestions from seniors, duty to the family, and harmony of the group. In such a case, one may experience many of intrapersonal conflicts due to both selves being well developed. The idea of the private and collective self with cultural and individual perspectives (Stigler, et al., 1990) is also consistent with the concept of self-construal with independent and interdependent construal of self in cultural and individual perspectives, which is discussed in detail in the following section.

### ***2.3.2. Defining Self-Construal***

Self-construal is a multi-dimensional construct that relates to individuals' attitudes and perceptions, values and beliefs, as well as thoughts and feelings in terms of their relationships with others (Cross & Markus, 1990; Singelis, 1994). It is often shaped by powerful forces such as social norms, and cultural norms, values, and beliefs as well. Markus and Kitayama (1991) define self-construal as what people "believe about the relationship between the self and others and, especially, the degree to which they see themselves as separate from others or as connected with others" (p.226).

There are two views of the construal of self, independent construal of self and interdependent construal of self (Markus, 1987; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Here, the former sees the construal of self as an important component and believes that oneself separates from others. However, the latter values others and places heavy emphasis on connectedness with others (Kitayama, et al., 1995). Both independent self-construal individuals and interdependent self-construal individuals seek a stable and balanced self, although their focus is different with the inner core self vs. self in relation to others. These two dimensions often co-exist in one person, or in one culture, and it is common for one dimension to take a more significant role. It is also possible that the person, or the culture, places high importance on or, on the contrary, pays no attention to, both independent and interdependent construal of self. In order to have a clear understanding of both dimensions, each is discussed in detail in the following section.

### *2.3.2.1. Defining self-construal through its nature*

#### 2.3.2.1.1. Defining independent construal of self

The independent self-construal view, which is dominant in Western cultures, sees each individual as distinct and separate from others. That is, a person is seen as “a bounded, unitary, stable self that is separate from social context” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.226). Here, the view of self plays a fundamental role in the independent construal of self, that it is important to keep the wholeness and uniqueness of the self. Additionally, one’s autonomy and independence as an independent person are essential. Thus, every individual is inherently seen as a distinct person separate from any other individual (Cross, 1995; Cross & Madson, 1997). Moreover, extending from the core self, an individual’s attributes, characteristics, feelings, and thoughts

are valued and respected during interactions, whether or not those personal traits belong to themselves or to others (Singelis, 1994).

However, this attention on the self with personal traits does not mean that individuals with independent self-construal refuse to respond to cultural norms or to their social environment. Actually, social norms are, in general, important to those with independent construal of self. However, the primary consideration of the independent self in response to social situations is to affirm the self with inner and core standards. That is, individuals with independent construal of self also respond to the social environment, but this responsiveness is often driven by one's internal attributes. As summarized by Markus and Kitayama (1991), individuals with a highly developed independent construal of self often place great emphasis on: a) being unique; b) expressing self; c) realizing internal attributes; and d) promoting their own goals in self relevant situations of information processing, interpersonal interactions, and social events.

#### 2.3.2.1.2. Defining interdependent construal of self

The interdependent construal of self, which is dominant in Asian cultures, is the belief that human beings are connected through social context. It is defined as a "flexible and variable self" in accordance with relationships (Singelis, 1994, p.581). Here, the role of the relevant other is highly valued and the connectedness to each other is fundamentally important for individuals with a well-developed interdependent construal of self. In other words, the view of self is to some extent amplified through the inclusion of the role of others by those with a high sense of their interdependent self. With



the amplified self, they often conceive themselves as a part of the social whole. However, the amplified self does not mean that the view of the self and the others are merged together. It actually means that individuals with a well-developed interdependent construal of self often fully use their personal attributes to perceive, and to respect, others' thoughts and feelings.

In this case, the connectedness of one's self and the other become relatively tight and interdependent. With this view that one is a unit of a larger social group, the self becomes meaningful and complete when it fits into an appropriate relationship in any particular social context (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Additionally, this interdependent self is not considered to be bound and unitary, for it often changes in accordance with the nature of particular social situations. That is, the interdependent construal of self is not supposed to serve the needs and desires of all the others or no others. Actually, this self is quite selective in terms of the closeness of relationships and differences in situations. As a result, with this view of interdependent construal of self, individuals are less differentiated from others, and are often motivated to behave in a way that enable them to fit in with relevant others (Cross, 1995; Cross & Madson, 1997). In addition, their relationship with others and their role in the social group are highly valued.

However, the belief in connectedness within a social context by individuals with well-developed interdependent self-construal, does not mean they lack internal attributes with personal preferences, thoughts, and feelings. Rather, it means that these personal attributes are not valued as highly as their belief in interdependent traits in interpersonal relationships, connectedness to others, and the groups to which they belong. As summarized by Markus and

Kitayama (1991) and Singelis (1994), individuals with a highly developed interdependent construal of self place more emphasis on: a) one's external features, like status and relationships; b) the sense of belonging to a certain social group; c) one's proper social position and appropriate action; and d) one's ability to "read others' minds" and being cooperate in conversation. Additionally, they are more likely to behave in accordance with the "anticipated expectations of others and social norms" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.228).

#### *2.3.2.2. Self-construal from cultural and individual perspectives*

Besides defining self-construal with its belief in relationship and connectedness between self and other, another important aspect in defining self-construal is to identify it from cultural and individual perspectives. The concept of self-construal is studied from both these perspectives, culturally by, for example, Markus and Kitayama, (1991) and Cross (2007), and individually by, for example, Singelis, (1994), Cross, et al., (2011), and Dean and Fles, (2016). As suggested by Markus and Kitayama (1991), from the cultural perspective, the independent construal of self is more prevalent in Western cultures, which generally favor individualism, and the interdependent construal of self is more common in non-Western cultures, which mainly favor collectivism. Singelis's (1994) study explored self-construal from the individual perspective. He found that traits of both independent and interdependent construal of self may exist in one individual, and that these characteristics might vary in extent from person to person in a given culture. In this paper, we mainly apply self-construal from the individual perspective

and note the traits of independent and interdependent construal of self exist in the same person among Chinese consumers.

#### 2.3.2.2.1. Self-construal from a cultural perspective

From a cultural perspective, individuals from individualist Western cultures are more aligned with an independent construal of self, while those from collectivist non-Western cultures more commonly believe in the interdependent construal of self (Kitayama, et al., 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, before discussing self-construal from a cultural perspective, an important point should be made. That is, independent and interdependent construal of self are actually quite different in terms of the dimension aspect, i.e., they are different from collectivism and individualism, which is measured as a single bipolar dimension, while the former are regarded as multi-dimensional concepts (Singelis, 1994). This also indicates that one culture could share the trait of both independent and interdependent construal of self, while this is not the case for individualism and collectivism. This multi-dimensional characteristic of self-construal is also shared within its individual perspective, which is discussed in the next section.

Researchers (e.g., Aaker & Schmitt, 2001; Cross, 1995; Dean & Fles, 2016; Singelis, 1994) state that independent construal of self is highly reflected in Western cultures through individualism in values and activities. They relate to individualism with similar labels, like individualist, separate, and idiocentric, and suggest independent construal of self often place heavy an emphasis on a separate self with individuality and autonomy. This high level of relevance between independent construal of self and individualism is because those with

high independent construal of self often share similar traits with individualist's values of respecting the self and being independent. However, this does not necessarily equate to the notion that independent construal of self only exists in individualist cultures. Actually, researchers find that independent construal of self exists in both Western and Eastern cultures, although relatively more individuals hold the view of independent construal of self in cultures with individualism (Singelis, 1994). Moreover, even within a given culture, the extent of one's independent construal of self also varies between individuals.

Individuals from collective cultures (e.g., China, Japan, Korea) often have a relatively well-developed interdependent construal of self, even though this view of interdependent self-construal does not only exist in collective cultures. Researchers (e.g., Aaker & Schmitt, 2001; Bond, 1986; Chen, 1990; Yang, 1981) suggest that a high tendency of interdependent self-construal exists in cultures with collectivism as a common, strong theme. This high relevance between interdependent construal of self and collectivism is mainly due to shared values in terms of social obligation and social harmony, with high interdependence and connectedness between an individual and a relevant other. That is, both views agree there is an essential role of connectedness between oneself and others and seeing oneself as a unit within the whole society. As one member of the social unit, individuals have an obligation to follow certain social norms and to maintain a harmonious society (Dean & Fles, 2016). However, the view of interdependent construal of self is also reflected in some individualist cultures. For instance, in the United States where with individualist culture, a stream of interdependent construal of self

is found in some of its subcultures, with connected values and interdependent activities found in some communities and religious groups as well (Bellah, et al., 1985).

#### 2.3.2.2.2. Self-construal from the individual perspective

As suggested in Singelis (1994) and Aaker and Lee's (2001) studies, from the individual perspective the traits of both independent and interdependent construal of self co-exist in one person. Here, we discuss each construal of self separately in their extreme, from the individual perspective. Besides, in each individual, the two construals co-exist, with varying strengths, as a multi-dimensional construct in any given culture.

In extreme cases, with only a high independent construal of self, one's self is abstrusely separated from the social context, and it is the personal inner attributes that influence values and activities (Cross & Madson, 1997; Lee, et al., 2000). Consequently, individuals with a well-developed independent self-construal find their top priority to be their right to be autonomous with their own feelings and preferences, for example in a situation of decision-making.

However, when this decision-making situation occurs in those with a well-developed interdependent construal of self, advice from the relevant others has a strong influence as such individuals consider others' opinions and respect their suggestions (Cross, et al., 2011; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). As a result, individuals with interdependent self-construal are more likely to follow elder's advice, even when their own opinions are opposed, since they often focus more on social norms, social obligation (e.g., the sense of

obligation in respecting opinions, thoughts and feelings of friends and family, following the advice of seniors) and social harmony (e.g., the need to maintain harmony within certain social groups).

However, an individual with high interdependent construal of self does not necessarily mean they cannot also have a high independent construal of self. Actually, it is very often that one person possesses both traits in a given culture, rather than being independent or interdependent to the extreme (Cross, et al., 2011; Singelis, 1994). Individuals with both a well-developed independent and interdependent construal of self often value the connectedness with others and their own attributes as well. As a consequence, they possess the value of individuality and autonomy and being independent. In the meantime, they also have the need to meet the social obligation of respecting others' thoughts and feelings, and maintaining social harmony as well.

For example, Markus and Kitayama (1991) found that among North American and East Asian exchange students, the East Asian students have a better developed interdependent construal of self than their Western peers, and they have a similar level of independent construal of self. In this particular case, those students possess both traits of independent and interdependent construal of self, which may produce intrapersonal conflicts in their lives. Another typical example of the co-existence of independent and interdependent construal of self in one person is in Cross and Madson's (1997) study. That is, in spite of women in the West often valuing their personal traits, they also define their role in terms of the closeness of their relationships, which corresponds to the view of an interdependent construal of self.

### ***2.3.3. Role of the Construal of Self***

Substantial studies (Aaker & Schmitt, 2001; Bagozzi, et al., 2003; Cojuharenco, et al., 2012; Cross, 1995; Cross & Madson, 1997; Kitayama, et al., 2006; Song & Lee, 2013) find that self-construal influences one's evaluation and regulation on patterns of thoughts, values, feelings, and behaviors in tasks, events, or situations with self-relevant schema. Such influences are often investigated through: the cognitive perspective, especially in information processing (Wong & Mowen, 1997); the emotional perspective in the process of affective regulation (Dean & Fles, 2016; Tang, et al., 2008); and the motivational perspective in the interpersonal process of social interaction such as consumption (Aaker & Schmitt, 2001; Wong & Ahuvia, 1997). As this research mainly investigates shame and status consumption, in this section we discuss the role of self-construal and its influence from the cognitive perspective, with the shame related information process; the emotional perspective, with regulation of the process of shame feeling; and the motivational perspective, especially with behaviors of status consumption.

#### ***2.3.3.1. Self-construal with cognitive consequences***

There are three aspects to the role of self-construal in cognition. The first aspect is the impact of self-construal on one's attention and sensitivity to knowledge about the self, about others, and about the self in relation to others. Second is its influence on attention and sensitivity to the context, or situation-based knowledge. Then, it also affects processing the information with the previous two types of knowledge and, thereafter, shaping cognitive thinking (Aaker, 2000; Williams & Aaker, 2002). Indeed, these aspects of

cognition are often processed automatically and effortlessly (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

#### 2.3.3.1.1. Independent construal of self with cognitive consequences

Individuals with a well-developed independent construal of self often organize knowledge with the “self in general” according to their own attributes (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.232). Cognitively, they often lack attention and sensitivity to others, or the self in relation to others, during information processing and knowledge organization (Wang & Mowen, 1997; Willians & Aaker, 2002). In others words, in message processing, understanding one’s personal attributes and following these characteristics are more important than knowing what others’ thoughts and feelings are, or knowing the social environment for those with a well-developed independent construal of self. Hence, these individuals are more sensitive to self-relevant information and thereafter form their thoughts and regulate their behavior in accordance with these traits.

In addition, independent self-construal individuals are less likely to generate particular knowledge from specific social situations since they often possess the view of being an independent and separate person, rather than a comprehensive unit of the social whole (Cross, 1995; Cross, et al., 2011). Actually, instead of lacking the capability to perceive and abstract information from a specific social situation, they simply regard such social surroundings, and the others in certain situations, as not meaningful or informative. For instance, in responding to the shame relevant information or situation, individuals with independent construal of self are often less sensitive to



other's evaluation since they often lack attention to others' thoughts and, consequently, are more likely to ignore others' perspectives (Leith & Baumeister, 1998). However, shame could also be evoked privately when one is alone. In this situation, when shame relevant information occurs privately, independent self-construal individuals also pay attention to such information through transgression of the self and personal attributes.

#### 2.3.3.1.2. Interdependent construal of self with cognitive consequences

Individuals with highly developed interdependent construal of self often place more value on relationships with other people and, thus, they are more sensitive and attentive to others, and they have a greater sense in processing information relates to the connectedness with others as well (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Here, the roles of the other, and of the self in relation to others, are fundamentally important with an innate need and desire embedded in those interdependent individuals in understanding others' thoughts and feelings, and the social environment as well. With such significant roles of the other and of connectedness, they are more likely to be perspective-taking and more sensitive about interpersonal knowledge (Leith & Baumeister, 1998). As a consequence, those with a well-developed interdependent construal of self are often more sensitive to other relevant information, cognitively better at perceiving interpersonal knowledge, and better at dealing with interpersonal relationships in specific social situations.

In terms of the influence of the interdependent construal of self on cognition, this sensitivity results in information processing in cognitive activities, especially in interpersonal relationships within particular social contexts

(Aaker, 2000; Wang & Mowen, 1997). As individuals with interdependent self-construal see themselves as a unit of the social whole, it is important for them to generate particular knowledge from specific social situations to maintain both harmonious interpersonal relationships and social environments to ensure a stable and balanced self. According to Cross and Madson (1997), social appropriateness and social obligation are of vital importance to the maintenance of such harmonious surroundings. Being socially appropriate and responsible often requires a full understanding not only of the others, but also of the particular social surroundings and situations. Importantly, this understanding of others by reading other's minds and identifying social situations is context-based in accordance with the closeness of the relationship and the specific condition of the situation (e.g., I serve the guest with tea because she is my friend and I (should) know that she loves tea vs. I serve the guest with tea just to be polite).

Cognitively, interdependent construal of self fosters one's attribution of being able to self-criticize and respond to failure responsibly (Koenig & Dean, 2010; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Take shame relevant information and situations as an example, individuals with interdependent construal of self often respond to such information or situations with more sensitivity. This is because this shame relevant information or situation often includes negative evaluation from the significant others, or rejection from specific social groups. With a well-developed interdependent construal of self, they are very likely to perceive such negative information and to take responsibility for this information or situation with their trait of self-criticism and perspective-taking (Leith & Baumeister, 1998).

### 2.3.3.2. *Self-construal with emotional consequences*

Self-construal plays an important role in self maintenance and self-regulation of one's emotional processes. Researchers (Dean & Fles, 2016; Kurger, 2015; Leith & Baumeister, 1998) suggest that emotional experiences and activities are often shaped by the self due to its particular traits and depending on relevant self-schema. According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), individuals with a different construal of self will experience particular feelings differently in two emotional processes. First, the potential eliciting condition, intensity and frequency of the evoked feeling would vary accordingly. Then, the individual's willingness and preference of expression would also differ from each construal of self (Aaker & Schmitt, 2001).

#### 2.3.3.2.1. Independent construal of self with emotional consequences

Individuals with a well-developed independent construal of self are very likely to experience self-related emotions (i.e., ego-focused emotions) (Aaker & Williams, 1998; Block, 2006). Moreover, they are considered to be experts in their self-expression of their distinctiveness and are more likely to express the experience of these emotions by displaying and highlighting their own needs, feelings, and desires (Aaker & Schmitt, 2001).

The self-related emotions often see one's self and one's inner attributes as a primary referent (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Such emotions often associate with one's internal status when there is a sense of blocking (e.g., frustration or sadness), or confirmation (e.g., pride or happiness). The high tendency to experience those emotions for individuals with independent construal of self is caused by sensitivity to the self and the high value of personal attributes

(Block, 2006). When focusing on the self, these individuals are less likely to be perspective-taking and the role of others becomes relatively less meaningful. In this case, the self-related emotion is strengthened through the highlighting of the self, and those emotions are experienced with more frequency and intensity.

Additionally, those with a well-developed independent construal of self often have a stronger desire to express their feelings, both vocally (Cross & Madson, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and behaviorally (Song & Lee, 2013). One interpretation of this high willingness for self-expression assumes that one's feeling are present in one's current emotional state, which reveals one's internal attributes. Individuals with a highly developed independent construal of self often place heavy emphasis on the self and the internal attributes, and highly likely to demonstrate those attributes as a consequence (Aaker & Schmitt, 2001).

#### 2.3.3.2.2. Interdependent construal of self with emotional consequences

Individuals with a well-developed interdependent construal of self are very likely to experience other related emotions (i.e., other focus emotions) (Cross, 1995; Kitayama & Markus, 1990; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This is a result of their high likelihood to maintain similarity with their peers, and to be sensitive to, and perspective-taking of, others (Aaker & Schmitt, 2001).

In contrast to self-related emotions, with their major focus on one's internal attributes, other related emotions, such as the emotions of shame, sympathy, indebtedness, often involve attention on another person with an external social context (Block, 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). These other related

emotions often associate with the perspective of others. That is, with these emotions, one considers others as the primary referent with an attempt at perspective-taking during interpersonal interaction. The high relevance of other related emotions to the interdependent construal of self is due to the trait of interdependence with its high sensitivity to an awareness of the role of others, the self in relation to others, and social context.

Moreover, it would be odd for those with a highly developed interdependent construal of self to display their feelings with their internal attributes, and they are consequently less willing to express their emotions, especially with negative feelings related to one's self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Further, among interdependent individuals, one's inner feelings are less important when compared with the whole social surrounding. These individuals maintain harmony and reduce conflict through a more cooperative attitude and their better ability at perspective-taking in interpersonal relationships and during social interactions (Cross & Madson, 1997; Cross, et al., 2011). However, expressing one's emotions has potentially negative consequences due to interpersonal conflicts, and this also reduces their willingness towards the self-expression of their emotions.

#### *2.3.3.3. Self-construal with motivational consequences*

An abundance of previous studies (Aaker, 2000; Block, 2006; Chen, 2009; Cross, et al., 2011; Cross & Madson, 1997; Monkhouse, et al., 2012) suggest that self-construal is one of the rooted motives for behaviors within self-regulation schema. According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), self-construal motivates from three perspectives. First, independent construal

of self motivates with the self as the focal referent, while interdependent construal of self motivates with the other as the focal referent. The second perspective is the needs and desires as agencies of self-construal during the motivational process. In other words, an independent construal of self is motivated by one's personal attributes, while an interdependent construal of self is motivated by the influence of others via social appropriateness and obligation. The final perspective is the outcome where self-construal is the motivator.

#### 2.3.3.3.1. Independent construal of self with motivational consequences

In the motivational process, the focus of those with independent construal of self is the self, similar to its focus in cognitive and emotional processes. In other words, these individuals are highly sensitive to self-relevant stimuli since they are more likely to be motivated to action that expresses their important self and inner attributes (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Additionally, they have a strong desire to express the self and are more likely to validate their own attributes, such as their feelings and thoughts. Furthermore, they tend to value their self and see this self as the most significant element in regulating their behavior (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Therefore, their reactions are fostered by the responsiveness of the self, rather than any social responsiveness. Although social situations are also important to those with high independent construal of self, it is their inner core of self which takes primary consideration in their behavior. Thus, instead of behaving in accordance with social norms, their self and inner attributes are more salient to explain their ways of behavior.

Independent construal of self often motivates behaviors of self-affirmation, self-verification, and self-consistency (Dean & Fles, 2016; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994). Here, the affirmation and verification is caused by the insistence of the self. Individuals with a well-developed independent construal of self often foster the self and serve attributions for failure with externalizing behaviors, such as blame (Dean & Fles, 2016; Koenig & Dean, 2010). In this case, also revealed is one's desire to verify the self with a potential refusal for change. This matches the phenomenon where shame is more frequently responded to with externalizing tendencies, i.e., blame, anger, and hostility in Western cultures, where dominated by independent construal of self.

Moreover, researchers (e.g., Aaker & Schmitt, 2001; Chen, 2009) also apply the role of an independent construal of self in the consumption area. Aaker and Williams (1998) and Block (2006) suggest that individuals with a well-developed independent construal of self have more favorable brand attitudes with a strong desire to pursue pleasure and enjoyment. An additional example is that individuals are found consuming luxury and status products when motivated by an independent construal of self as they follow their internal attributes of taste and preference (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998).

#### 2.3.3.3.2. Interdependent construal of self with motivational consequences

Interdependent construal of self motivates one's behavior with others as the referent. This includes one's connectedness with others and with specific social situations as well. In other words, those with a highly developed interdependent construal of self are more sensitive to other-related stimuli,

and their actions are motivated more by the aim of enhancing or fostering their relatedness and connection to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994). Furthermore, the motivational process is also socially context-based. Although interdependent self individuals possess self and inner attributes, these traits are quite flexible and are understood only within specific situations. That is, their thoughts or feelings may change when the social context is different, and they often behave differently in accordance with their different social roles.

Additionally, it is one's self-in-relation to others in a particular situation that guides interdependent individuals' behavior, and they are more likely to behave in accordance with the closeness of their relationships with others. This is due to the interdependent persons' strong desire to maintain a harmonious social environment (Cross, 1995; Lee, et al., 2000). Thus, it is important for them to observe the specific social situations, anticipate the connotation of actions, respect others' feelings or thoughts, and then adjust their behavior accordingly (Church, 1987). As a result, highly interdependent self individuals are more likely to be aware of others thoughts and feelings, and the connotations of their actions. Here, internal attributes are not reliable in the motivational process in situations with interdependent construal of self. While individuals with high independent self-construal are more likely to behave according to their own preferences and for their own pleasure, those with high interdependent self-construal behave on the basis of others' preferences, since they give high importance to valuing the connectedness with others, respecting social norms, and behaving properly.



Consequently, interdependent construal of self often motivates behaviors of self-enhancement, self-actualization and self-consistency (Lee, et al., 2000; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). That is, with a well-developed interdependent self-construal, they often foster self-critical attributions for failure by pursuing reasons for such failure and promoting restorative actions of improvement (Dean & Fles, 2016; Koenig & Dean, 2010). This also matches the phenomenon that shame is more frequently responded to with restorative tendencies of repair, restore, and reform in Eastern cultures, where interdependent construal of self dominates.

Moreover, such self-consistency in meeting one's self with group and social standards is also revealed in studies in the consumption area (O'Cass & Frost, 2002; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). That is, individuals often buy symbolic products which subtly reflect their achievements. This is to fix their position within the social group appropriately, and thus to achieve consistency between one's self and the image presented to others.

## **2.4. Self-affirmation Theory and Self-regulation Theory**

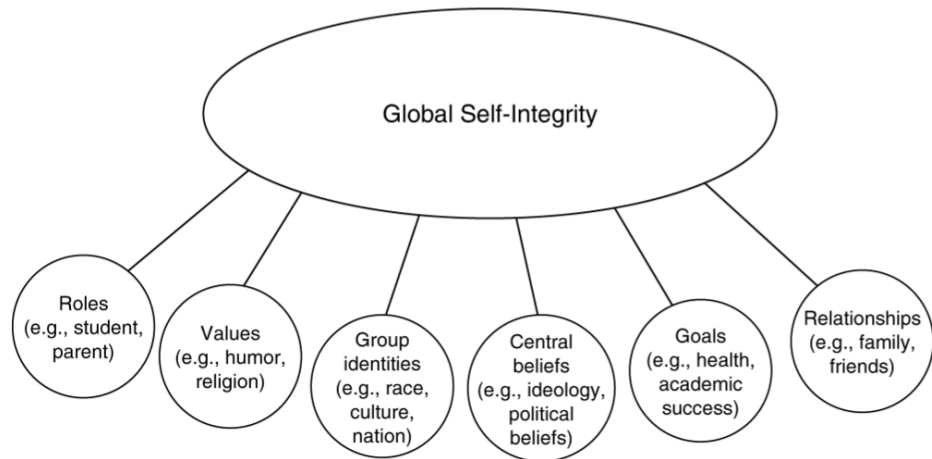
In this section, we theorize the impact of shame proneness in status consumption with self-affirmation theory and self-regulation theory.

### ***2.4.1. Self-affirmation Theory***

Self-affirmation theory suggests that individuals are driven to maintain their self-integrity. Here, integrity is proposed as a sense of being a whole, good, and appropriate person who fits within a given social or cultural norm, which illustrate in figure 5.1 (Sherman & Cohen, 2006). In Steele's (1988) research, there are four main tenets for the self-affirmation framework, which are:

*“people are motivated to protect the perceived integrity and worth of the self”*; *“motivations to protect self-integrity can result in defensive responses”*; *“the self-system is flexible”*; and *“actions that promote one’s value can reduce perceived threat”*.

Figure 2.1. Representation of a global self-integrity



(Source: Sherman & Cohen, 2006)

We apply this theory since it effectively explains the feeling of shame with the following desire to protect one’s self-integrity. That is, shame is caused by one’s transgression of the self. In a shame situation, the integrity of the self is damaged and the worth of the self is devalued. Hence, one often has the intention to respond with actions to keep the integrity, and to confirm the worth of the self to achieve a balanced condition. However, the second and third main tenets of self-affirmation theory actually suggest one reduces one’s threatened or damaged self via defensive bias, i.e., by rejecting the threatening information, rather than via restorative behaviors, i.e., by presenting a good self-image and repairing the damaged and defected self. This is seen as a

passive and indirect psychological adaptation to the provoking situation (Sherman & Cohen, 2006).

This may best explain shame responses with withdrawal tendencies and externalizing tendencies in most of the Western shame studies, i.e., responding to shame by passively refusing to acknowledge it, and/or avoiding the negative information by escaping or blaming others. However, it fails to explain the shame response with active adaption of self-entitlement in the Eastern context. Thus, we apply self-regulation theory to explain this particular response of restorative tendencies.

#### ***2.4.2. Self-regulation Theory***

Instead of the responses of defensive bias and passive adaptation, we propose an alternative response of direct and active adaption by applying self-regulation theory. Self-regulation theory refers to a person being adaptive and seeking a desirable situation actively while maintaining control over their feelings as well as their behavior. This is often defined as a multifaceted process caused by ego depletion and resulting in adjustive behaviors and restorative actions for the avoidance of any negative impact from dysfunctional situations and behaviors (Baumeister, et al., 2006). That is, self-regulation often causes the suppressed individual to make active changes in order to conform to standards (Baumeister, et al., 2006).

It was first used within the health management domain, and is now also widely applied in other domains, such as management and psychology (Bagozzi, et al., 2003; Kitayama, et al., 1995; Sheikh, 2014). Self-regulation theory generally consists of several stages. First, one needs to monitor an individual's behavior

and feedback from others, and then evaluate how the behaviors or feedback affect that individual through a diagnostic process. If the behavior fits the desired situation, the behavior is reinforced as strengthening good effects. However, if the behavior fails to fit one's desired situation, adjustment to the certain situation is to be made by changing the current behavior via other adaptive actions (Muraven & Baumerister, 2000; Muraven, et al., 2005). The detailed processes are shown in Figure 5.2.

Figure 2.2. Structure of the system of self-regulation

Self Observation	Diagnostic Process	Self Reaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance dimensions Quality Sociability morality</li> <li>• Quality monitoring Informativeness Regularity Proximity Accuracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal standards Explicitness Generality</li> <li>• Referential performances Standard norms Social comparison</li> <li>• Valuation of activity Valued Neutral Devalued</li> <li>• Performance determinants Personal External</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Evaluative self-reactions Positive Negative</li> <li>•Tangible self-reactions Rewarding Publishing</li> <li>•No self-reaction</li> </ul>

(Source: Bandura, 1991)

Moreover, researchers (Baumeister, et al. 2007; Carver & Scheier, 1982; Mischel, 1996) deconstruct these processes into four components: failure to meet standards of desirable behavior or situation; arousal of the motivation to meet standards; monitoring and reviewing the situation or behavior that fails to meet the standards; and willpower, where internal strength controls urges for improvements. Hence, when the distorted situation is monitored, regulated

behavior acts in order to achieve the desired state. That is, when one is negatively evaluated and fails to meet the desired standards, one may regulate oneself through adaptive strategies in disadvantageous conditions.

#### ***2.4.3. Application of Self-affirmation Theory and Self-regulation Theory***

As shame is considered to be a negative situation that needs to be regulated, in this study we mainly focus on the situation where one fails to fit the desired situation, rather than where one reinforces the desired situation through good behavior. When one feels shame, the integrity of the self is damaged. When this distortion is experienced or monitored, the psychological mechanism is that one thinks of engaging in actions that help to promote one's values, beliefs, and to build a appreciated self-image, in order to reduce the perceived threat. Considering their previous appearance or behavior fails to achieve a desired state, this individual will regulate their behavior in order to repair the defected and damaged self through adjustive actions. Hence, changing the current shame situation through further adaptive and restorative action is necessary to protect one's self-integrity and to remedy the distorted conditions. Although some may protect and affirm their self-integrity through indirect psychological adaptation of passively denying negative information, an alternative approach to cope with this distortion of a shame situation and to repair the damaged and defected self is through self-enhancement and the active display of a good self-image. Here, we place more emphasis on the restorative tendency of shame with direct adaptation because this is more frequently found as a shame response in the Eastern context (Bagozzi, et al., 2003; Sheikh, 2014).

Moreover, Chinese shame experiences are often highly related to *shi ru* (势辱, shame with transgressions in capacity), and are accompanied by a sense of lacking power, prestige, and capacity. In this case, shame with its defected self is often due to a sense of inferiority of status or power, as well as incompetence in capacity. As a result, the desired stage may contain an image of power, high status, and competence. To maintain the integrity of the self, one may regulate one's behavior by purchasing products with status signals which indicate high social status, powerfulness, and competence in the consumption situation. By this approach, the desired state of a good self-image may be achieved.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature on status consumption in Section 2.1, shame in Section 2.2, and self-construal in Section 2.3. Furthermore, theories of self-affirmation and self-regulation that are applied in this research are also discussed in Section 2.4.

A definition of status consumption is built based on a systematic review of previous studies. We also summarize motives for status consumption with an extrinsic stimulation of desiring social recognition and building one's identity, and an intrinsic stimulation of pursuing one's self interest and seeking enjoyment. In addition, this chapter provides an overview of the unique behavior of the consumption of status products among Chinese consumers during some specific historical events, which influence Chinese status consumption dramatically at that time.

In section 2.2 with existing research into shame, its causes and responses are carefully reviewed. Shame is caused by self-attack through negative evaluation and social rejections as a result of both moral and non-moral transgressions. Further, in the responses to shame, recent studies show an increasing interest in restorative tendencies as a potential response to shame, especially in Confucian cultures which are shame-affirming (Gausel, et al., 2012; Sheikh, 2014). This is in contrast to the traditional view of shame responses with withdrawal and externalizing tendencies within Western cultures. In this section, we conceptualize these different behavioral tendencies towards shame with potential causes and carefully review restorative tendency together with the other two shame responses. Additionally, we review different shame related expressions in both Chinese and English in this section in preparation for the corpus analysis which is discussed in Chapter 4.

The review of self-construal in Section 2.3 provides an overview of the concept of self, and the development of the two selves (independent and interdependent) from the psychical perspective. We also systematically review the traits of both independent and interdependent self-construal in previous studies from a culturally-based and an individually-based perspective. That is, independent construal of self is found to be more representative of Western individualist cultures, while interdependent construal of self tends to be more dominant in Eastern collectivist cultures. However, it has also been found that traits of both independent and interdependent construal of self can co-exist in one person. In addition, this section also conceptualizes the role of both independent and interdependent construal of self from cognitive, emotional,

and motivational perspectives through information processing, emotion regulation, and focal motivations in areas of shame and consumption.

Section 2.4 reviews the theories of self-affirmation and self-regulation that explains the relationship between shame and status consumption. Based on detailed discussions and justifications in Chapter 2, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present empirical studies using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In Chapter 4, we show restorative tendency as an additional behavior tendency towards shame by employing a corpus approach of concordance analysis. Moreover, Chapters 5 and 6 provide empirical evidence to justify status consumption as a response to shame with restorative tendency using survey and experimental approaches.



## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

### **Chapter Overview**

This thesis aims to investigate the influence of shame on status consumption among Chinese consumers. In doing so, we seek to confirm our conceptual knowledge with empirical approaches. The objective of this chapter is to introduce and discuss the empirical methods we apply for this research. In order to guide the processes, we need first to clarify the underlying philosophical foundation of the assumptions. Thus, section 3.1 discusses the underlying research philosophy. Then, in section 3.2, we outline the research procedures which use a mixed methodology of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The first step takes a qualitative approach and involves corpus analysis, then quantitative approaches are used by means of a paper-based survey and, finally, quasi-lab experiments are carried out. In addition, section 3.3 provides justification for the research method adopted with a brief introduction to the empirical processes and discussion of the measurements applied.

### **3.1. Research Philosophy**

This study selects a mixed methodology, following both qualitative and quantitative perspectives to explore and examine a social problem, that of consumers' responses to status product under the influence of the emotion of shame in China. Basically, it is based on first investigating social phenomenon to have a better and comprehensive understanding about the existing world; and then testing the theory to determine whether the generalized theory and predicted assumptions are true (Creswell, 1994).

The selection of a mixed research method, i.e., employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches, originates from the researcher's philosophical position of the ontological and epistemological foundations. According to Scotland (2012), ontology refers to the philosophical study of the nature of being. That is, it concerns the perception of the existence of reality, and whether that reality is a fundamental existence of the world, or a product of peoples' minds (Hunt, 1990). Epistemology, on the other hand, refers to how one understands the world. Crotty (2009) defines it as "the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology" (p.3). Generally, ontological and epistemological issues arise together. Some researchers also argue that only by answering and confirming the ontological questions can epistemological questions be addressed (Crotty, 2009; Hunt, et al., 2009)

Basically, in research philosophy, there are two views or belief systems referring to ontology, which are objectivism (the belief that reality is what exists in the world), and subjectivism (the belief that reality is what we perceive about the world). Researchers with subjectivism as their starting point rely on interpretivism as their epistemological approach to obtain knowledge of the world via an interpretation of reality. While those taking objectivism as their research position often rely on positivism and realism, that is they test theories and prove them through assumptions in order to investigate and understand reality (Crotty, 2009; Hunt, 1990, 1993).

In this study, our ontological position is a combination of both subjectivism and objectivism. In terms of subjectivism, we believe that human being's emotions are subjective and produced by their own minds, though such emotions are often caused by existences of reality. However, considering

objectivism, we believe that the existence of emotions and responses to certain emotions are objective (e.g., status consumption as a shame response of restorative tendency among Chinese consumers). Hence, responding to our ontological position, both interpretivism and positivism best represent our epistemological perspective from which to examine reality and our assumptions.

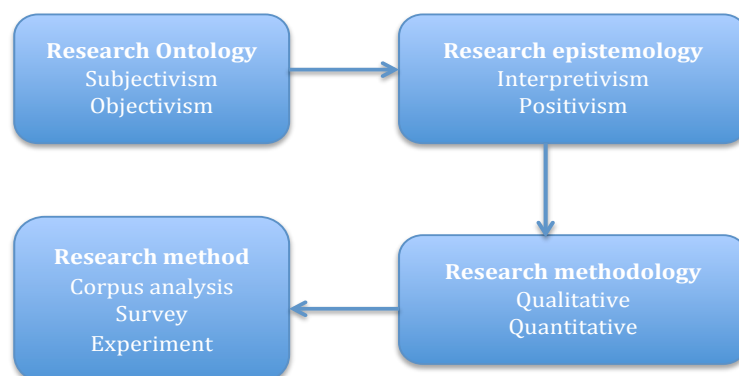
Interpretivism is an approach to social science which interprets humans as social actors and uncovers their personal attributes, such as beliefs, emotions, and value systems as constructed meanings of reality (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012). It has its strengths in understanding individuals or groups, especially in emerging issues or ideas, by investigating the actual meaning of a person's particular behavior, or their responsiveness in certain situations. As suggested in the previous literature on shame studies (e.g., Gausel, et al., 2012; Sheikh & Janoff-Bulman, 2010; Sheikh, 2014), the phenomenon of shame response with restorative tendencies is a novel finding and thus there is limited focus and application from existing research. Taking an interpretivist view allows us to have a better understanding of the feeling of shame and its responses, especially response with restorative behavior, from a linguistic perspective.

While interpretivism is based on ontology from a subjective perspective, the fundamental belief system of positivism is objectivism. Positivism aims to confirm hypothesized prediction by testing theory with objective data and evidence, rather than through subjective sensation and reflection (Crotty, 2009). Actually, there are a large number of researchers conducting their research as positivists, and many existing studies have been conducted in order to test theory in different contexts in marketing research (Heding, et al., 2008; Hunt,

1993). The general positivist approach is to “generate hypotheses that can be tested and that will thereby allow explanations of laws to be assessed” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.15). Traditional practice of positivism adopts quantitative methods with corresponding measurement instruments for testing hypothesized assumptions and generalizing applied theories using a group of representative populations. In line with this, this study attempts to confirm the impact of shame on consumers’ status consumption behavior using both survey questionnaire and laboratory experiments.

To conclude, this research positions itself as a combination of interpretivist and positivist study, and thereby applies a mixed methodology adopting both qualitative and quantitative approaches. From our ontological stand point of subjectivism, we adopt a qualitative linguistic approach by analyzing corpora of written materials and discourses to interpret the world, and thus, better understand the emotion of shame and its responses. While from the ontological stand point of objectivism, we take a positivist view and test our theory and predicted hypotheses with quantitative approaches using a paper-based survey questionnaire and laboratory experiments. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of our research philosophy and corresponding methodology.

Figure 3.1. Overview of research philosophy and methodology



### **3.2. Research Procedures**

After establishing the research questions, we started with a comprehensive review of the previous related literature, which suggests that shame is caused by transgressions of one's self (Bedford & Hwang, 2003; Tangney, et al., 2005). In particular, the reviews of shame-related studies also show three potential responses, restorative tendencies (especially found in Asian cultures), withdrawal tendencies, and externalizing tendencies (Gausel, et al., 2012; Sheikh, 2014; Tangney, et al., 1996; Tangney, et al., 2014). The recent finding of shame response of restorative tendency, especially found in shame-affirming cultures, provides directions for our research. We apply this particular response to the consumption area, suggesting that it may lead to status consumption where the function of status products is for self-protection and repair of self-image (Belk, 1988; Sivanathan and Pettit, 2010).

Prior studies adopted either qualitative methods (Tangney, et al., 1996), in order to identify the range of responses to shame in psychological area, or quantitative methods (Bagozzi, et al., 2003; Gausel, et al., 2012), in order to examine reactions to shame in managerial area. In this study, we adopt a mixed methodology using both qualitative and quantitative approaches to identify shame responses, as well as the application of restorative tendencies in the consumption area through the purchase of status products. The empirical processes of this thesis are composed of three steps introduced in chronological order, beginning with a corpus analysis, followed by a paper-based survey and quasi-lab experiments. The overall research design is outlined in Table 3.1. Additionally, in-depth discussions of methodology,

analytical techniques, as well as discussion and interpretation of the findings are provided in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Table 3.1. Summary of research design

Empirical process	Qualitative	Quantitative	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Research Method	Corpus analysis (Chapter 4)	Survey (Chapter 5)	Experiments (Chapter 6)
Subject of study	Causes and responses of shame and shame phenomenon in written corpus	Influence of shame on status consumption	
Shame responses	Linguistic evidence of shame responses with restorative tendency, withdrawal tendency, and externalizing tendency	Status consumption as an application of the shame response of restorative tendency	
Method of data collection	Linguistic corpora of written material (Qualitative approach)	Paper-based survey (Quantitative approach)	Lab experiments (Quantitative approach)
Target population	Both Chinese and English corpora using online and offline materials	Chinese consumers (Real consumers in and near shopping malls in Ningbo, China)	Chinese consumers (undergraduate and postgraduate students in universities in Ningbo, China)
Data Analysis	Concordance analysis using Word Smith	Descriptive statistics EFA CFA Regression using AMOS and SPSS	Descriptive statistics EFA One-way ANOVA using SPSS

The choice to follow a mixed methodology by analyzing both existing corpora and collected data, originates from the nature of the research. As shame response with restorative tendency is a recently raised issue in shame study, the application of this response, especially in consumption, is also very limited. Consequently, further investigation in both understanding the phenomenon and testing the theory are required. As a result, it makes sense to consider mixed methodology that combines and integrates both qualitative and quantitative approaches, not least because researchers argue that there may be shortcomings if a pure single method is applied in a research project, especially when research questions are highly complex (Mayring, et al., 2007). While combination and integration using multiple methods helps overcome the problems that a single method produces, it also creates a “balanced, reciprocal relationship between philosophy and methodology, between paradigms and practices” (Greene & Caracelli, 1997, p.12)

Our first step is to examine the phenomenon of shame from a linguistic viewpoint in written materials in both Chinese and English corpora. This exploratory qualitative process is to ground the theoretical conceptualization of shame with its causes and responses, as well as the potential reasons for its particular response tendencies. The discussion in Chapter 4 shows the details of the empirical process. More importantly, a large amount of linguistic evidence supports restorative tendency as one shame response, especially in the Chinese corpus. This finding provides a good indication for following quantitative steps to test potential influences of shame on status consumption.

In the second step, we test the application of generalized shame responses of restorative tendency in the consumption area with status products. For this

process, we adopt an empirical study using a paper-based survey among real Chinese consumers. Details are discussed in Chapter 5.

In the final step, we employ an empirical investigation into the influence of shame response with restorative tendencies in consumption via status consumption through experiments among Chinese students. Large amount of researchers applies student sample as experiment respondents in their studies (Aaker, 2000; Griskevicius, et al., 2010; Pelozo, et al., 2013). Moreover, before conducting the experiments, pilot studies were undertaken using interview and pretest to develop a related recall scenario and dependent variable. Over the same period, we conducted three experiments to examine consumers' intentions to buy status products with shame feelings under different conditions among college students. The detailed processes, both pilot studies and experiments, are discussed in Chapter 6.

### **3.3. Research Method Justification**

In this section, we justify our strategies of method selection as well as our choice of measurement instruments. As stated, we apply three empirical approaches. We begin with a qualitative linguistic approach of corpus analysis to investigate the phenomenon of shame, its causes and responses, particularly in terms of the response of restorative tendencies found in recent research. Then, the survey is then used to confirm our predictions of applying the shame response of restorative tendencies to the consumption of status products. Finally, the laboratory experiments are conducted on the basis of the results of the survey in order to further examine the impact of shame on status consumption under different conditions.



### ***3.3.1. Qualitative Approach: Corpus Analysis***

The corpus approach has been actively applied in data mining, such as grouping newly found concepts barely mentioned, and giving semantic definition to those concepts (Assadi, et al., 1998; Aussenac-Gilles, et al., 2000). In this study, we first apply a classic linguistic tool of concordance analysis, which looks into “the corpus for every occurrence of any user given syntagm” (Aussenac-Gilles, et al., 2000, p. 6). This particular linguistic approach is considered to be very practical in studying linguistic behavior, as it reveals not only patterns of use of certain linguistic syntagms, but also the contexts in which they occur, and related conditions as well. In Chapter 4, we apply the corpus approach to analyze concordances to uncover the meaning of shame and identify the related contexts in which it occurs.

Apart from traditional shame studies concerned with responses of withdrawal and externalizing tendencies, response with restorative tendency is a recent finding and related research is yet to be established (Gausel, et al., 2012; Sheikh, 2014; Tangney, et al., 2014). From this perspective, the selection of a qualitative strategy with corpus analysis is judged to be most appropriate approach for the first step of this research. With a qualitative approach through corpus analysis, we gain a better understanding of restorative tendency as a shame response with detailed, vivid descriptions by linguistic support.

The corpus analysis provides a large amount of linguistic evidence to support the finding that restorative tendency is one of the major shame responses. However, a key limitation of the linguistic material is that it mostly covers shame in general situations, thus, there are few examples of the shame

condition in a particular situation, such as consumption. Indeed, the linguistic corpus approach mainly focuses on subjective interpretation and is a relatively new strategy adopted in marketing. Quantitative researchers may criticize it for being too subjective (Hunt, 1993; Robertshaw, 2007). Additionally, restorative tendency as a shame response lacks application in areas other than psychology, and its generalization to the marketing area may be questionable. Hence, following quantitative methods with survey and experiments are applied to test the application of the linguistic findings in the consumption area.

### ***3.3.2. Quantitative Approaches: Survey and Experiment***

With a positivist's view of seeking to understand the causal relationship between variables, both correlational and experimental studies are used. The aim of the survey approach is to collect empirical quantitative evidence about the influence of shame proneness on consumers' status consumption.

As shame response with restorative tendency is a novel trend found in recent shame study, there is limited research on testing the impact of shame in the consumption area, let alone relating shame and the purchase of status products with its function of self-protection and self-affirmation. One advantage of the survey approach is to justify the findings in the corpus approach and to generalize the impact of shame with objective statistical evidence. A further practical advantage of using a survey is that it allows the collection of a wide range of data as it is relatively easy to administer (Creswell, 1994). Also, considering the novelty of the research topic and the limitations of resources, it is a good strategy to adopt as a start to test our assumptions. Details of the survey method are introduced in Chapter 5. The collected data shed light on

our research questions suggesting that there is a positive link between shame and status consumption in the condition of high independent construal of self.

However, the survey strategy has certain epistemological limitations, or errors. These limitations, or errors, include both sampling and non-sampling errors. Sampling errors refer to bias in respondents' selection when there is difference between the sample selected and the whole population (Sarndal, et al., 1992). To reduce sampling error, our survey respondents were randomly selected via mall-intercept, i.e., selecting one respondent from every six passing by, near, or in, big malls and plazas. Besides sampling errors, it is non-sampling errors that trouble most researchers conducting a survey (Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2001; Robersshaw, 2007). Generally, there are two sources of non-sampling errors, which are respondent bias, such as common method bias, and unreliable measurements. To minimize bias, the survey is conducted anonymously and respondents are told that there is no right or wrong answer to the questions. In terms of measuring instruments, we mainly adopt scale-based measurements, discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

A further limitation of the survey approach is that survey only examines the linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables, and not the causal relationship. Dean and Voss (1999) suggest that the experimental approach not only provides insight into the causal relationship between variables with a direct cause and effect path, but also helps when comparing responses in different settings with controlled variables. Thus, we adopt further experimental approaches, discussed in detail in Chapter 6, to explore the causal relationship between shame and status consumption.

### 3.3.3. Measurement Instruments for Measuring Shame

In this section, we provide an introduction to the shame measurement instruments and then provide justification for our own selection after careful evaluation. The shame measurements are used in both survey approach in Chapter 5 and experimental approach in Chapter 6. But there are many instruments for measuring shame, while shame instruments for survey and experimental approaches are different. We thus provide a comprehensive overview of different types of shame measurements in this section, to achieve a coherent understanding of these instruments ahead of discussing them separately in Chapters 5 and 6. Existing literature (Gao, 2013; Niedenthal, et al., 1994; Tangney, Dearing, Wagner & Gramzow, 2000; Tangney, Wagner, Gavlas & Gramzow, 1991) suggests that there are two major types of shame measurements, scale-based measurements and experiment-based paradigms, details of which are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Shame measurements in previous literature

Measure instruments of shame				
Scale-based measurements			Experiment-based measurements	
Scenario-based measurement	GASP (Guilt and shame proneness) scale	Cohen, et al., (2011)	Easy-task failure paradigm	Niedenthal, et al. (1994); Yang, et al. (2010)
	TOSCA (Test of self-conscious affect) scale	Tangney, et al., (2000)	Recall/ imagination paradigm	Han, et al., 2010; Wang & Vladas, 2014
Global adjective checklists	PFQ (Personal feelings questionnaire)	Harder, (1990)		
	PANAS (The positive and	Brown, et al.,		

	negative affect schedule -revised)	(2009)		
Shame measurement with self-report	ESS (experience of shame scale)	Andres, et al., (2002)		

### 3.3.3.1. Scale-based measurements of shame

The first type of shame measurements is scale-based measurements, which including scenario-based questions, global adjective checklists, and self-report. Scenario-based shame measurements are created based on general situations in daily life that may evoke the feeling of shame via two dimensions, the perception of shame and potential response of the shame feeling. The TOSCA measurements (Tangney, et al., 2000; Tangney, et al., 1991) of shame and guilt proneness are the best known and most widely used scale. However, previous literature (Cohen, et al., 2011) criticizes this measurement for its limitations with some of the shame and guilt measurements confounded. In fact, shame measurements using the TOSCA scale are found to be a better predictor of the feeling of guilt, shame, and other self-critical emotions. Another issue with the TOSCA measurement is that it is mostly applied within Western culture and the results are often highly correlated with anger and hostility. With Western cultures often being shame-devaluing, and Eastern culture often being shame-affirming, Sheikh (2014) found an alternative response to shame feelings with restorative tendency in Eastern culture. Thus, whether the TOSCA measurement could effectively measure the feeling of shame within a shame-affirming culture is questionable. Moreover, there are two schools of thought concerning the debate that shame and guilt differ: the self-behavior

perspective; and the public-private perspective. In TOSCA, the focus is more on the self-behavior perspective. However, Cohen et al.'s (2011) GASP scale combines both schools of thought and evaluates shame and guilt proneness from a self-behavior perspective within scenarios of both public and private settings. Hence, in this research, we apply Cohen et al.'s (2011) recent scenario-based measurement for measuring shame in the survey approach.

For shame measurements with global adjective checklists, instead of creating a certain scenario that may evoke the feeling of shame, respondents are tested with different shame-related expressions or adjectives. With this measurement, they are asked to evaluate themselves on those expressions and adjectives with different scales. Established scales with adjective checklists for testing shame are created by Harder (1990) with a PFQ (Personal feelings questionnaire), which includes 16 expressions of shame, and Brown et al., (2009) with PANAS (positive and negative affect schedule - revised) which includes six shame related adjectives. This measurement is not applied in this study because the shame-related expressions in those checklists are not theoretically precise and often overlap with other adjectives for emotions. For the shame measurement of self-report, established scales are created by Andres et al., (2002) with their ESS (experience of shame scale), which includes three dimensions of shame, which are characterological shame, behavioral shame, and bodily shame.

#### *3.3.3.2. Experiment-based measurements of shame*

The experiment-based shame measurements are easy-task failure paradigm and recall/imagination paradigm (Gao, 2013). In terms of easy-task failure

paradigm, respondents' shame is manipulated, rather than measured with scales. They are often appointed certain tasks and then informed that they failed to complete the task, or that they ranked lowest of all the respondents. In this way, the feeling of shame may be aroused, especially when the failure is announced publicly. Indeed, failure in completing easy tasks brings stronger feelings of shame than failure in completing difficult tasks. This type of shame manipulation is often applied in psychological literature, such as in Niedenthal, et al.'s (1994) and Yang, et al.'s (2010) studies.

For recall/imagination paradigm, shame is activated via recall or the imagination of one's own shame experience. The recall/imagination paradigm is widely adopted in manipulation processes in experimental design in marketing research (Han, et al., 2010; Wang & Vladas, 2014). The procedure for activating the feeling of shame is to first collect qualitative data through a shame-evoking question referring to respondents previously experienced shame situation. Then, those qualitative data are transferred into vocal or text activators and given to respondents to evoke their feeling of shame during the experiments. This approach of emotion activation with related questions is used not only in shame-related studies (Bagozzi, et al., 2003; Ghorbani, et al., 2013), but also in other emotion-related research, such as the emotions of guilt or regret (Peloza, et al., 2013). In this research, we adopt the recall paradigm to trigger respondents' feeling of shame, rather than the imagination paradigm. This is because it is difficult to feel the pain of shame via the imagination if the individual has not had that exact experience of shame.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has clarified the research philosophy of this thesis, which positions itself within a combination of interpretivism and positivism. We adopt a mixed method approach, using both qualitative and quantitative approach with corpus analysis, and survey and experiments respectively. This chapter has also reviewed the research procedures describing three steps to the empirical data collection. The first step is to study shame phenomenon through concordance analysis in written materials using a linguistic approach. The main objective of this stage is to interpret the causes of, and responses to, shame by analyzing existing corpora. Then, following the findings from this stage, a paper-based survey is employed to test the impact of shame on status consumption. After this, an experimental method is adopted to further examine the role of shame in status consumption within different conditions. In addition, we justify the methods adopted and their chronological sequence. Meanwhile, measuring instruments of shame are introduced and carefully selected for both survey and experimental approaches after evaluation and discussion.

This chapter only provides an overview with a brief introduction to each method. More details of the methodology, findings, and data analysis for the three steps are presented in the methodology and discussion sections of Chapters 4, 5, and 6.



## **Chapter 4: A Corpus Approach to Shame: Concordance Analysis**

### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter investigates shame using a qualitative method, the linguistic approach of corpus analysis. It aims to answer the first research question, i.e., *What is shame?*, by examining the concept of shame with its potential causes and responses and the usage of shame expressions, employing concordance analysis, especially concerning Chinese shame expressions. Section 4.1 is an introduction to corpus analysis as an approach for the analysis of linguistic corpora of shame. It introduces the linguistic material to be used for the shame analysis. In addition, we describe the process for the selection of lexical items for this particular linguistic approach. In sections 4.2, the results of the corpus approach are given and are discussed accordingly. In this section, we report the linguistic results with potential causes of and responses to shame, morality issues in transgression in shame situations, and different levels of intensity of shame expressions. Additionally, implications and limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are presented and discussed in section 4.3.

### **4.1. Method**

#### ***4.1.1. Corpus Analysis***

Corpus analysis is a common method applied in linguistics for analyzing a large collection of structured discourses and text materials (Pustejovsky, et al., 1993; Biber, et al., 2007). With a different shame culture between Eastern countries and Western countries, shame is considered to be an emotional motivator for, or preventer of, its responsive behavior. That is, the behavioral

tendencies after experiencing the feeling of shame differ between two different cultures. They show different behaviors of restorative tendencies with repair, improvement, and prosocial actions, withdrawal tendencies of hiding and escaping, or externalizing tendencies of anger and violence (Gausel, et al., 2012; Tangney, et al., 1996). It is to better understand the concept, expressions, and related behaviors of shame in English and Chinese that we apply a corpus analysis, as this allows us to compare shame situations in Eastern and Western cultures through materials from each language. Additionally, it may produce a variety of shame related scenarios that help us to better understand the details in each particular situation when shame incidents lead to different behavioral tendencies.

The corpus analysis includes quantitative sections with word counts, and qualitative sections with concordance analysis. Word counts provide an overview of the usage of shame-related expressions in different cultures. The concordance analysis of shame related corpora provides information on the content via discursive construction of the concept, and detailed description of the situation. Here, we use shame and shame-related expressions as our keywords to perform analysis of both word counts and the concordances. While word count analysis indicates the frequency of use of shame-related expressions in different languages, concordance analysis allows a closer look at the situations in which the focal expressions are used, thus contextualizing them. The corpus analysis tool, Word Smith, is used to investigate the different expressions of shame in English and in Mandarin, and the causes and outcomes of shame experiences are generated from the analyzed corpus.

#### ***4.1.2. Selecting Corpus Materials and Lexical Items***

The linguistic materials for corpus analysis are taken from *The Freiburg-Brown Corpus of American English* (FROWN) and *The Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British English* (FLOB) for the English corpus analysis; and *The Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese* (LCMC) for the Chinese corpus analysis. FROWN contains 500 texts with 1,000,000 words in total and FLOB contains a similar size of texts and words. The LCMC is specially designed with Chinese Mandarin to match FROWN and FLOB, and thus, provides monolingual analyses of Chinese, and a lexical resource for a contrastive and comparative investigation between English and Chinese. In addition, in order to broaden the corpus material for greater richness, an additional large scale online corpus from the *Center for Chinese Linguistics, Peking University* (CCL PKU), is applied for the Chinese analysis, and *Just the Word* (JTW) for the English analysis. The Chinese corpora from CCL PKU contains 780 million characters in total with sources ranging from written and spoken corpora in arts, commerce, law and science with novels, conference records, newspapers and so on. There are three corpora available from CCL PKU, modern Chinese (580 million characters), ancient Chinese (200 million characters), and a Chinese-English bilingual corpus (2374 texts including 6,000,000 Chinese characters and 3,900,000 English words). For this research we use the modern Chinese corpus since it is modern Chinese that is more frequently used by Chinese today. The corpora from JTW contains 80 million words from British National Corpus with wide cross-section of spoken and written corpora from late 20<sup>th</sup> century. For ease of reference, Table 4.1 presents a brief introduction on the sources of analyzed corpus database.

Table 4.1. Sources of analyzed corpus

<i>Chinese Corpus</i>	<i>English Corpus</i>
<i>LCMC</i> 500 texts with 1,000,000 characters	<i>FROWN</i> 500 texts with 1,000,000 words
	<i>FROWN</i> 500 texts with 1,000,000 words
<i>CCL PKU</i> Online corpus with 580,000,000 characters (modern Chinese) ranging from different texts from novels to conference records	<i>JTW</i> Online corpus with 80,000,000 words from British National Corpus

The lexical items selected for the English analysis are a set of terms that share a similar semantic space with shame and is compiled of synonyms, meronyms, and hyponyms. However, with different perceptions and usages of shame in different cultures, it is difficult to achieve equivalence terms in English and Chinese. Here, the equivalence of language implies “the words used in the measuring instrument convey equivalent concepts and meaning across culture” (Cavusgi & Das, 1997, p.954). In order to achieve linguistic equivalence, we select shame expressions by first using a dictionary to select the Chinese and English expressions which have the equivalent semantic meaning of shame. Then we compare the expressions with previous shame-related studies.

Referring to the discussion on shame expressions in Section 2.2.2 in Chapter 2, the lexical items chosen for the English concordance analysis of shame are *shame*, *shameful*, and *shameless*. Then related expressions such as *humiliate* and *humiliation* are also selected. The selected lexical items for shame for the analysis of the Chinese concordances are also a set of terms that are synonyms and near-synonyms of shame in Chinese expressions, as seen in Section 2.2.2.1, in Chapter 2. We started with *xiu* (羞, *shame*), *chi* (耻, *disgrace*), and *ru* (辱,

*humiliation/shame*) as the root and direct expressions for shame. Then, other shame-related words, *lian* (脸), *mian*(面), *yan*(颜) were searched as descendible terms for the expression of shame as indicated in the dictionary.

We also compare our selected terms with Li, Wang and Fischer's (2004) study and Bedford and Hwang's (2003) study and choose the most frequently used shame expressions for corpus analysis. The former collected 113 terms for shame expressions in Chinese, but guilt is also with dealt as a sub-cluster under the shame category. However, shame and guilt are two distinct emotions and many previous studies have determined that they should not be classified within the same category (Bedford & Hwang, 2003; Tangney, 1990; Tangney, et. al., 1996; Tangney, Mashek, & Stuewig, 2005). Thus, we only compare the shame terms from their research, while the guilt expressions are excluded. The same terms used in Li, Wang, and Fischer's (2004) study, i.e., expressions related to *mian* or *lian*, such as *mei(diu) mianzi* (没(丢)面子; *losing face*), or *diu lian* (丢脸, *losing face*), *chi* (耻, *disgrace*), *xiu ru* (羞辱, *humiliation/shame*) and *nan kan* (难堪, *ashamed or embarrassed depending on context*) are selected for this study. In addition, other lexical items for shame expressions in Chinese are also chosen with *xiu chi* (羞耻, *shame*) representing the strongest stage of shame, and *diu lian* (丢脸, *losing face*) the mildest stage, in accordance with Bedford and Hwang's (2003) research. As the corpora for analysis contain various kinds of materials, ranging from informal language, such as popular novels, to formal language, such as conference records, the expressions are thus selected include expressions used in both formal and

informal situations with different intensity. The list of lexical units of shame is shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below.

Table 4.2. Terms semantically related to shame in Chinese

<i>Term in English</i>	<i>Chinese</i>
Shame/disgrace	羞耻/耻
Shame/humiliation	羞辱
Losing face	没(丢)面子
Losing face	丢脸
Ashamed or embarrassed depending on context	难堪

Table 4.3. Terms semantically related to shame in English

<i>Term</i>	<i>Part of speech</i>
Shame	Noun/verb
Shameful	Adjective
Humiliation	Noun
Humiliate	Verb

## 4.2. Results and Discussion

### 4.2.1. Results and Discussion of Word Counts

The literature (e.g., Bedford & Hwang, 2003; Benedict, 2005) argues that Western cultures are guilt-based cultures, while Confucian cultures are shame-based cultures. The two emotions of shame and guilt are distinct emotions, although they are similar and are often used interchangeably in daily life (Bedford, 2004; Schmader & Lickel, 2006; Tangney, et al., 2005). In order to have a concrete understanding of the usage of shame expressions in Chinese and English, we also use guilt-related terms for comparison in the analysis of word counts in this section. The selected terms for shame and guilt in English are listed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Shame and guilt expressions for word counts analysis in the English corpora

<i>Shame*</i>		<i>Guilt*</i>	
Term	Part of speech	Term	Part of speech
Shame	Noun/verb	Guilt	Noun
Shameful	Adjective	Guilty	Adjective
Humiliation	Noun		
Humiliate	Verb		

The results in Table 4.5 indicate that, in English, guilt and its semantically related terms are used more frequently than shame. There are 26 entries for shame and 50 for guilt in the results of word counts in FLOB, and 26 entries for shame and 50 for guilt in FROWN. In the online corpus of JTW, there is a total of 1,976 occurrences of shame, among which there are 495 entries which are meaningful with concordances of full sentences. For guilt entries and entries that are semantically related to guilt, there are 978 meaningful entries from a total of 2,150 occurrences. Basically, the results demonstrate that the frequency of the usage of shame expressions in English is only half that of the usage of guilt and its semantically related terms.

Table 4.5. Results of word counts for shame- and guilt-related entries in the English corpora

	<i>Shame*</i>	<i>Guilt*</i>
FLOB	26	50
FROWN	26	50
JTW	495	978

The analyzed shame and guilt items and their related expressions in the Chinese corpora are listed in Table 4.6. As discussed in the previous section, for item selection we started with root and direct expressions for shame by referring to the dictionary to identify lexical items such as *xiu* (羞, *shame*) and

*chi* (耻, *disgrace*). Then, we extended the search to other shame-related expressions which include the words *lian* (脸, *face*) and *mian* (面, *face*). For guilt expressions, we started with root expressions, *kui* (愧, *guilt*), *jiu* (疚, *guilt*), and *zui* (罪, *guilt/crime*). Moreover, shame and guilt expressions listed in Table 4.6 are carefully evaluated, not only for their semantic meaning, but also in accordance with their popularity and frequency of usage according to Bedford (2004) and Li, Wang and Fischer (2004).

Table 4.6. Shame and guilt expressions for word counts analysis in the Chinese corpora

<i>Term in English</i>	<i>Shame</i>	<i>Term in English</i>	<i>Guilt</i>
Shame/disgrace	羞耻/耻	Guilt conscience	愧疚
Shame/humiliation	羞辱	Guilt	罪恶感
Lose face	没(丢)面子	Feeling guilty	惭愧
Lose face	丢脸	Guilty	内疚
Shame/Embarrassed	难堪	Guilt-regret	愧悔

The results show that, contradictory to the results found in the English corpora, shame and its related expressions in the analyzed Chinese corpora are more frequently used than are the expressions of guilt. In the LCMC corpus, the related entries number 37 shame-related and three guilt-related expressions. Furthermore, the frequency of the occurrence of shame expressions is double that of the occurrences of guilt expressions in the Chinese corpus analysis, at 17242 and 9406 respectively in the CCL PK corpus.

Apart from the higher frequency of usage of shame expressions, the number of words that express the feeling of shame is also higher than the number of expressions for guilt in Chinese. Expressions used for different stages of the shame feeling range from strong, with *xiu* (羞, *shame*) and *chi* (耻, *disgrace*),



to medium, with *bu ti mian* (不体面, disreputable/indecency), *bu guang cai* (不光彩, disreputable), and mild, with *bu hao yi si* (不好意思, slightly shameful/ embarrassed/fear of losing face), *diu lian* (丢脸, losing face), and *mei(diu) mian zi* (没(丢)面子, losing face). Meanwhile, the number of guilt expressions is relatively fewer. Moreover, in some shame related studies within the Chinese context, guilt is categorized as a subcategory of shame (Li, Wang & Fischer, 2004). This is a possible reason for fewer guilt expressions compared to shame expressions in the Chinese corpora.

Table 4.7. Results of word counts for shame- and guilt-related entries in the Chinese corpora

	<i>Shame*</i>	<i>Guilt*</i>
LCMC	27	3
CCL PKU	17242	9406

From such differences in the number usages of shame- and guilt-related expressions, we could draw the conclusion that shame may have a richer content and connotation in Chinese culture than it does in Western culture, where people may have a better understanding of the feeling of guilt. Moreover, as seen in Table 4.8, the root term of shame with *chi* (耻, disgrace) has a remarkable usage, with 8055 entries in the CCL corpus. Besides this core term, other shame expressions, such as *nan kan* (难堪, *ashamed or embarrassed depending on context*), *diu lian* (丢脸, losing face), and *mei(diu) mian zi* (没(丢)面子, losing face) also frequently appear in the corpus concordances. This high frequency may be because these expressions often describe the mild stage of the shame feeling, which is the stage most commonly experienced in daily life.

In the different usage of mild shame expressions, the term *mei(diu) mian zi* (没(丢)面子, losing face) has a significantly higher rate of use than the other two expressions (see Table 4.8). As mentioned in Chapter 2, although *diu lian* (丢脸, losing face) and *mei(diu) mian zi* (没(丢)面子, losing face) seems used similarly in informal conditions, i.e., they indicate loss of one's dignity from a moral perspective and self-respect from a social perspective, the connotations of the two terms are actually different. Here, *lian* (脸, face) refers to approval or respect from the individual's moral perspective, while *mian* (面, face) refers to affirmations and appreciation of one's achievements, power, or possessions. From this perspective, shame expressions for the loss of one's social-respect and recognition are more frequently used than those which express the feeling of transgression of one's morality or self-dignity, at 8 and 1 respectively in the LCMC corpus, and 3773 and 1381 in the CCL corpus.

Table 4.8. Occurrences of shame expressions in the Chinese corpora

<i>Term in English</i>	<i>Shame</i>	<i>No. of entries in LCMC</i>	<i>No. of entries in CCL</i>
Shame/disgrace	羞耻/耻	5	1020 / 8055
Shame/humiliation	羞辱	4	1040
Lose face	没(丢)面子	8	3773
Lose face	丢脸	1	1381
Shame/Embarrassed	难堪	7	1973

In summary, the results of word counts show that in the English corpora, all semantically shame-related items under investigation appear with considerably less frequency when compared with the expressions of guilt. However, in the Chinese corpora, the quantitative evidence shows that, in contrast to guilt, the expressions of shame are more often used. Basically, the number of

appearances of shame-related expressions in the Chinese corpora are double the number in the English corpora, while the number of guilt-related expressions in the English corpora are double the number in the Chinese corpora. These results not only confirm that the Chinese culture is a more shame-based culture, while cultures with English as their main language are more guilt-based, but it also indicates that the Mandarin speakers have a richer perception of the feeling of shame and are thus more frequently exposed to shame experiences.

#### ***4.2.2. Results and Discussion of Concordance Analysis***

Ho, Fu and Ng (2004) provide more than 100 Chinese expressions for shame and argue that the feeling of shame is more profound and frequently experienced in China than it is in Western countries. Given this situation, a close scrutiny of the concordances suggests that the different expressions of shame may have a different tone, as well as a different level of semantic connotation in Chinese. The results in the preceding section mainly focus on the feeling of shame by first construing shame and its intensity through different shame expressions, especially in Chinese shame expressions, then investigating potential causes and outcomes of shame and, finally, the morality issue of shame. This qualitative analysis of the relevant concordances answers the first research question and provides a deeper understanding of what shame is in Western and Chinese contexts. Selected samples of shame-related concordances are listed in Tables 4.9 and 4.10 for further analysis and discussion.

#### *4.2.2.1. Construing shame*

Previous research argues that shame is felt due to ones' transgressions of the self, and the perception of one's self-image is bad and defect (Tangey, 1998; Wharton, 1990). This is also consistent with the result of the corpus analysis, which shows that the feeling of shame is often generated by one's degraded self-image with "one's true self" alienated (see item E9, Table 4.9). Results show that there are some universal recognitions of the feeling of shame. One's transgression of the self with negative evaluation, especially under public exposure, may lead to the feeling of shame. As a result, a summary analysis of the concordances also shows that the degraded self-image generally comes from an inferior situation with negative evaluation and public exposure. Additionally, the feeling of shame can also be shared.

Table 4.9. Samples of concordance analysis selected from English Corpus

Concordance with shame expressions from English corpus	
E1	committed adultery once was publicly <b>shamed</b> ; on the second
E2	For some people, a sense of <b>shame</b> clings to the buying of cast-offs.
E3	But Shelley was unable to get rid of the sense of <b>shame</b> , of being exposed and cheated
E4	home in secret, so that her pregnancy would not bring <b>shame</b> on her family.
E5	Deceit only brings <b>shame</b> .
E6	women are ashamed of it, and <b>shame</b> makes them deceitful
E7	For Westerners the sense of <b>shame</b> and embarrassment has become strongly associated with nakedness and the proprieties of dress and attitudes towards nudity (especially among conventional Protestants).
E8	A deep and brooding sense of <b>shame</b> and failure led him to turn in upon himself, withdraw from both his wife and his son, and ultimately during 1920 and 1921 to engage in nightly excursions, disappearances designated by Sartre as 'attempted suicides'.
E9	There is an inner sense of <b>shame</b> that results in a feeling of alienation from one's own true self and from others.
E10	Christian felt a slight flush of <b>shame</b> at his own vanity, and hid behind his napkin.
E11	sat down in a small chair nearby. To his <b>shame</b> he burst into tears and sobbed
E12	Noreen bowed her head blushing in <b>shame</b> and was about to walk off .....
E13	It is a great <b>shame</b> , therefore, that the programme goes out in the afternoon, just the time when the most kitchen-shy of either sex are generally out at work.
E14	I say you fans at Lord's can <b>shame</b> the TCCB into a re-think.
E15	principles may have the beneficial effect of <b>shaming</b> it into action.
E16	only hopes that the Russian authorities will be <b>shamed</b> into improving conditions for them in their homeland.
E17	which resulted in the intense sense of <b>shame</b> that the patient attempts to assuage by losing weight.
E18	ROS is <b>shamed into</b> fury

Table 4.10. Samples of concordance analysis selected from Chinese Corpus

Concordance with shame and related expressions from Chinese corpus	
C1	负责面谈的官员用不堪入耳的言词 <u>羞辱(xiuru)</u> 大陆配偶 The official who in charge of the interview uses offensive words to humiliate the spouses from mainland
C2	他认为小赵当众给他 <u>难堪(nankan)</u> ,使他掉了身价。俩人斗嘴了, He thinks that Xiaozhao bringing shame to him publicly and this has a bad impact on his social status. Thus, they start arguing,
C3	插进了我的胸罩里。我一时 <u>羞辱(xiuru)</u> 难当,猛地推开那双脏手说 Put his hand into my bra, the feeling of shame flooding to me for the moment, I push that dirty hands and said
C4	至于他会不会怕这次羞耻的私奔使他在部队里 <u>丢面子(diū miàn zi)</u> ,便把行为检点一下,那我就无法判断了,因为我无从知道他这一次 As for if he will afraid the face losing impact of his shameful elopement in the army, and then to behave well. I won't be able to judge, because I don't know if this time he
C5	不小心做了一件错事,被 <u>羞辱(xiuru)</u> 压的抬不起头来; Accidentally did a wrong thing, he is too shameful and thus almost bury his head into the floor
C6	偷家里的东西。”他自觉 <u>难堪(nankan)</u> 一笑,笑得很苦。 Steal from home. "He felt a little bit shame himself, he smiled, but bitterly.
C7	司马迁认为受腐刑是一件很 <u>丢脸(diū liǎn)</u> 的事,他几乎想自杀。 Sima Qian thought the punishment of castration is a very shameful thing, he almost want to commit suicide.

<i>Table 4.10 continued</i>	
C8	<p>受到传统文化的影响,许多男人会认为受“家暴”是很丢脸(diulian)的事情,往往不太愿意到处声张,更不可能打电话求助;</p> <p>With the impact of traditional culture, many men may see domestic violence as something that really losing their face. Thus they may not willing to tell others, let alone make a phone call for help</p>
C9	<p>很多人忌讳自己心理上有病,认为这是难为情(nanweiqing),羞(xiu)于启齿的</p> <p>Many people see their mental sickness as taboo and think this something too shameful to speak about</p>
C10	<p>羞(xiu)于见母,故而悄然离家。</p> <p>He is so shameful to see his mother. Therefore, he left his home quietly.</p>
C11	<p>碍于(不能丢)面子(mianzi),他当然不便投书报社询问</p> <p>In order to avoid losing face, he will not write to the newspaper agency for inquiry.</p>
C12	<p>羞(xiu)得连抬头看我一眼也不敢</p> <p>So shameful that even not dare to raise her head to look at me</p>
C13	<p>希望刚即位的顷襄王能变法强国,洗雪楚国的奇耻(chi)大辱!</p> <p>People hope that after the accession of the throne, Qingxiang Duke could clear the shame disgrace experience that Chu State has been suffering through is reform.</p>
C14	<p>山东济南各界三万多人召开国耻(chi)纪念大会,要求收回青岛</p> <p>There are more than 30 thousand people participating the national shame memorial meeting in Jinan, Shandong Province, for the aim of taking back city of Qindiao.</p>
C15	<p>有人感叹中国人不争气,丢(diu)了自己的面子(mianzi).有人主张通过各种途径跟租界当局疏通,哪怕花点儿钱,也要把这脸</p> <p>Someone exclaim that Chinese people are not able to make a good showing, and then lost their own face. Someone proposed to talk to the concession authorities through various channels, even spend some money, also want to take this face back</p>

<i>Table 4.10 continued</i>	
C16	<p>苏小姐嫌鸿渐太<u>没面子(meimianzi)</u>。心痒痒地要为他挽回体面。</p> <p>Miss Su consider that Hong Jiang would losing their face, she intent to do something to save his face and make sure he is decent.</p>
C17	<p>我承认这样痴心是一件<u>丢脸(diulian)</u>的事，可是我没有力量把它补救过来呀。</p> <p>I admit that my infatuation is a disgrace, but I don't know how to remedy it.</p>
C18	<p>作为第一个中国血统的人进入太空，没能做成实验，实在是给中国人<u>丢脸(diu lian)</u>。所以我下决心一定要赶快修好它，为中国人争一口气。</p> <p>As the first Chinese descent into space, the experiment failed to make it, it is to the Chinese lose face. So I decided to must fix it quickly, win honor for the Chinese.</p>
C19	<p>联赛中列倒数第三已经降为乙级队，这次胜利使它多少<u>挽回(wanhui)</u>了一些<u>面子(mianzi)</u>。</p> <p>Ranking at the third from bottom in the league and thus relegated into the second division, this victory at least helps to save some face.</p>
C20	<p>郑海霞：第一场打得不好，后面两场<u>挽回(wanhui)</u>了<u>面子(mianzi)</u></p> <p>Zheng Haixia: the first race is not good, the last two races save the face for the first one.</p>
C21	<p>不到一年，我就成了公司里的台柱子，我不仅为赵总<u>争回面子(zhenghui mianzi)</u>。也给自己积蓄下了一笔可观的财产。</p> <p>In less than one year, I became backbone in the company. I not only fight the face back for Director Zhao, but also save myself a substantial property.</p>
C22	<p>评论为我购过的、最值得,又最漂亮的衣服,很给阿尔巴尼亚<u>挣(zheng)</u>了些<u>面子(mianzi)</u></p> <p>Commented as the most beautiful and worthwhile clothes I have bought, earning face for Albania</p>
C23	<p>塔椰市市长拉到自己一边,争取获得两市市民的支持.拉米罗获悉后<u>恼羞成怒(naoxiuchengnu)</u>策划暗杀市长.市长遇刺受伤住院.消息传开,...</p> <p>He pulled the Mayor of Tabang city to his side for obtaining the public supports from the two cities. When Ramiro learned this, he shamed into furious and planed to assassinate the mayor. The mayor got assassinated and words spread...</p>



<i>Table 4.10 continued</i>	
C24	<p>当司机拒付时，竟强行搜司机的腰包，甚至<u>恼羞成怒(naoxiuchengnu)</u>，殴打司机。</p> <p>When the driver refuses, he forced to search the driver's pocket, then shamed into anger and beat the driver finally</p>
C25	<p>让他干装卸工吧，他嫌太累；让他摆摊做生意吧，他又觉得<u>丢面子(diumianzi)</u>……如果不转变观念，把工作分成三六九等</p> <p>If let him be the stevedores, he complains that would be too tired; if let him set a stall for small business, he complains that would lose his face .....if he still have such stereotype of categorizing one's job hierarchically</p>
C26	<p>不屑进这家店购物，因为拎着阿尔迪的购物袋在大街上行走是件让人<u>丢面子(diumianzi)</u>的事</p> <p>They disdained to go shopping in this store since walking on the street with Hardy's shopping bags would be something losing their face</p>
C27	<p>华本想从东安市场买些洋点心招待客人，可她母亲却说不能给中国人<u>丢脸(diulian)</u>，特地叫当差的到外面订了一笼笼藤萝饼、玫瑰花饼、萝卜丝饼等纯粹</p> <p>Hua was indented to buy some western desserts to treat the guest. However, his mother said they could not lose their face and told him to order some Chinese delicacies</p>
C28	<p>告诉你罢，他请客的馆子准阔得很，我衣服都没有，去了<u>丢脸(diulian)</u>。”鸿渐道：“我不知道你那么虚荣！那件花绸的旗袍还可以穿。”</p> <p>Here is the fact, he would entertain his guests in very high end restaurant. I have even no decent clothes to wear. I will lose my face there.” Hongjian said: “I didn't know that you are that peacockish. You could wear that brocade cheongsam.”</p>
C29	<p>但她因此受到多数亲友和村民的排斥。父亲指责她使家人蒙<u>羞(xiu)</u>。</p> <p>But she was rejected by most of her relatives and villagers. Thus, her farther blames that she brings shame to the whole family.</p>

*Negative evaluation:* the feeling of shame is perceived when one is negatively evaluated through one's actions, or conditions, or in certain situations.

According to the analyzed concordances, although shame often comes from the negative evaluation of one's self, the source of the negative evaluation differs between the English and the Chinese concordances. In the English concordance, the results show that this negative evaluation of the self is more likely to come from one's own evaluations, rather than from the judgment of others. That is, although a person may be in a public situation, or surrounded by other people, the question of one's self often comes from the individual, rather than from the surrounding others. For instance, "a deep and boring sense of shame" (see E8, Table 4.9) and "an inner sense of shame" (see E9, Table 4.9) both suggest a more self-focused criticism.

However, in the Chinese concordance, the source of negative evaluation often comes from others' comments. A typical example of this is seen in item C6 in Table 4.10, where the words of others, "... steal from home", represent an attitude of disapproval that leads to one's feeling of shame. Likewise, in item C1, the inferred shame situation experienced by "spouses from mainland" is due to the negative evaluations with "offensive words" from the official who in charge of the interview. Also, as in item C2, it is other people's behavior (in the concordance, it is Xiaozhao) that brings the shame experience on him. Actually, there is more evidence for shame through other's negative evaluation in the Chinese concordance, e.g., C3, C4, C15.

*Public exposure*: the feeling of shame is perceived when one feels the self is observed, or that one's behavior (that could represent the self) is under public exposure to others' attention.

The results of the English concordance show that the feeling of shame is mostly perceived through public exposure in the Western context. For example, in E1 and E3 (see Table 4.9), the words “publicly” and “exposed” appear in the concordance. Similarly, in concordances such as E7, E10, E11, E14, and E16, the situations described are of individuals surrounded by others and under public attention.

However, public exposure is not the only necessary condition for the arousal of the feeling of shame in the analyzed Chinese corpora. Although there are many shame related incidents found with public exposure, such as C2, C15, C18 (see Table 4.10), shame incidents which happen in relatively private settings are also found. For example, the situations in which shame is experienced in C8 and C9 are actually private, i.e., “domestic violence” in C8, and having “mental illness” in C9, each more often occur in relatively private settings. Moreover, people may feel shame even when it is possible a certain action or situation may be exposed, but is, in fact, yet to be exposed. That is, face already lost and the possibility of losing face could both be considered to cause the feeling of shame. For instance, items C15 and C16 represent the conditions that the feeling of shame is already experienced following certain shame-related incidents, while items C26, C27, and C28 represent the condition that the shame feeling is anticipated in the possible up-coming situation if no remediation is made.

*Shared shame*: the shame experience or feeling of one person will spread to the group, particularly in the Chinese context.

The perception of shame may also differ between cultures. The central issue of the Western shame concept and the Chinese shame concept lies in the different perception of one's identity in the shame experience (Bedford, 2004). For Western shame, the perception of shame feeling is a self-concept, which means Western people perceive shame as a very self focused emotion. However, Chinese shame is more complex. Along with the idea of shame as one's self concept, a large proportion of the identity of shame for Chinese people also depends on their relationship with other people (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). That is, Chinese people will perceive the feeling of shame through self-attack as do their Western counterparts, however, the sense of connectedness with others among Chinese people also increases the range of shame perception and the frequency of shame experiences. That is, when one feels shame, this feeling may also spread to the other members in the social group that the individual belongs to. For example, in item C16 in Table 4.10, Miss Su feels Hongjian's behavior would bring the shame experience to both of them in that situation. Additionally, in C29 (see Table 4.10) that the shame of one's social rejection from relatives and villagers shared by the whole family.

#### *4.2.2.2. Intensity of shame expressions*

Despite the fact that shame experiences occur through the transgression of self with a negative evaluation mostly under public exposure in both English and Chinese, the perception of shame is sometimes very much dependent on culture, since different cultures may define situations into shame categories

differently. Even different social groups within the same culture may perceive shame differently. In English, there are fewer, and relatively similar expressions, for the shame emotion, such as shame, shameful, and ashamed. Sometimes humiliation and related words are also considered as shame-related expressions. As a result, the intensity of shame expressions in English is relatively difficult to distinguish through their relatively limited expressions. While researchers suggest there are more than 100 expressions for shame in Chinese (Ho, Fu & Ng, 2004; Li, Wang & Fischer, 2004), the description of Chinese shame expressions is more precise in terms of intensity compared with English shame expressions. Here, high intensity indicates the expressions with strong feelings of shame, while low intensity indicates those mild feelings of shame. With a main focus of investigating the impact of shame on status consumption within Chinese context in this study, hence, we focus only on the Chinese shame-related expressions in the analysis and discussion of shame with different intensity.

The expressions, *xiu chi* (羞耻, *shame/disgrace*), *chi* (耻, *disgrace*) and *xiu ru* (羞辱, *shame/humiliation*), describe the feeling of shame with high intensity. These use of these expressions is often caused by negative evaluations, accompanied by highly offensive language or insulting behavior, often from people with high social positions (e.g., C1 in Table 10); or, one's position is seriously degraded by such shame related incidents. Moreover, these expressions often occur in a country-related context (e.g., C 13, C14 in Table 10), or in individual experiences which are highly sensitive, or in intense sexually-related incidents seen as moral transgressions (e.g., C3, C5 in Table 10). In the results of the concordance analysis, the highly intensive shame

expressions are more likely to be found in situations where a group shares the shame incident, or an individual experiences intense shame-related issues.

For example, in entries C1, C13, and C14 in Table 4.10, the incident is relevant to one's country or a group of "spouses from mainland", and the highly intensive shame expressions *xiu chi* (羞耻, *shame/disgrace*), or *chi* (耻, *disgrace*) are used. Meanwhile, highly intensive shame expressions related to individual experience are used only when the incident is of great severity. This may be because those shame-related expressions are too strong to use on one person, unless one is confronted with extreme shame experiences. Examples of this are items C3 and C5, which represent extreme incidents where the individual either damages or transgresses his/her self. Possible responses for such a highly intense shame feeling would be both restorative or withdrawal tendencies, depending on the context. Generally, restorative tendencies tend to happen when one has adequate resources (sufficient time or ability) to rebuild the damaged image (e.g., C13 in Table 10).

Moreover, the shame term *xiu ru* (羞辱, *shame/humiliation*), although similar to *xiu chi* (羞耻, *shame/disgrace*), is considered to express a stronger feeling of shame. Here, *xiu chi* (羞耻, *shame/disgrace*) is more focused on the shame emotion experienced by one's self, while *xiu ru* (羞辱, *shame/humiliation*) is more focused on the other, i.e., the person who brings about the disgrace. That is, for *xiu ru* (羞辱, *shame/humiliation*), the pressure often comes from other people. An example is seen in items C1 and C3, where it is the official who utters the offensive words, and it is the person who committed the sexual harassment that causes the shame incident. Sometimes, the shame-related

expression *xiu ru* (羞辱, *shame/humiliation*), focuses more on the action of humiliation, rather than the outcome of the feeling of shame.

Compared with shame expressions with high intensity, results also show that shame expressions with mild intensity are more frequently used. Expressions such as *diu lian* (丢脸, losing face), *mei(diu) mian zi* (没(丢)面子, losing face), and *nan kan* (难堪, ashamed or embarrassed, depending on context), are expressions which describe mild shame feelings. For 丢脸(*diulian*) and 没(丢)面子(*mei(diu)mianzi*), they can be literally translated as ‘losing face’ or ‘lost face’. In the analysis, although *lian* (脸, face) and *mian* (面, face), both refer to *face* in English, their actual connotation is different. The former emphasizes one’s self-respect and dignity, while the latter focuses on social status and privilege that is valued by others. An example of this is the shame experience seen in C7 and C17, where *diu lian* (丢脸, losing face) is more self-respect-related, while in C16 and C25, *mei(diu) mian zi* (没(丢)面子, losing face) are more related to social status and privilege.

Generally, *diu lian* (丢脸, losing face), *mei(diu) mian zi* (没(丢)面子, losing face) and *nan kan* (难堪, ashamed or embarrassed, depending on context) are seen as expressing a slight feeling of shame. However, at times the tone of these expressions may differ in different contexts and *nan kan* (难堪, ashamed or embarrassed, depending on context) may express a much stronger feeling than *diu lian* (丢脸, losing face) or *mei(diu) mian zi* (没(丢)面子, losing face). For example, in C6, the expression *nan kan* (难堪, ashamed or embarrassed

depending on context) in this context is much stronger than the mild shame feeling it is generally used to express.

#### *4.2.2.3. Causes and Responses of shame*

The analysis shows the shame related expressions with potential situations for the causes of shame, which answers research question 1a, and possible responses to shame, which answers research questions 1b, 1c, 1d, and 1e (refer to Table 1.1). In this section, we categorize shame according to its causes and responses with detailed concordances shown in Table 4.11 for English, and in Table 4.12 for Chinese. The causes of shame are often related to transgression of one's self via negative evaluation mostly under public exposure, and the responses to the shame feeling are often withdrawal behaviors, restorative behaviors, and externalizing behaviors for both English and Chinese language speakers.

##### *4.2.2.3.1. Causes of shame*

The core cause of the shame feeling, revealed in both the English and Chinese corpora, is a transgression of one's self, with the perception of self-image damaged either by other people or by oneself. This particular core cause is demonstrated in different ways, such as negative evaluation or degradation of status under certain public exposure, discussed in detail above. In terms of negative evaluation, the analysis of the English corpora suggests the feeling of shame often comes from one's own questioning of the self through public exposure, with a perception of a defected and damaged self-image (see Table 4.11). While the analysis of the Chinese corpora show negative evaluations come both from one's self-criticism and other's questions of the self.



Table 4.11. Concordance with causes and outcomes of shame English Corpus

<b>Potential Causes of Shame</b>	
E1	committed adultery once was publicly <b>shamed</b> ; on N13 14 the second
E2	For some people, a sense of <b>shame</b> clings to the buying of cast-offs.
E3	But Shelley was unable to get rid of the sense of <b>shame</b> , of being exposed and cheated
E4	home in secret, so that her pregnancy would not bring <b>shame</b> on her family.
E5	Deceit only brings <b>shame</b> .
E6	women are ashamed of it, and <b>shame</b> J65 44 makes them deceitful
E7	For Westerners the sense of <b>shame</b> and embarrassment has become strongly associated with nakedness and the proprieties of dress and attitudes towards nudity (especially among conventional Protestants).
<b>Shame Outcomes of Restorative Tendencies</b>	
E14	I say you fans at Lord's can <b>shame</b> the TCCB into a re-think.
E15	principles may have the beneficial effect of <b>shaming</b> it into action.
E16	only hopes that the Russian authorities will be <b>shamed</b> into improving conditions for them in their homeland.
E17	which resulted in the intense sense of <b>shame</b> that the patient attempts to assuage by losing weight.
<b>Shame Outcomes of Withdrawal Tendencies</b>	
E8	A deep and brooding sense of <b>shame</b> and failure led him to turn in upon himself, withdraw from both his wife and his son, and ultimately during 1920 and 1921 to engage in nightly excursions, disappearances designated by Sartre as 'attempted suicides'.
E9	There is an inner sense of <b>shame</b> that results in a feeling of alienation from one's own true self and from others.
E10	Christian felt a slight flush of <b>shame</b> at his own vanity, and hid behind his napkin.
E11	sat down in a small chair nearby. To his <b>shame</b> he burst K09 47 into tears and sobbed
E12	Noreen bowed her head blushing in <b>shame</b> and was about to walk off .....
E13	It is a great <b>shame</b> , therefore, that the programme goes out in the afternoon, just the time when the most kitchen-shy of either sex are generally out at work.
<b>Shame Outcomes of Externalized Tendencies</b>	
E18	ROS is <b>shamed into</b> fury

Table 4.12. Concordance with causes and responses of shame Chinese Corpus

<b>Potential Causes of Shame</b>	
C1	负责面谈的官员用不堪入耳的言词 <b>羞辱(xiuru)</b> 大陆配偶 The official who in charge of the Interview uses offensive words to humiliate the spouses from mainland
C2	他认为小赵当众给他 <b>难堪(nankan)</b> ,使他掉了身价。俩人斗嘴了, He thinks that Xiaozhao bringing shame to him publicly and this has a bad impact on his social status. Thus, they start arguing,
C3	插进了我的胸罩里。我一时 <b>羞辱(xiuru)</b> 难当,猛地推开那双脏手说 Put his hand into my bra, the feeling of shame flooding to me for the moment, I push that dirty hands and said
C4	至于他会不会怕这次羞耻的私奔使他在部队里 <b>丢面子(diu mian zi)</b> ,便把行为检点一下,那我就无法判断了,因为我无从知道这一次 As for if he will afraid the face losing impact of his shameful elopement in the army, and then to behave well. I won't be able to judge, because I don't know if this time he
C5	不小心做了一件错事,被 <b>羞辱(xiuru)</b> 压的抬不起头来; Accidentally did a wrong thing, he is too shameful and thus almost bury his head into the floor
C6	偷家里的东西。”他自觉 <b>难堪(nankan)</b> 一笑,笑得很苦。 Steal from home. "He felt a little bit shame himself, he smiled, but bitterly.
C7	司马迁认为受腐刑是一件很 <b>丢脸(diulian)</b> 的事,他几乎想自杀。 Sima Qian thought the punishment of castration is a very shameful thing, he almost want to commit suicide.
C29	但她因此受到多数亲友和村民的排斥。父亲指责她使家人蒙 <b>羞(xiu)</b> 。 But she was rejected by most of her relatives and villagers. Thus, her farther blames that she brings shame to the whole family.
<b>Shame Outcomes with Restorative Tendencies</b>	
C13	希望刚即位的顷襄王能变法强国,洗雪楚国的奇 <b>耻(chi)</b> 大辱! People hope that after the accession of the throne, Qingxiang Duke could clear the shame disgrace experience that Chu State has been suffering through is reform.

<i>Table 4.12 continued</i>	
C14	<p>山东济南各界三万多人召开国耻(chi)纪念大会，要求收回青岛</p> <p>There are more than 30 thousand people participating the national shame memorial meeting in Jinan, Shandong Province, for the aim of taking back city of Qindiao.</p>
C15	<p>有人感叹中国人不争气，丢(diu)了自己的面子(mianzi)。有人主张通过各种途径跟租界当局疏通，哪怕花点儿钱，也要把这脸</p> <p>Someone exclaim that Chinese people are not able to make a good showing, and then lost their own face. Someone proposed to talk to the concession authorities through various channels, even spend some money, also want to take this face back</p>
C16	<p>苏小姐嫌鸿渐太没面子(meimianzi)。心痒痒地要为他挽回体面。</p> <p>Miss Su consider that Hong Jiang would losing their face, she intent to do something to save his face and make sure he is decent.</p>
C17	<p>我承认这样痴心是一件丢脸(diulian)的事，可是我没有力量把它补救过来呀。</p> <p>I admit that my infatuation is a disgrace, but I don't know how to remedy it.</p>
C18	<p>作为第一个中国血统的人进入太空，没能做成实验，实在是给中国人丢脸(diu lian)。所以我下决心一定要赶快修好它，为中国人争一口气。</p> <p>As the first Chinese descent into space, the experiment failed to make it, it is to the Chinese lose face. So I decided to must fix it quickly, win honor for the Chinese.</p>
C19	<p>联赛中列倒数第三已经降为乙级队，这次胜利使它多少挽回(wanhui)了一些面子(mianzi)。</p> <p>Ranking at the third from bottom in the league and thus relegated into the second division, this victory at least helps to save some face.</p>
C20	<p>郑海霞：第一场打得不好，后面两场挽回(wanhui)了面子(mianzi)</p> <p>Zheng Haixia: the first race is not good, the last two races save the face for the first one.</p>
C21	<p>不到一年，我就成了公司里的台柱子，我不仅为赵总争回面子(zhenghui mianzi)。也给自己积蓄下了一笔可观的财产。</p> <p>In less than one year, I became backbone in the company. I not only fight the face back for Director Zhao, but also save myself a substantial property.</p>
C22	<p>评论为我购过的、最值得,又最漂亮的衣服,很给阿尔巴尼亚挣了些面子(mianzi)</p> <p>Commented as the most beautiful and worthwhile clothes I have bought, earning face for Albania</p>

<i>Table 4.12 continued</i>	
C27	<p>华本想从东安市场买些洋点心招待客人，可她母亲却说不能给中国人<u>丢脸(Diulian)</u>，特地叫当差的到外面订了一笼笼藤萝饼、玫瑰花饼、萝卜丝饼等纯粹</p> <p>Hua was indented to buy some western desserts to treat the guest. However, his mother said they could not lose their face and told him to order some Chinese delicacies</p>
C28	<p>告诉你罢，他请客的馆子准阔得很，我衣服都没有，去了<u>丢脸(diulian)</u>。”鸿渐道：“我不知道你那么虚荣！那件花绸的旗袍还可以穿。”</p> <p>Here is the fact, he would entertain his guests in very high end restaurant. I have even no decent clothes to wear. I will lose my face there.” Hongjian said: “I didn’t know that you are that peacockish. You could wear that brocade cheongsam.”</p>
<b>Shame Outcomes of Withdrawal Tendencies</b>	
C8	<p>受到传统文化的影响,许多男人会认为受“家暴”是很<u>丢脸(diulian)</u>的事情,往往不太愿意到处声张,更不可能打电话求助;</p> <p>With the impact of traditional culture, many men may see domestic violence as something that really losing their face. Thus they may not willing to tell others, let alone make a phone call for help</p>
C9	<p>很多人忌讳自己心理上有病，认为这是<u>难为情(nanweiqing)</u>，<u>羞(xiu)</u>于启齿的</p> <p>Many people see their mental sickness as taboo and think this something too shameful to speak about</p>
C10	<p><u>羞(xiu)</u>于见母，故而悄然离家。</p> <p>He is so shameful to see his mother. Therefore, he left his home quietly.</p>
C7	<p>司马迁认为受腐刑是一件很<u>丢脸(diulian)</u>的事，他几乎想自杀。</p> <p>Sima Qian thought the punishment of castration is a very shameful thing, he almost want to commit suicide.</p>
C11	<p><u>碍于(不能丢)面子</u>，他当然不便投书报社询问</p> <p>In order to avoid losing face, he will not write to the newspaper agency for inquiry.</p>
C12	<p><u>羞(xiu)</u>得连抬头看我一眼也不敢</p> <p>So shameful that even not dare to raise her head to look at me</p>
<b>Shame responses with externalized tendencies</b>	
C2	<p>他认为小赵当众给他<u>难堪(nankan)</u>,使他掉了身价。俩人斗嘴了，</p> <p>He thinks that Xiaozhao bringing shame to him publicly and this has a bad impact on his social status. Thus, they start arguing,</p>

<i>Table 4.12 continued</i>	
C23	<p>塔榔市市长拉到自己一边,争取获得两市市民的支持.拉米罗获悉后恼羞(xiu)成怒策划暗杀市长.市长遇刺受伤住院.消息传开,..</p> <p>He pulled the Mayor of Tabang city to his side for obtaining the public supports from the two cities. When Ramiro learned this, he shamed into furious and planed to assassinate the mayor. The mayor got assassinated and words spread...</p>
C24	<p>当司机拒付时,竟强行搜司机的腰包,甚至恼羞(xiu)成怒,殴打司机。</p> <p>When the driver refuses, he forced to search the driver's pocket, then shamed into anger and beat the driver finally</p>

A typical example of negative evaluations from one's self-criticism and other's criticism in Chinese corpora is seen in C6 and C2 (see Table 4.12), where both use the same term, *nan kan* (难堪, ashamed or embarrassed depending on context). In C6, the negative evaluation is more likely related to a negative evaluation by the person himself, while in C2, the shame feeling is obviously caused by criticism from other people (*xiao zhao* in the concordance).

Moreover, where public exposure is the cause of the shame feeling, results suggest that shame expressions are more likely to be used under public attention by English speakers (e.g., E1, E3). Meanwhile, for the Chinese speakers, both public (e.g., C1, C2, C4) and private settings (e.g., C3, C8, C9) may breed the negative emotion of shame. That is, shame may occur in a setting with public exposure, whereby most people notice their self-image. However, some shame experiences are also found under the private situations, which may damage one's self-image and lead to relegation.

#### 4.2.2.3.2. Responses to shame

Previous shame related literature (e.g., Tangney, et al., 1992; Tangney, et al., 1996) categorize two major outcomes of shame with responses and actions of withdrawal tendencies, e.g., hiding or escaping, and externalizing tendencies e.g., anger, irritation, and even violence. However, some shame researchers within the Eastern context find that, in addition to these two possible responses, shame may also lead to an alternative response of restorative tendencies with adjustive behaviors, as well as actions of self-enhancement (Gausel, et al., 2012; Sheikh, 2014). Moreover, although Tangney and her colleagues suggest that the major responses of shame are behaviors with withdrawal and

externalizing tendencies in most of their previous studies, a recent study by Tangney, et al. (2014) finds that shame also leads to restorative tendencies, even within the Western context.

In line with the recent finding of shame with its alternative response of restorative tendency, the results of concordance analysis clearly confirm that this restorative tendency as a shame response is found in both English and Chinese corpora. The analyzed concordances are selected from corpora materials as seen in Table 4.9 for English, and Table 4.10 for Chinese. Further, these corpora are categorized into concordances of shame causes and responses with different behavioral tendencies in Tables 4.11 and 4.12.

Here, more detailed reactions to shame with restorative tendencies, withdrawal tendencies, and externalizing tendencies are found. That is, responses with restorative tendencies, such as rethinking, improving conditions, or reforming in order to erase the humiliation or disgrace (e.g., E14, E16, C13), are found in the analyzed concordance. More concordances related to shame responses with restorative tendencies are shown in *shame outcomes with restorative tendencies* in Table 4.11 for the English corpora, and Table 4.12 for the Chinese corpora. Results also show behavioral tendencies with withdrawal intentions and externalizing behaviors like hiding, escaping, becoming angry and/or violent (e.g., E10, E18, C2, C12). In addition, in some cases, people may choose to lie and show physical reactions such as blushing, crying, and/or smiling bitterly when they feel ashamed (e.g., E11, E12, C6).

#### 4.2.2.3.3. Discussion of causes of, and responses to, shame

The analysis of the English corpora shows that Western shame often occurs within a public setting. Besides negative evaluation and relegation that attack the self, most other shame experiences are sexually-related. For example, the concordance result in entry E4, Table 4.11, reveal that pregnancy may also lead to the feeling of shame, which supports the cause of shame with a sexually-related experience. Additionally, one's nakedness (see entry 7E, Table 4.11) may lead to the feeling of shame since nudity is also sexually-related and it may, to some extent, not only expose one's body, but the self as well. However, when such an incident happens secretly, rather than in public, it seldom leads to shame.

Results found that there are many concordances relating to restorative tendencies as shame responses found in the analyzed English corpora. For instance, restorative reactions, such as rethinking, and attempts at self-enhancement, are found in the analyzed English concordances, seen in *shame outcomes of restorative tendencies* in Table 4.11. That is, instead of directly withdrawing from the current shame situation by escaping or hiding, a possible behavior is to take restorative action for further avoidance of shame. In the entry E17, “*which resulted in the intense sense of shame that the patient attempts to assuage by losing weight*”, instead of escaping from the situation in which they may feel shame, the restorative action of losing weight is undertaken.

Meanwhile, our results also confirm the withdrawal tendencies as the major responses to the shame feeling. In line with existing studies (e.g., Gruenewald,



et al., 2004; Tangney, et al., 1996), results of the analyzed English concordances show that the main responses to shame are withdrawing, disappearing, and hiding behind the napkin (see *shame outcomes with withdrawal tendencies* in Table 4.11). However, different to suggestions made in previous research (Tangney, et al., 1992; Tangney, et al., 1996) which suggest that externalizing tendencies through anger, or even violence, are a common reaction to the shame feeling, our results find relatively few concordances for externalizing tendencies as a shame response in the English corpora (see E18, with fury as shame response).

In Chinese culture shame is considered to be a more common feeling and there are more reasons and situations for people to feel shame. Instead of the shame feeling in Western culture, which is more self-concentrated, people from a Chinese cultural background may feel shame more widely, i.e., the shame feeling may be country-concentrated (C13, C14 and C18), family-concentrated (C16 and C29), or self-concentrated (e.g., C2, C5 and C12).

Moreover, in the Chinese concordance analysis, we find all three behavioral tendencies as shame responses. Results of shame response with restorative tendency are profound. It demonstrates that shame response leads to restorative action for repairing the damaged self (C13, C14 and C15), as well as for avoiding further, or future, feelings of shame (C27 and C28). Compared with shame response of restorative tendencies found in the English corpora, more linguistic evidence is found in the Chinese corpora. Large numbers of concordances in *shame outcome of restorative tendencies* in Table 4.12 reveal that shame may result in restorative behavior by trying to repair for a better image and taking prosocial action in the situation. Consequently, the emotion

of shame subtly shapes people's behavior by making them behave in a way that will allow them to avoid painful experiences.

Results show that the feeling of shame could be redeemed by further behavior, and the shame experience may be erased through certain actions (see C13, C16, C18, C19 and C20, Table 4.12). Even though someone may lose face, the concordances show that the lost face could be saved by further action. The approaches to saving lost face are various and may range from spending money or having exquisite clothes, to further actions such as working hard or making some sort of reform (e.g., 'spend money' in C15; and 'purchase and possess beautiful and worthwhile clothes' in C22; 'reform' in C13; 'fix quickly' in C18). Furthermore, potential shame situations may also be avoided with pre-restorative behavior via consumption. For example, in C27, the original decision is to buy some Western desserts. But *his mother said they could not lose their face* since these Western desserts might not be exquisite enough. In this case, Hua changed and repaired his original decision by replacing the Western desserts with exquisite Chinese delicacies. In addition, C27 and C28 provide profound examples for restorative behavior in the consumption field, which is reacting to shame or potential shame by possessing or buying good quality and expensive items. This finding provides linguistic support for further investigation of the influence of shame on status consumption in Chapters 5 and 6.

Additionally, from the results of Chinese corpora, other outcomes of shame are found with withdrawal and externalizing tendencies. Table 4.12 illustrates shame response of withdrawal tendency of hiding, disappearing, and escaping (see *Shame outcomes of withdrawal tendencies*). One example of this is that

people see domestic violence (see C8) as an incident of shame, or of losing face, for the Chinese male. Thus, when experiencing this situation, they (especially males who suffer from domestic violence) hide the fact, rather than tell others or make a phone call for help. Linguistic evidence of also shows that shame leads to externalizing tendencies, such as anger and violence (see *Shame outcomes of externalizing tendencies*, Table 4.12). There is even a particular word, *nao xiu cheng nu* (恼羞成怒, shame into anger), used to express such a shame situation with externalizing behaviors.

#### 4.2.2.4. *Morality of shame*

The feeling of shame is often associated with one's transgressions of the self, and either moral or non-moral transgressions may lead to this negative feeling of shame (Ghorbani, et al., 2013). According to Smith et al. (2002), the feeling of shame through non-moral transgression is often related to one's incompetence and inferiority. However, to the author's best knowledge, no existing literature has related the morality issue of shame with *yi ru* (义辱, shame with transgressions in moral standards) and *shi ru* (势辱, shame with transgressions in capacity). As we have conceptualized the similarities between moral transgression and *yi ru* (义辱, shame with transgressions in moral standards), as well as non-moral transgression and *shi ru* (势辱, shame with transgressions in capacity), in section 2.2.3.1.2 in Chapter 2, results in this section provide linguistic examples with a substantial number of concordances found in the Chinese corpora.

In the analyzed corpora in this study, both moral and non-moral transgressions are found in shame related concordances. However, there are more

concordances with non-moral transgressions found in the Chinese corpora, while more with moral transgressions are found in the English corpora. Results in the analyzed Chinese concordances suggest that the feeling of shame could be associated with both moral transgressions (e.g., C3, C4, C5, C6), and non-moral transgressions (e.g., C1, C7-C9, C13-C22, C25-C28) (see Table 4.12). In shame with moral transgressions, elopement in C4, doing something wrong in C5, and the immoral behavior of stealing in C6, are all seen as *yi ru* (义辱, shame with transgressions in moral standards), which violates the moral standard and transgresses one's self. We also conclude C3 to be shame with moral transgressions since sexually-related incidents are often seen as moral issues.

However, more linguistic evidence of shame with non-moral transgressions are found in the analyzed Chinese concordances. These non-moral transgressions are often related to shame with one's incompetence and sense of inferiority, addressed as shame through *shi ru* (势辱, shame with transgressions in capacity) in Chinese. A very clear example is Sima Qian's being punished with *castration* in C7, which brings him a sense of being inferior to other normal males. A similar example would be having *mental sickness*, seen in C9. Here, being mentally ill is not related to morality, but may bring on oneself a sense of inferiority. Additionally, lack of power or sense of incapacity are also considered part of *shi ru* (势辱, shame with transgressions in capacity). A typical example is seen in C13 where a country's weakness, in the condition of being less powerful, is seen as a shameful condition that needs to be changed by reform. Furthermore, C15 shows Chinese people's inability of *making a good showing* may also lead to the feeling of shame. More detailed examples

for shame with non-moral transgressions, or *shi ru* (勢辱, shame with transgressions in capacity) are seen in Table 4.12.

However, the focus of the morality issue in shame is different between the Chinese and English corpora. Results suggest that most of the analyzed concordances in the English corpora are shame events associated with moral transgressions (see in E1 and E5), rather than of both moral and non-moral transgressions revealed in the Chinese corpora. For example, behaviors such as committing adultery and cheating for the purpose of deceit, are seen as immoral behaviors. Also, E4 and E7 relate to sex and nudity (pregnancy and nakedness in the original concordances). Actually, topics relating to sex and nudity are also seen as morally-related issues. As a result, these two entries are also included in the shame events with moral transgression. Only entry E2 in the English concordance is considered to be a purely non-moral transgression with the consumption behavior of buying cast-offs. Here, the behavior of buying cast-offs would be considered as shame through the use of *shi ru* (勢辱, shame with transgressions in capacity).

Results with examples of shame with non-moral transgressions from this section also provide linguistic evidence that non-moral transgressions, such as being inferior and lacking status or power, may lead to the feeling of shame. This also provides preconditions for responding to shame restoratively through self-improvement and enhancement for a better self-image. With an affirmational function of status products for protecting one's self and rebuilding a better image (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010), the emotion of shame

may be reduced and repaired through status consumption, this is discussed and examined empirically in Chapters 5 and 6.

### 4.3. Implications and Limitations

This study focuses on feelings of shame which range from a mild stage to an extreme condition by examining related expressions frequently used in written texts as well as in daily life. The connotations of a strong feeling of shame in Chinese culture is often context- and situation-related. Thus, besides extreme shame expressions like *xiu* (羞, *shame*), *chi* (耻, *disgrace*), and *xiuru* (羞辱, *humiliation/shame*), mild expressions often used by native speakers to express their feeling of shame, such as *nan kan* (难堪, *embarrassed/shame*), *diulian* (丢脸, *losing face*), and *mei(diu)mianzi* (没(丢)面子, *losing face*) are also applied in the concordance analysis process.

The results of the concordance analysis help to build a deeper understanding of shame. They also add several theoretical contributions to the previous shame literature. First, results confirm the withdrawal and externalizing tendencies as shame responses in both Western and Chinese shame situations, which is in line with the existing shame research (e.g., Greunewald, et al., 2004; Kemeny, et al., 2004; Tangney, et al., 1992; Tangney, et al., 1996; Tangney, et al., 2004). Actually, the most profound contribution of this study is that it provides linguistic evidence for restorative action as shame responses within both Chinese and English contexts. Contrary to expectations, our results find that there few English concordances relating to shame through blame, anger, or violence. Interestingly, we found more linguistic evidence for responses to shame by restorative tendencies in the English corpora, although this is not as

profound as in the Chinese Mandarin corpora. This contrasts with the Western literature on shame which suggests externalizing tendencies, rather than restorative tendencies, to be the second major outcome. Hence, this indicates that besides withdrawal as a major shame outcome, shame may also lead to individuals' restorative action in both English and Chinese contexts, while the responses of shame with restorative action are strengthened or weakened within different cultures. Another interesting outcome of shame is lying, which is seldom mentioned in the previous literature. A possible explanation for this is that the behavior of lying could be seen as a behavior of withdrawing or escaping from the truth, or as a potential restorative action with fake or temporary improvement of one's self-image, depending on the specific context.

One limitation concerns the equivalence of the expressions of shame between China and Western countries. Although the analyzed shame expressions for both corpora were carefully selected, equivalence is difficult to achieve given the different cultural backgrounds.

As shame responses with restorative tendencies are found in both Chinese and English corpora, one direction for further research concerns with the application of this restorative behavior in different areas. Our results find that examples of shame with non-moral transgressions and *shi ru* (势辱, shame with transgressions in capacity) are substantial, and individuals often respond restoratively through the possession or purchase of good quality and expensive products in the consumption field. Therefore, when applying shame with restorative tendencies in the consumption area within the Chinese context, the restorative behavior is status consumption. This restorative behavior of shame response in the consumption context may be other types of consumption (e.g.,

green consumption), instead of status consumption in other cultures. In the following studies reported in Chapters 5 and 6, we focus only on the shame response of restorative tendencies through status consumption within the Chinese context.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter answered the first research question by investigating shame using a linguistic corpus approach via word counts analysis and concordance analysis. More shame related expressions are found in the Chinese corpora. In Chinese there is a larger scope of shame expressions in terms of intensity, ranging from expressions for strong shame feelings to those for mild shame feelings. Further, linguistic evidence suggests that self-transgressions cause the emotion of shame with negative evaluation under public exposure. However, either moral or non-moral transgression of one's self may lead to the feeling of shame. We also found three potential behavioral tendencies as shame responses in both the Chinese and English corpora, restorative tendency, withdrawal tendency, and externalizing tendency. More importantly, a large amount of linguistic evidence supports restorative tendency as a common shame response, especially in the Chinese corpora where China emerges as a shame-affirming culture. This finding provides a good indication for further quantitative steps in Chapters 5 and 6 for testing potential influences of shame on status consumption. Interestingly, the restorative tendency is also found as a shame response in the English corpora, although the amount of related discourse is less profound than that found in the Chinese corpus.



## **Chapter 5: A Survey Approach to the Shame Response of Restorative Tendencies in Status Consumption**

### **Chapter Overview**

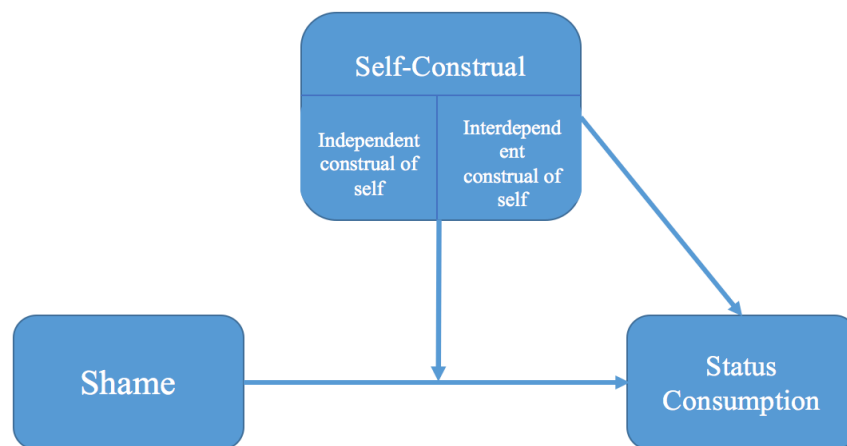
As we have identified the shame responses of restorative tendencies in the previous chapter via a linguistic approach, this chapter investigates the application of this restorative tendency in the consumption area through status consumption within the Chinese context. Here, we will answer research question 2 (see Table 1.1) by examining the impact of shame proneness on status consumption through the employment of a paper-based survey. Section 5.1 provides an overview of the conceptual framework and developments of the hypotheses. In sections 5.2 and 5.3, procedures of the method and analysis of results of the survey are demonstrated and discussed accordingly. In these sections, we not only report details of the design and procedure conducted for the empirical survey, but also discuss the roles of shame and self-construal, through independent and interdependent construal of self, on consumer intentions to purchase status products. Additionally, limitations and suggestions for further research are presented in the final section of this chapter.

### **5.1. Hypotheses Development**

This study links shame and status consumption and sees the behavior of purchasing status product as a restorative response. Further, the role of self-construal of both independent and interdependent construal of self on status consumption as well as its role as moderator is discussed in this section.

The model is shown in Figure 5.1. with the independent and interdependent construal of self in one box of self-construal, while they are discussed separately in section 5.2.2. and 5.2.3 for the fact of being two different dimensions.

Figure 5.1. Research model for survey approach



### ***5.1.1. Shame and Status Consumption***

The stimulation of an influence of shame on consumption is addressed as shame appeal which is “operationalized as a persuasive message that is designed to call attention to a failure (or anticipated failure) to adhere to a valued behavior or belief and *focuses the attention on the person who failed*” (Boudewyns, Turner & Paquin, 2013, p. 814). This is also discussed by Huhmann and Brotherton (1997) and Brennan and Binney (2009) who claim that shame appeal is used in advertising as a potential threat to the self if certain products are not consumed. However, their arguments lie more within a conceptual perspective and lack empirical evidence. While Boudewyns et al. (2013) find that shame appeal may lead to negative outcomes like anger and perceived manipulative intent within the Western context, from this

perspective, shame appeal may be less effective than its impact is assumed to be in Huhmann and Brotherton's (1997) study. In Boudewyns et al.'s (2013) study, consumers feel their self to be attacked by the implicit shame appeal and they may be reluctant to purchase because of this perceived manipulation of the negative shame arousing information.

However, there is a difference in individual's reactions towards shame between people from different cultures. Consumers from a shame-devaluing culture perceive shame appeal as negative information that attacks the self and they react with externalizing and withdrawal tendencies such as anger, neglect, and escape (Dickerson, et al., 2004; Cohen, et al., 2011). However, apart from responding maladaptively by rejecting and ignoring, self-regulation theory suggests that one may also respond to such situations adjustively by the regulation of one's behavior through improvement and active adaption (Baumeister, et al., 2006; Sheman & Cohen, 2002). Different from those in shame-devaluing cultures in the West, individuals from shame-affirming cultures see shame as a motivation for self-enhancement and are more willing to react with restorative tendencies using active and adaptive strategies (Sheikh, 2014).

This difference in potential shame response may lead to their different reaction to shame appeal, where consumers from shame-devaluing cultures react to shame appeal with withdrawal behavior of not buying products, and consumers from shame-affirming cultures choose to buy certain products to build a better image. That is, in order to maintain self-integrity, one may regulate one's behavior or appearance restoratively to conform to the standard of a good self-image (Baumeister, et al., 2006; Sheman & Cohen, 2002). Besides,

individuals with high shame proneness are assumed to be highly sensitive to shame appeals, as well as to shame experiences, since they have a richer perception of shame. Thus, when facing shame appeal, individuals with high shame proneness within shame-affirming cultures are more likely to react with adaptive actions of participating in consumption.

Moreover, when facing self-threat or self-attack during a shame experience, status consumption becomes the regulating behavior for the protection of self-integrity and repair to one's self. Belk (1978) argues that individual's acquisition, possession, and consumption may create one's image, and that all these activities may reflect a part, or an extension, of the self. Also, similar to Gilbert's (2003) suggestion that an individual might see and imagine an object as a symbolic representation of the self, that person may then judge and evaluate the self according to this object. This also indicates that one's acquisition, possession, or consumption could strengthen or repair one's self, as well as reduce the damage to the self.

As seen in chapter 4, shame related situations in Chinese are often caused by non-moral transgressions with the expression *shi ru* (势辱, shame with transgressions in capacity), when consumers are deprived of acquisition, possession, or consumption of certain products, or those products are in a condition of shortage, one's self-integrity (both perceived by oneself or by other individuals) might be attacked and the self considered to be relatively smaller (Gilbert & McGuire, 1998; Smith, et al., 2002). In this case, potential regulating behaviors for maintaining self-integrity are further acquisition, possession, or consumption, in order to reveal a better self-image, and thus repair and strengthen the self. Therefore, it is more likely that purchasing and

possessing status products helps to create a self-image of being powerful and having a high social status. Meanwhile, the distorted situation of a defected self is balanced with the repair of self-integrity and affirmation of a good self-image.

This is also supported by Sivanathan and Pettit (2010), where they find that individuals under self-threat or self-attack seek ownership of high status products to repair their psychological damage. With the feeling of shame, one's self is attacked and thus fails to fit a desired situation with a damaged self-integrity. In this case, one may regulate behavior in order to achieve that desired situation (Muraven, et al., 2005). In other words, this attacked self is considered to be a potential motivation for individuals' decisions regarding status consumption, with the aim of regulating and repairing one's self through possession of products which carry a status signal. Hence, with the notion that one's self could be repaired through ownership of affirmational goods, and that high shame prone individual may have a higher frequency for confronting shame situations by self-attack, those individuals are thus more likely to consume status products. Meanwhile, those individuals with low shame proneness are less sensitive to shame and, thus, are less likely to have a need for status products for protection and affirmation of the self. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Shame proneness is positively related to status consumption.

### ***5.1.2. Construal of Self and Status Consumption***

According to Mason (1984) and Kleine et al. (1992), an individual's daily consumption patterns and possessions may provide information to themselves

and to their peers about their social group and social status. Consumption patterns are often influenced by one's personality in terms of how they care about their own attributes, as well as the attitudes of others. There are two motivations for one to consume status products (Sheldon, et al., 2004; Troung, 2010). Intrinsically, individuals who place great emphasis on their own attributes tend to consume for their own pleasure and taste. They often choose status products for their exquisite design and good quality. Extrinsically, individuals who care more about others' attitudes tend to consume status products in order to display their status and success, and to gain appraisal and recognition.

Independent and interdependent construals of self are two domains of self-construal. As discussed in Chapter 2, these two traits often co-exist in one person where the former places more emphasis on the self, and the latter focuses more on others. As O'Cass and Frost (2002) see status consumption as a specific behavior pattern where purchase decisions are navigated by consumers' construal of self through both independent and interdependent self-construal, the two construals represent the two motivations mentioned above for status consumption. Generally, status products are designed to serve both internal needs, with good quality and exquisite design, as well as external needs, with the achievement of appreciation of others (Goldsmith, et al., 2006; Han, et al., 2010). As a result, although independent and interdependent construal of self may have similar behavioral impacts on consumers' status consumption, the psychological trigger of such influences would be different. Their relationships with status consumption are separately hypothesized in this section.

Previous research finds that consumers seeking status products often have high interest in seeking pleasure for the self, and a high need to express their attributes and tastes (Aaker & Schmitt, 2001; O’Cass & Frost, 2002). These interests and needs are reflected in one’s independent construal of self. This is because those with high independent self-construal place great emphasis on the self and see their own attributes, feelings, and preferences as of vital importance. Therefore, they are more likely to behave in ways which meet their own preferences and for their own pleasure. As status products are mostly products from luxurious brands of good quality, and they provide consumers with hedonic enjoyment, those with high independent construal of self are more likely to follow their own attributes and enjoy the pleasure gained from experiencing luxury.

Moreover, those with high independent construal of self often highlight the self and so differentiate their self from others (Aaker & Schmitt, 2001). Status products are often good at presenting “*who I am*”, and this fulfills their need to express the self. Further, status product also helps distinguish those with high independent construal of self from others through prestige in taste and uniqueness. Hence, in order to follow their own tastes and preferences, and expressing a self which is differentiated from others, consumers with a highly developed independent construal of self are more likely to consume status products. Thus, we hypothesize:

H2: Independent construal of self is positively related to status consumption.

Interdependent construal of self often associates with high sensitivity to social awareness and social relationships. For those with high interdependent

construal of self, they are more likely to place emphasis on external features of social roles, public perceptions of their social ranking, and their relationship with others. As a consequence, they are more sensitive to their ways of consumption, as well as to others' perceptions of their possessions, and are more likely to relate their possessions to their social status. The traits of interdependence which value connectedness with other social members and seek social recognition, force consumers with high interdependent construal of self towards a stronger intention to maintain their social status and avoid potential negative evaluations from others.

In addition, Wong and Ahuvia (1998) find that Asian interdependent consumers are more likely to value the public meaning of their possessions, rather than their private meaning, when compared to Western consumers with a highly developed independent construal of self. With the finding in Sivanathan & Pettit's research (2010) that the behavior of purchasing status products is often accompanied by the purpose of social acceptance and the prevention of potential social threats of losing social status, individuals with a highly developed interdependent construal of self may have a higher tendency to involve themselves in status consumption. From this perspective, highly interdependent consumers are more likely to prefer those status products with conspicuous social signals of power, status, and prestige, rather than possession with idiosyncratic private meanings, such as owning a lucky scarf. Thus, we hypothesize:

H3: Interdependent construal of self is positively related to status consumption.



### *5.1.3. Construal of Self as Moderator*

Since shame is often portrayed as an other-focused emotion which associates with social bonds and interpersonal relations (Corss & Markus, 1990; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), the notion that shame proneness may interact with independence may seem surprising. Indeed, many scholars demonstrate that shame proneness is closely associated with one's self since the feeling of shame often comes as consequence of situations when one's self is attacked, and those individuals with a highly independent construal of self are more likely to place heavy emphasis on the self, thus they more likely to be influenced by self-relevant stimuli (Kemeny, et al., 2004; Tangney, et al., 1996; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tangney, et al., 2005).

We propose that Chinese consumers with high shame proneness may react to the shame situation of lacking certain possessions using adaptive strategies of consumption, rather than only withdrawing and hiding, and the interaction of shame proneness and independent construal of self may strengthen the impact on status consumption. Since individuals with a highly developed independent construal of self tend to have a more idiocentric and unitary self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), they are thus more sensitive to potential self-attack and self-threat. When confronted with potential or existing self-attack, such as the feeling of shame, these individuals are likely to manage their emotions with self-regulating behaviors. Hence, individuals with a high independent construal of self are more likely to be aware of a potential shame situation when there is potential for self-attack or self-threat. Consequently, they have a higher tendency to respond restoratively by seeking status consumption as a potential solution for the regulation and repair of their self. For people with a low

independent construal of self, they may be less sensitive to self-attack and thus shame proneness would have a weaker impact on their consumption of status products. Therefore, sensitivity to awareness of self-relevant stimuli among consumers with a high independent construal of self, strengthens the positive relationship between shame proneness and status consumption. Thus, we hypothesize:

H4: Independent construal of self positively moderates the relationship between shame proneness and status consumption; the higher the independent construal of self, the stronger the positive association between shame proneness and status consumption.

In addition, with the concept of a high interdependent construal of self, Chinese consumers may care more about public evaluations and social roles. Thus, they may also place more emphasis on the social signal during their product consumption. Chinese consumers with high shame proneness may place more value on others attitudes towards them and on social norms. Status consumption often provides consumers with others' appreciation through status signals since those products are often consumed publicly. As shame is often an emotion with a focus on the other under public exposure, the interdependent construal of self may strengthen the impact of shame, since individuals with a highly developed interdependent construal of self often value social norms as well as the evaluations of other social members. In consequence, in a highly interdependent condition, where others' attitudes and social norms are highly valued, consumers with high shame proneness may also have a greater tendency to value the brand, or the country of origin of the product, which is

often embedded with symbolic meanings of certain social status and self-image.

Moreover, in Mason's (1984) study, social attributes impact consumers' intentions towards status consumption and consumers in "a lower socioeconomic class" are found more affected by such social attributes. Those in a lower socioeconomic class are considered as in a situation of *shi ru* (势辱, shame with transgressions in capacity) with less money, power and prestige. As individuals with high interdependent construal of self highly emphasis on others and social attributes, consumers' desire for status products is strengthened especially when the individual is also highly prone to shame and sensitive to others' evaluation, for they have a high sensitivity towards others and a strong need to build a good self-image. Thus, with a highly interdependent condition, the impact of individuals' shame proneness on status consumption might be stronger since they care more about the evaluation of their peers, especially under public settings. Thus, we hypothesize:

H5: Interdependent construal of self positively moderates the relationship between shame proneness and status consumption, with the higher independent construal of self, the stronger the positive association between shame proneness and status consumption.

## **5.2. Methodology**

### ***5.2.1. Approach***

Data for this study were collected with a survey instrument administered in China from December, 2014 to January, 2015 among real consumers in China. The questionnaire comprised a variety of emotion- and consumption-related

questions. Respondents received the Chinese version, which was translated from original English scales. The survey was also back translated by a different translator. Respondents were selected through mall intercepts (Bush & Hair, 1985), selecting one from every six passing-by, which resulted in 210 valid surveys.

### **5.2.2. Sample**

Respondents were randomly selected around big malls among Chinese consumers. A total of 250 surveys were distributed and 223 were returned, which is return rate of about 89%. Among the 223 returned questionnaires, 13 were invalid with ten uncompleted and three unreasonable surveys, i.e., respondents to these three surveys made the same choice for every single question. With 13 invalid questionnaires excluded, a total of 210 samples, or 84% of the total distribution, were available for the following data analysis. All respondents are Chinese with 45.7% male and 54.3% female, and 87% within the ages of 16 to 45, thus, representative of the major consumers in China.

### **5.2.3. Measures**

The study is based on the development and administration of a self-completion survey. Established scales are applied to measure the hypothesized constructs. The measurements for the interdependent self follow research by Escalas and Bettman (2005) and Singelis (1994). Items such as “*it is important for me to maintain harmony within my group*”, and “*I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in*”, are used to measure interdependent construal of self; and items like “*It is very important to me that my personal identity is independent of others*”, and “*I enjoy being unique and different from others in*

*many respects*”, are adopted for independent construal of self. The shame scale is adopted from Cohen et al.’s (2011) *Guilt and Shame Proneness Scale* which contains eight items for shame proneness. They are scenario-based, questions concern general shame scenarios measured for SNSE (*Shame Negative Self Evaluation*) and SW (*Shame Withdrawal*). Items such as “*You rip an article out of a journal in the library and take it with you. Your teacher finds it and tells this to the librarian and the rest of the class. Will you tend to guess that they think you a bad person?*”, and “*You give a bad presentation at work. Afterwards your boss tells your co-workers it was your fault that your company lost the contract. What is the likelihood that you would feel incompetent?*”, are used for measuring SNSE. Items like “*After making a big mistake on an important project that you are in charge of, and your boss criticizes you in front of your co-workers, will you feign sickness and leave work?*”, and “*Your home is very messy and unexpected guests knock on your door and invite themselves in. What is the likelihood that you would avoid the guests until they leave?*”, are applied as the SW measurement. For the status consumption scale, we follow Eastman, Goldsmith and Flynn (1999) with five seven-point-scale items ranging from, “*I would pay more for a product if it has status*” and “*I am interested in new products with status*”. We also use reserved statements like, “*The status of a product is none of my business*”. Additionally, control variables such as age, educational background, and income are included.

Table 5.1. Results for Exploratory Factor Analysis

<b>N=210</b>				
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Status Consumption</b>				
1. I would buy a product just because it has status.	<b>.895</b>			
2. I am very interested in new products with status.	<b>.840</b>			
3. I would pay more for a product if it has status.	<b>.886</b>			
4. The status of a product is none of my business.	<b>.711</b>			
5. A product is more valuable to me if it can satisfy my vanity.	<b>.819</b>			
<b>Shame Proneness (SNSE+SW)</b>				
6. You rip an article out of a journal in the library and take it with you. Your teacher finds it and tells this to the librarian and the rest of the class. Will you tend to guess that they think you a bad person?		<b>.507</b>		
7. You give a bad presentation at work. Afterwards your boss tells your coworkers it was your fault that your company lost the contract. What is the likelihood that you would feel incompetent?		<b>.605</b>		
8. You successfully exaggerate your friend's damages in a lawsuit. Months later, your lies are discovered and you are charged with perjury. What is the likelihood that you would think you are a despicable human being?		<b>.640</b>		
9. You make a mistake at work and find out a coworker is blamed for the error. Later, your coworker confronts you about your mistake. What is the likelihood that you would feel like a coward?		<b>.704</b>		
10. After making a big mistake on an important project that you are in charge of, and your boss criticizes you in front of your coworkers. Will you feign sickness and leave work?		<b>-.685</b>		
11. A friend tells you that you boast a great deal. What is the likelihood that you would stop spending time with that friend?		<b>.698</b>		
12. Your home is very messy and you don't want guests to knock on your door and invite them in. What is the likelihood that you would avoid their coming?		<b>.573</b>		
13. You take office supplies home for personal use and are caught by your boss. What is the likelihood that this would lead you to quit your job?		<b>.630</b>		

<b>Independent Construal of Self</b>				
14. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.			<b>.880</b>	
15. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in.			<b>.871</b>	
16. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than own accomplishments.			<b>.819</b>	
It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.			<b>.840</b>	
<b>Interdependent Construal of Self</b>				
17. I'd rather say "No" directly, than risk being misunderstood.				<b>.817</b>
18. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met.				<b>.781</b>
19. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.				<b>.720</b>
20. My personal identity independent of others, is very important to me.				<b>.857</b>
<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	<b>.902</b>	<b>.789</b>	<b>.891</b>	<b>.842</b>

To test the proposed model and check the validity and reliability of the measurements for the survey, we apply exploratory factor analysis (EFA) since all these measurements are originally designed in English for use in a Western context. Our results show that all measures demonstrate adequate reliability of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (status consumption: 0.902; shame proneness: .789; independent construal of self: .891; interdependent construal of self: .842). More detailed results are provided in Table 5.1. To further evaluate the goodness of the fit of the measurement model, we also adopt confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS. In sum, an adequate measurement model was obtained (CMIN/DF=2.222\*\*\*; CFI=.918; RMSEA=.076; N=210). Here, a co-variance based method was not applied in the following steps since this study also aims to investigate the interaction effect of shame proneness and independent self-construal on status consumption. Instead, the stepwise hierarchical regression analysis is examined via SPSS 20.0. Detailed results for this stepwise hierarchical regression analysis are shown in Table 5.2.

### **5.3. Results and Discussions**

#### **5.3.1. Results**

Table 5.2 presents the results for the stepwise hierarchical regression analysis with SPSS. As hypothesized, results for H1, Step 1 in Table 5.2, show that shame proneness has a significant positive impact ( $Beta = .155^*$ ,  $SE = .070$ ) on status consumption. However, in the Step 2, when adding self-construal into the model, the impact of shame becomes less significant ( $Beta = .115^+$ ,  $SE = .069$ ). It then becomes insignificant when the moderation effect is added in Step 3, but with a significant positive moderation effect of independent



construal ( $Beta = .139^*$ ,  $SE = .070$ ) on shame and status consumption. Thus, H1 is rejected with the result from the full model.

In order to better understand the reason for this descending significance of the impact of shame on status, we then apply an analysis with a medium split of independent construal of self. We medium split independent construal of self by its Mean ( $M = 4.1964$ ) into two groups, high independent construal of self and low independent construal of self, and re-run a regression of shame on status consumption. Results are shown in Table 5.3 and demonstrate that the impact of shame on status consumption is significantly positive only in the high independent condition ( $Beta = .294^{**}$ ,  $SE = .096$ ), but not in the condition of low independent construal of self ( $Beta = .037^{n.s.}$ ,  $SE = .103$ ). The different shame results in the two different groups explain the insignificant impact of shame in the full model. That is, insignificant impact of shame with the low independent construal of self drags down the significance rate on the significant positive impact of shame on status consumption in the full model. Furthermore, in the results for the controls, age has a negative effect and income has a positive impact on status consumption.

Moreover, results in Step 2 and support H3 ( $Beta = .186^{**}$ ,  $SE = .067$ ) and indicate that consumers with a highly developed interdependent construal of self have a higher tendency to involve themselves in status consumption. However, H2 is rejected ( $Beta = .124^{n.s.}$ ,  $SE = .072$ ) with an insignificant relationship between independent construal of self and status consumption, which suggests that independent construal of self does not influence status consumption among Chinese consumers. Possible explanations for this result are discussed in detail in the next section.

Table 5.2. Regression Models of Shame Proneness and Status Consumption

Dependent Variable	Status Consumption					
	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3	
	<i>Beta</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>SE</i>
Constant	.332	.335	.267	.332	.328	.330
Shame	.155*	.070	.115 <sup>+</sup>	.069	.090	.071
Independence			.109	.072	.088	.072
Interdependence			.186**	.067	.191**	.067
<i>Moderation</i>						
Independence X Shame					.139*	.070
Interdependence X Shame					.025	.070
<i>Controls</i>						
Age	-.217**	.073	-.140	.077	-.166*	.076
Education	-.015	.071	-.047	.070	-.055	.090
Income	.332***	.073	.311***	.075	.328***	.004
$R^2$	.136		.184		.205	
Adjusted $R^2$	.119		.159		.173	
Numbers of observation	210		210		210	

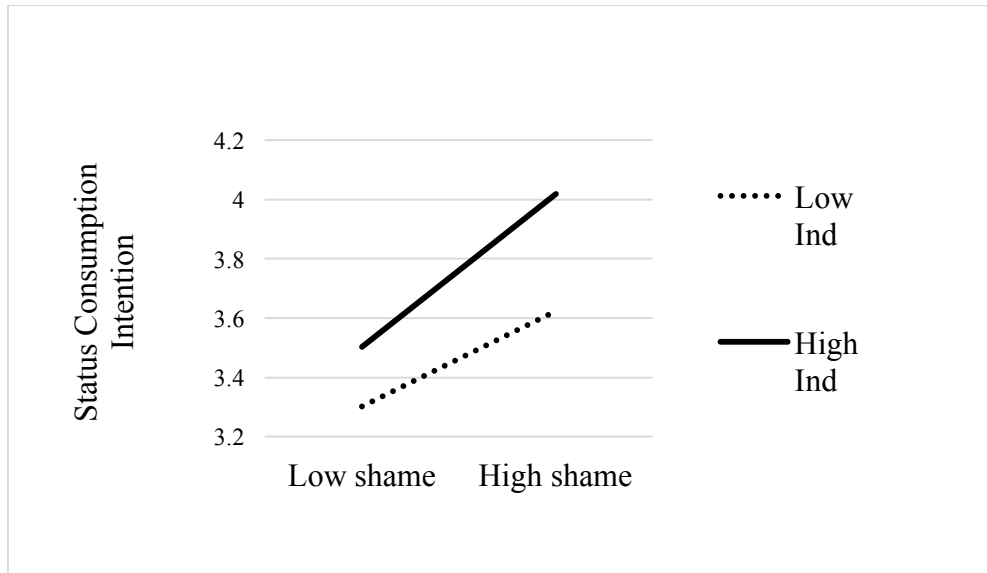
Note: <sup>+</sup>: p<.10; \*: p<.05; \*\*: p<.01; \*\*\*: p<.001.

Table 5.3. Medium Split on Independent Construal of Self

Dependent Variable	Status Consumption			
	High independent construal of self		Low independent construal of self	
	<i>Beta</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>SE</i>
Constant	.026	.102	-.068	.093
Shame	.294**	.096	.037	.103
<i>Controls</i>				
Age	-.259*	.125	-.159	.095
Education	-.140	.107	.067	.095
Income	.382***	.073	.309**	.115
$R^2$	.187		.115	
Adjusted $R^2$	.152		.081	
Numbers of observation	210		210	

Note: +:  $p < .10$ ; \*:  $p < .05$ ; \*\*:  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*:  $p < .001$ .

Figure 5.2. The Moderating Effect of Independent construal of self



Additionally, the moderation effects of both independent and interdependent construal of self on the relationship of shame proneness with status consumption are tested with hierarchical regression analysis. Step 3 in Table 5.2 shows the results of these moderation effects. In the regression analysis, we consider the direct effect of shame proneness, and the interaction effect of shame proneness, with both independent and interdependent construal of self, on status consumption. The results support a positive direct impact of interdependent construal of self ( $Beta = .191^{**}$ ,  $SE = .067$ ), and a positive moderation effect of independent construal of self ( $Beta = .139^{*}$ ,  $SE = .070$ ) for H4. Figure 5.2 illustrates the positive moderating effect of independent construal of self on status consumption. However, results show that there is no significant moderation effect of the interdependent construal of self ( $Beta = .025^{n.s.}$ ,  $SE = .070$ ).

### **5.3.2. Discussion**

This study has focused exclusively on real consumers in and around shopping malls in China. The empirical study of the impact of shame on status consumption is a novel practice. It follows the recent view that shame functions through adaptive response with restorative tendencies of repairing one's self, especially in Eastern cultures, rather than maladaptive consequences of withdrawal tendencies, and externalizing tendencies of protecting one's self passively, most frequently found in Western countries with shame-devaluing cultures (Gausel, et al., 2012; Sheikh, 2014; Tangney, et al., 2014). In addition, we investigate the influence of self-construal on status consumption and its moderating role. Here, we examine the impact of self-construal with its two domains of independent and interdependent construal of self separately.

#### *5.3.2.1. Shame restorative response of status consumption*

Our study initially examined the relationship between shame proneness and status consumption among Chinese consumers. Though the findings fail to support H1 with a significant positive impact of shame on status consumption with the full model, our results of the analysis using medium split found that Chinese consumers with high shame proneness do have a higher intention to purchase status products. However, this finding is limited to individuals with a high independent construal of self. In the case of those with a low independent construal of self, shame proneness does not lead to status consumption. The finding of shame leading to status consumption in the specific condition of high independent construal of self also, and importantly, reveals that shame leads to the restorative behavior of the purchase of status products, rather than withdrawal and externalizing actions, during consumption.

Here, status consumption is regarded as a shame response with adjustive intention and restorative behavior, which could build, or restore, one's image and protect one from social threat and social attack as these possessions signal status. When one's self is attacked among those with high shame proneness, they tend to have a greater intention to regulate one's behaviors in order to maintain self-integrity via the improvement of one's self-image (Sheikh, 2014; Mischel, 1996). However, as results find that the influence of shame on status consumption only exists in the case of an independent construal of self, this shows that the self, self-image, and attributes of the self, such as feelings and preferences, are important for those with a high independent construal of self.

In light of this, the attacked self, and the painful experience of shame, is only important to those who value the self, rather than to those with a low independent construal of self who actually do not care much about the self and related attributes. Therefore, under the condition of a high independent construal of self, consumers highly prone to shame value their self and self-image, they are more sensitive to self-attack, and more likely to deal with the situation through restorative behavior which maintains their self-integrity and improves their self-image.

Further, status products often provide an image of prestige with their status signals. The devalued self-image in a shame situation may be restored by possessing status products. More importantly, besides self-image, the defected self in a shame situation may also be repaired via consumption of status products. Just as Sivanathan and Pettit (2010) suggest, status products often have an affirmational function. High shame prone people with high independent construal of self are often more frequently exposed to self attack and have a high urge to repair the self-image. The affirmational function of status products helps to protect and repair one's self. Moreover, with the social connotations of prestige and the social signaling of status products, status consumption is more preferred by high shame prone consumers when they highly developed in their independent construal of self, since it not only reveals one's social rank with a good self-image, but also takes care of the defected self when confronted with certain negative situations.

#### *5.3.2.2. Self-construal and status consumption*

Additionally, the roles played by both independent and interdependent construal of self in status consumption are tested in this study. The results show a significant positive relationship between interdependent construal of self and status consumption, while a non-significant relationship between independent construal of self and status consumption are shown. Possible reasons for this are that individuals with a highly developed interdependent construal of self often place heavy emphasis on the external features of social status, social image, and relationships with other social members, consequently they are more attracted to products with status signals and more desirous of appreciation from the surrounding social members.

Moreover, they are supposed to read others' minds and sense others' appreciation easily. As shown in the concordance analysis reported in chapter 4, shame expressed by *shi ru* (势辱, shame with transgressions in capacity) is frequently found in China nowadays. People in China often show their respect and appreciation if one has power or adequate competence and is highly ranked in social groups (Yang, 2006). Here, purchasing and possessing products with status signaling often reveals one's competence and powerfulness. Meanwhile, it also helps increase one's social position and draw more appreciation from others. As a result, Chinese consumers with high interdependent construal of self are more tend to purchase products with status signal.

However, no significant influence of independent construal of self and status consumption is found in our study. This may be because independent construal of self in Eastern culture in China is not as profound as interdependent construal of self (Cross, et al., 2011; Singelis, 1994;). Generally, consumers are



more likely to buy status products for generating others' appraisal, rather than for their own enjoyment and pleasure. However, this does not mean that independent construal of self is irrelevant to status consumption. Only when there is an interaction between self-attack under shame, and a high value of self with an independent construal of self, is there a pursuance of status products. This interactional effect is further discussed in the following section. Another possible explanation is that Asian consumers are more likely to value the public meaning of their possessions, rather than the private meaning (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Thus, although consumers in China are also well-developed in their independent construal of self, this does not transfer into status consumption, since the private meaning of a status product is not important and valued by Chinese consumers.

#### *5.3.2.3. Moderation effect of self-construal*

In terms of the moderation effect, the interaction of shame proneness and independent construal of self shows a significant positive impact on status consumption, while the moderation effect of interdependent construal of self is not found. That is, when an individual's independent construal of self is highly developed, such high independence strengthens the original high tendency of high shame prone consumers to consume status products, while low independence weakens the relationship between shame proneness and status consumption.

A reason for the positive moderation is that consumers with high independent construal of self are often very sensitive to the self and it is important for them to maintain the wholeness and uniqueness of the self. Consumers with high

shame proneness are also sensitive to social threats and self-attack (Cohen, et al., 2011; Tangney, et al., 1990; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). In order to avoid a potential or existing self-attack, they may choose status products to maintain or repair their self-image. As a consequence, the negative emotion of shame is regulated by their restorative behaviors of repairing the damaged self via the purchase of status products, and thus, a balance between the self and one's feelings is achieved. When adding the interaction of shame proneness and independent construal of self, the relationship between shame proneness and status consumption is strengthened. This is because individuals with a highly developed independent construal of self place heavy emphasis on the integrity of the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). They have a higher awareness of self-attack and this awareness adds power to the moderation effect. Thus, with the motivation of maintaining self-integrity and avoiding self-attack, the influence on status consumption is strengthened when shame proneness and independent construal of self work together.

For those with a low independent construal of self, they do not care about the self and thereby their lack of sensitivity to the self weakens the impact of shame proneness on status consumption. Indeed, consumers with low independent construal of self often place less value on their self integrity, as well as on their own thoughts, feelings, and attributes (Kitayama, et al., 1995; Singelis, 1994). As a result, in the condition of low independent construal of self, consumers' personal attributes of shame proneness are less respected and, therefore, shame is less likely to be transferred into status consumption. In fact, even confronted with a shame feeling, there is less intention to purchase status products since those consumers with low independent construal of self are less

likely to care about their own feelings. This low interest and value in one's self and one's personal feelings and attributes weakens the relationship between shame and status consumption.

#### **5.4. Implications and Limitations**

Results from this study demonstrate a positive influence of shame proneness on status consumption in the condition of a high independent construal of self. Moreover, a positive impact of an interdependent construal of self on status consumption is proved among Chinese consumers. This study also finds a positive moderation effect of independent construal of self on the relationship between shame proneness and status consumption in a Chinese context with its shame-affirming culture.

In terms of theoretical implications, this study provides insight into the influence of shame, from a consumer perspective, on the intention to purchase status products as a type of restorative response in consumption field. Here, the shame response of restorative tendencies through the repair of one's self and the improvement of one's self-image, rather than through withdrawal or externalizing behaviors, is reflected as consumption behavior of purchasing status products. This insight not only broadens the theorist's discernment of shame positive response with adjustive and restorative behavior, but also in the influence of shame in consumption area, rather than domains of psychological or managerial. Moreover, the self-construal literature is added with a direct impact of interdependent construal of self on status consumption and more importantly, independent construal of self as a moderator.

A further contribution concerns the shame proneness measurement. As seen in section 5.3.3 above, the measurement we adopt is a set of scenario-based questions with items that measure shame perception with shame negative self-evaluation (SNSE), and potential outcome of shame with shame withdrawal (SW) behaviors. Though our major focus of shame response with restorative tendencies is not contained in the measurement, our results show that shame has a restorative behavioral tendency with a positive impact in the consumption field via the purchase of status products, rather than withdrawal or externalizing tendencies with no consumption or aggression. Instead of measuring shame restorative tendencies when measuring shame and consumption as restorative behavior tautologically, this general shame measurement, without the shame restorative tendency, proves empirically that shame does lead to restorative behavior in the consumption field.

However, one limitation to this study may be the social desirability bias caused by the nature of shame and the consumption measurements used for the questionnaire. Indeed, shame is a negative emotion which represents a painful experience that many people want to avoid and hide from, especially when there are others present. Also, the questionnaire was distributed directly by means of a face-to-face paper-based survey. In this situation, respondents may over report their favored intention toward status consumption in order to gain or maintain face. However, during the data collection, anonymity and confidentiality were promised to all respondents in an effort to reduce the impact of this issue.

Though lack of restorative tendency in shame measurement contributes to this research by avoiding tautological measures in shame and consumption

measurements, further study could focus on development of a shame scale which includes items for shame restorative outcomes with adjustive strategies, and self-enhancement for cross cultural study. This could be specially designed for Asian countries with shame-affirming cultures. In addition, studies about active, rather than passive, shame outcomes with adjustive and restorative behavior in other areas within shame-affirming cultures are also suggested.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has examined the influence of shame proneness on status consumption through a quantitative empirical approach with a survey-based questionnaire. Additionally, the impact of self-construal, both independent and interdependent, on status consumption and its moderation effect are also investigated. Specifically, this chapter conceptualizes the framework by applying shame responses with restorative tendencies to the repair of the self in the consumption area, particularly the behavior of purchasing status products. Results prove that shame responses of restorative tendencies are reflected in status consumption in the condition of high independent construal of self among Chinese consumers. Further, as hypothesized, a positive relationship between interdependent construal of self and status consumption, as well as the moderation effect of an independent construal of self are found in our results.

## **Chapter 6: An Experimental Approach to The Impact of Shame on Status Consumption**

### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter investigates the application of the shame response of restorative tendencies in the consumption area through status products using a quantitative method of quasi-lab experiments. In this chapter, we aim to empirically investigate the second research question, through three sub-questions: whether shame, as an emotion, influences consumers' decisions to purchase status products (RQ 2a); to what extent does shame influence status consumption with products of different conspicuousness (RQ 2b); and to what extent do relationships with companions at the time of purchase influence the linkage of shame and status consumption (RQs 2c). We respond to these questions with three experiments. Study 1 is specifically designed to answer Research Question 2a. It also aims to test shame manipulation and, if validated, will apply this manipulation in the following studies. Studies 2 and 3 examine important boundary conditions for when the emotion of shame influences consumers' decisions in status consumption. Study 2 answers Research Question 2b by investigating consumers' preferences in terms of brand conspicuousness under different shame conditions, and Study 3 responds to Research Question 2c by exploring the moderation effect of the relationships with one's purchasing companion/s on shame and status consumption.

### **6.1. Pilot Studies: Interview and Pretest**

Before conducting the experiments, we performed pilot studies by interview and pretest. The aim of the interview is to explore restorative behavior as a

shame response during consumption, and identify other factors that may influence an individual's decision at the time of consumption. Additionally, the pretest focuses on an examination of the ranking of, and attitudes towards, status brands among Chinese consumers. The results of both the interviews and the pretest are used in the three studies which follow.

### ***6.1.1. Pilot Study with Interview***

To our best knowledge, shame has not been the subject of studies through its response of restorative tendency in a context of the consumption area, thus, we performed a pilot study. Before beginning the experiments, an unstructured interview was conducted to explore shame response with restorative tendencies in consumption, and to seek potential factors which may impact the choice of restorative behavior. The designed scenario for the recall paradigm was refined and confirmed through unstructured interviews with Chinese consumers who have specific experience of shame feelings. We also seek further potential factors that may influence consumers' intentions to purchase status products as a shame response with this interview.

We interviewed seven Chinese consumers, three female and four male, and each interview took about 30 to 45 minutes. Shame is a relatively sensitive and negative feeling that most people are not willing to discuss. Thus, instead of asking the interviewees shame-related question directly, we ask questions indirectly, e.g., we ask them to describe either shame-related phenomenon they have observed, or the experiences of others they know of, rather than their own.

Among all the interviewees, five suggest that being inferior in terms of possession or appearance under public exposure would lead to the feeling of shame. Others also suggested that a negative evaluation, such as “teasing by others” or “salesperson”, even subtly, during the consumption process would also lead to the feeling of shame. As a result, we adopt the phenomenon of being inferior, or receiving negative evaluation, as a shame priming question within a recall paradigm. The two scenarios, being inferior or receiving negative evaluation, are both used in the priming process to expand the scope for the recall of the feeling of shame in case respondents do not have a particular corresponding experience.

Additionally, two factors were coded that may influence consumers’ intentions to purchase status products in shame situations. They are: brand conspicuousness; and relationships between the individual and the person/s who accompanies them at the time of consumption. Thus, we further investigate the impact of these two factors on shame and status consumption in the following studies where Study 2 considers brand conspicuousness, and Study 3 considers relationships.

### ***6.1.2. Pilot Study with Pretest***

We conducted a pretest in order to identify the luxury brands with status signaling among Chinese consumers. To identify appropriate brands for the status product, we selected both international and local brands with high-end and low-end brand images via popularity in local malls and plazas. Then, 60 respondents (37 female and 23 male) were shown to the resulting 15 brands, eight of which are international brands, and seven of which are local brands.



Among the eight international brands, five are brands representing status products, they are: Chanel, Gucci, LV, Coach, and Prada. Respondents are asked to select brands that could help build their image and reveal a good social status, when multiple selections are allowed.

The results show the five luxury brands to also be ranked as the top five that could help one reveal a good social image with high status. Furthermore, our results show Chanel and Gucci to be the most favored of the prestige brands among Chinese consumers. Therefore, we choose Chanel as the status brand in the experiment for Study 1, and Gucci as the brand for status products in Studies 2 and 3.

## **6.2. Study 1: Shame Motives and Status Consumption**

In the first study, we test our proposed theoretical framework, whether one's feeling of shame influences the decision to purchase status products, using a quasi-experiment. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, proposed in Chapter 5, with a positive relationship between shame proneness and status consumption, we predict that consumers with an activated shame feeling would elicit a higher preference for consuming status products than the other two groups.

### ***6.2.1. Feeling of Shame and Status Consumption***

As seen in Chapter 5, a sense of inferiority often produces a threat to one's self in social interaction, and consequently arouses the feeling of shame. Actually, similar ideas are found in the literature (e.g., Mazzocco, et al., 2012; Rucker & Galinsky, 2008) where those with a sense of inferiority are more likely to compensate by consuming status products. However, none of these studies links the restorative behavior of repairing one's self through status

consumption with shame. The reason for such few studies about the linkage of shame and status consumption may be that shame response with restorative tendencies is a very recent trend found in shame studies (Gausel, et al., 2012; Tangney, et al., 2014). In this study, we associate shame with status consumption since status products help repair the damaged and defected self caused by the shame feeling. As found in our pilot interview, discussed further below, receiving negative evaluations during consumption may cause consumers' to feel shame. We then propose that the attacked self in this situation could be repaired through presentation of a better self-image achieved with status products.

As self-affirmation theory (Steele, 1988) suggests, people are often motivated to maintain their self-integrity and, when one's self is damaged, certain actions that could reduce the pain are promoted. Applying this in the case of shame experienced during consumption, when one's possessions or appearance are negatively evaluated the feeling of shame is aroused since an individual might see and imagine an object as one's self, and then judge and evaluate the self according to this object (Gilbert, 2003). In other words, possessions or appearance are seen as a symbolic representation of one's self. Therefore, negatively evaluated possessions or appearance reflect a damaged and defected self. When the feeling of shame is aroused, self-integrity is threatened, and one is motivated to maintain the integrity of the self and to get rid of this particular painful situation. According to Chaudhuri and Majumdar (2006), consumption of expensive and conspicuous status products is not only an exhibition of one's wealth, but it also helps to display one's social identity and to maintain one's self as a remarkable entity with integrity. One solution is to repair the damaged

and under-evaluated self-image with possessions that reveal one's good self, often with status and prestige signaling. As a result, one could respond to the shame feeling during consumption by regulating behavior and purchasing status products to rebuild the social image and protect one's self-integrity with the damaged and defected self-image repaired. Thus, we hypothesize:

H6: the experienced feeling of shame is positively related to consumers' intentions to purchase status products.

### **6.2.2. Method**

#### *6.2.2.1. Participants and design*

The study has a 3 (condition: shame vs. neutral vs. no activation)  $\times$  2 (product category: status vs. neutral) design. The experiment has been carried out among students from two universities in Ningbo, China, during the period January to March 2016. A total of 116 female undergraduate students participated in the study with the offer of a lucky draw of 1000 RMB. The two universities are: the University of Nottingham Ningbo, with 53 participants, 45.7% of the total; and Zhejiang Wanli University, with 63 participants, 54.3% of the total. The participants are randomly assigned to one of the conditions.

#### *6.2.2.2. Experiment procedure*

This laboratory experiment was set up in classrooms (both on the Nottingham campus and the Wanli campus) that allow for 20 to 30 students. All the participants invited to the experiment are Chinese students and the materials, as well as the oral introduction to the experiment, are in Chinese. Each round of the experiment took about 20 to 30 minutes.

During the process, participants were told that the experiment contains multiple unrelated tasks. In the first stage, the design of the shame manipulation is a combination of scale measurements with scenario-based questions and recall/imagination paradigm of shame experiences. First, we use the shame proneness scale from Cohen et al.'s. (2011) GASP scale to test each individual's personal trait of shame proneness. Then, participants are randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (1) shame activation condition; (2) neutral (no-shame) activation condition; or (3) no activation condition.

Participants assigned the shame activation condition are asked to write 150 to 200 words about a personal experience in which their possessions are derided by others, or about a disrespectful experience during consumption, and to describe their feelings and reactions in that situation. Here, the feeling of shame was evoked by an established priming method with a recall paradigm, whereby the respondents are asked to recall a shame-related experience during consumption (De Hooge, et al., 2007; Pelozo, et al, 2013; Yang, Yang & Chiou, 2010). Participants in the neutral activation condition were asked to write 150 to 200 words about their recent experience of watching a video. Participants in the no activation condition have no task in this stage. After the priming process, participants' experiences of the shame feeling were tested using an experience shame scale (ESS) used by Andrews et al. (2002) and Qian et al. (2000). The rationale behind this is to ensure the manipulation is validated through the priming process, rather than through the individuals' own personalities.

Finally, each participant is given the scenario of attending an important party for which they are going to buy a new handbag. They are provided with

pictures of two products, one a Chanel bag, and the other a non-branded bag, and their buying intention (status product vs. neutral product) is tested.

### 6.2.2.3. Manipulation test

To ensure that the manipulation elicited an expected level of arousal of the feeling of shame, we apply a before and after check by testing for shame proneness as an individual trait before manipulation, and testing individual's experience of the shame feeling after manipulation. The shame proneness scale is a 1 to 7 scale where 1 = not at all, and 7 = very much. The ESS was tested on a 1 to 4 scale where 1 = not at all and 4 = very much.

In this stage, we perform ANOVA to analysis the manipulated groups. Since we failed to achieve an even number of participants in each group during the experiment, we duplicated the neutral activation group and the no activation group with average values to achieve the same number as the shame activation group in order to run the ANOVA analysis. The original and evened number of participants in each group, and the results before and after stimulation are displayed in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1. Results of the manipulation check

	<i>Shame activation</i>	<i>Neutral activation</i>	<i>No activation</i>
SP(trait)	4.6576	4.6029	4.6389
P (original)	.953	.981	.994
P (evened)	.934	.971	.992
Priming process			
SES(feeling)	2.8826	2.2206	2.1528
P (original)	.000	.851	.851
P (evened)	.000	.776	.776
N (original)	46	34	36
N (evened)	46	46	46

As depicted in Table 6.1, before the priming process, all three groups have similar conditions of shame proneness as a personal trait, and there is no significant difference between the shame activation condition ( $M= 4.6576$ ;  $p= .953$ ), the neutral activation condition ( $M= 4.6029$ ;  $p= .981$ ), and the no activation condition ( $M= 4.6389$ ;  $p= .994$ ). In addition, after the manipulation test, respondents from the shame activation group felt significantly more affected by the priming process with stronger feelings of the experience of the shame feeling ( $M= 2.8826$ ;  $p= .000$ ). However, there is no significant difference between the other two conditions, even after the priming process ( $p= .851$ ), and the experienced feelings of shame are relatively much lower than for the primed group. Hence, our results from the ANOVA show that the manipulation process leads to a strong arousal of the experienced feeling of shame, and confirms that the shame activation group report a more negative mood of shame than do the other two groups. Moreover, the neutral activation did not cause any difference when compared with the no activation condition.

#### *6.2.2.4. Dependent measures*

To assess their desire for status products, participants responded to two different products, one a non-branded product and one a luxury brand status product. Chanel, the brand name of the status product generated from the result of the pretest, is highly valued by Chinese consumers and its function is to reveal one's social status. The two products in the picture shown to the participants are handbags with exactly the same appearance, except that the status product bears its logo, and thereby reveals its status explicitly (design of the experiment 1 is shown in Appendix 3 by English version and 4 by Chinese version). Also, in the introduction to the purchase intention part of the

experiment, we emphasize that the status product is a handbag from Chanel, while the non-branded product is of the same design, but without a famous brand name. Respondents answered how likely they were to buy each product by choosing from a 7-point scale, where 1 = not very likely to purchase, 4 = average, and 7 = very likely to purchase.

### ***6.1.3. Results and Discussion***

We tested our prediction by using an ANOVA to analyze the data. Results are shown in Figure 6.1. Consistent with our hypothesis, the purchase intentions of the primed group for both status and no brand products are significantly different from the other two groups (Status product:  $F= 6.730$ ,  $P= .002$ ; No brand product:  $F= 5.485$ ,  $P= .005$ ). As shown in Figure 6.1, the primed group showed the strongest preference for status products and the lowest interest in the non-branded product among the three groups. In the shame primed condition, participants with high shame feeling were more likely to buy the status product ( $M= 5.0797$ ), which is much higher when compared with the neutrally primed group ( $M= 4.0686$ ) and the unprimed group ( $M= 4.3056$ ). However, in terms of the buying intention for the non-branded product, participants from the primed group were less likely to make a purchase decision ( $M= 2.7899$ ) than those in the neutrally primed condition ( $M= 3.4706$ ) and the unprimed condition ( $M= 3.7870$ ).

As suggested by Chaudhuri and Majumdar (2006), consumers often achieve their self-realization and identification through consumption of certain products with symbolic meaning. With status products, the symbolic meaning often serves as social signaling of high social status, power, and prestige

(Barnett, 2005; Mason, 1992). Especially when one feels shame through a damaged and defected self, the symbolic content of the status product helps repair the degraded identification and rebuild the self-image. Here, it is the motivation to maintain one's self-integrity and a good social image, and thus avoid the feeling of shame, that drives the behaviors to purchase status products (Anderson & Cunningham, 1972; Mazzocco, et al, 2012). Our results confirm that when confronted with a shame feeling, consumers are more likely to buy status products with the symbolic meaning of social prestige, rather than non-branded products.

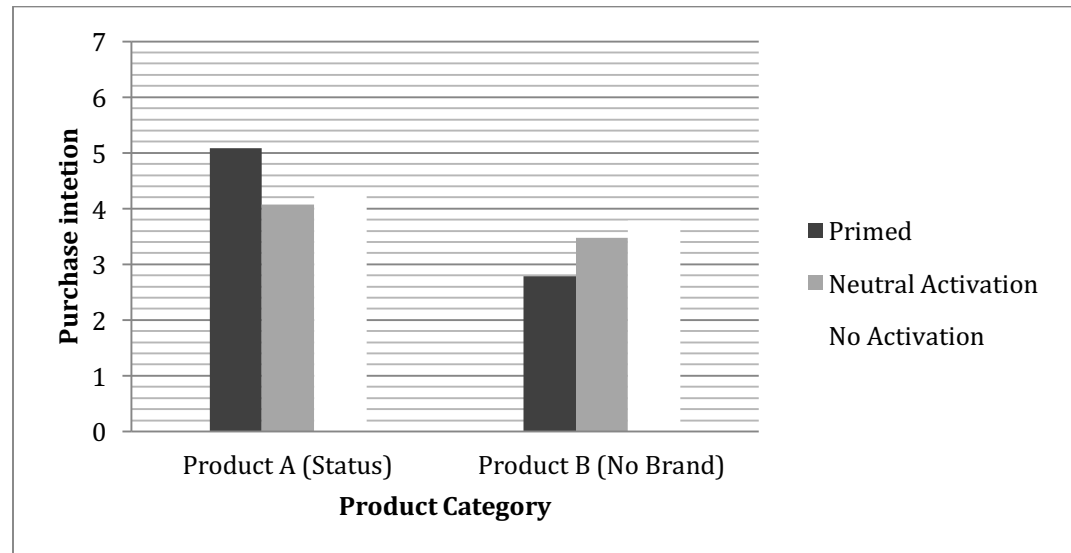
Actually, when consumers feel shame, our results also suggest that they have the lowest intention to buy no brand products among the three groups. This could also be seen as a withdrawal tendency for the avoidance of further shame feelings. As a result, instead of withdrawal behavior of avoiding negative information, as suggested by self-affirmation theory (Steele, 1998), Chinese consumers in a shame condition are more likely to respond with actions that avoid the negative consequences, rather than merely psychologically resisting negative information.

Hence, importantly, this study confirms our prediction that the feeling of shame leads to a higher preference for status products in the consumption field. That is, consumers are more likely to regulate their behaviors, both with restorative behaviors of enhancing one's self-image with status products, and withdrawal behaviors of avoiding further potential negative feelings with non-branded products, to achieve a balanced and comforting condition. This also in line with the results reported in Chapter 5 that shame leads to



restorative behavior of purchasing status products during consumption among Chinese consumers within a culture of shame-affirming.

Figure 6.1. Purchase intention with shame manipulation



### 6.3. Study 2: Brand Conspicuousness, Shame, and Status consumption

Study 2 examines consumers' preferences for the conspicuousness of status products under the shame condition. As seen, results from Study 1 suggest that consumers with a primed shame feeling show a significantly higher level of desire for status products. However, status products contain both loud and quiet products in terms of conspicuousness. Therefore, in this study, we seek to extend the findings in Study 1 by testing the influence of consumers' aroused shame on their choice of status products with different levels of conspicuousness (loud product with high conspicuousness vs. quiet product with low conspicuousness). Consistent with Hypothesis 7, we predict consumers with a primed shame process elicit a significantly higher level of preference for status products with high conspicuousness than with low conspicuousness.

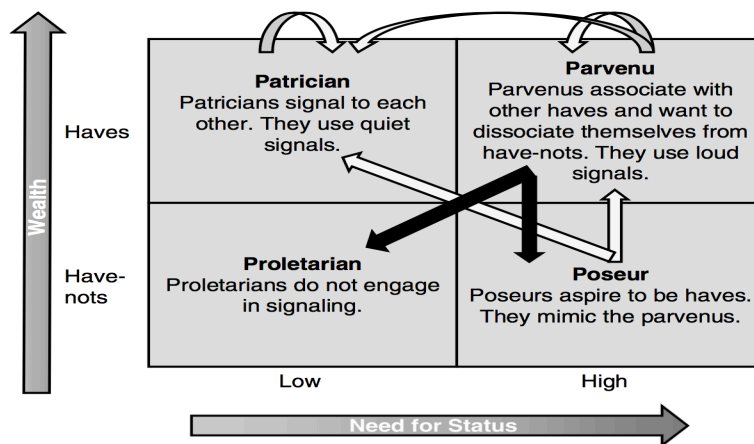
### ***6.3.1. Feeling of Shame, Conspicuousness, and Status Consumption***

The conspicuousness of status products varies in the extent to which their emblem, or logo, is easily noticed by others. Status products with high conspicuousness often display logos prominently and ubiquitously, while logos on status products with low conspicuousness are less visually identifiable. Han et al. (2010) label the former type of status products as loud products, and the latter as quiet products.

Additionally, in their study, Han et al., (2010) classify consumers' signal preferences into four categories based on wealth and need for status: Patrician; Parvenu; Proletarian; and Poseur (see figure 6.2 for details). Patricians are those who have wealth but a low need for status display. They often signal to each other in their social groups. Parvenus are those who have wealth and a high need for status signaling. Proletarians often have no wealth and also a low need for status, while Poseurs are the group of people who have low wealth but a high need for status signaling. Among these four types, consumers who prefer products with high conspicuousness (i.e., with a loud signal) are often those with a high need for status, regardless of the possession of wealth. Actually, the need for displaying the social status often relates to the need of self-presentation and self-expression rather than of one's wealth (Aaker & Schmitt, 2001). Moreover, previous studies also find that products with high conspicuousness are more likely to serve the function of status products in terms of self-presentation and self-expression (Wilcox, et al., 2009). That is, logos on famous brands often function as a signal to present one's image of the self and to express one's value and attitude. As a result, loud status products with high conspicuousness are more attractive to those who desire to express

their own self, and associate themselves with others. With the shame feeling which highly relates to others and their evaluation, one often longs to present the self to the group with a good self-image, often by displaying high social status. Consequently, these individuals are more likely to choose loud products, rather than quiet products, to distinctly display the status signal to the group members.

Figure 6.2. Consumer category on signal preference



(Source: Han, et al., 2010)

To be more specific, as the feeling of shame is caused by a damaged and defected self as a result of a painful experience, consumers with a shame feeling in shame-affirming cultures are highly likely to resolve this issue with restorative action, and thus, express the self with a better image. Status products of high conspicuousness, rather than of low conspicuousness, could fulfill consumers' social goals of expressing the self distinctly with more easily discernible emblems. In this case, consumers want to associate themselves with significant others and the reference group with clear signals to avoid further attack or exclusion. Here, the high conspicuousness functions as a signal to the others and the reference group as well. Thus, loud products serve

as one's affirmational approach of self-expression and self-presentation. Thus, we hypothesize:

H7: The experienced feeling of shame is positively related to consumers' intention to purchase status products with high conspicuousness.

### **6.3.2. Method**

#### *6.3.2.1. Participants and design*

The study has a 3 (condition: shame vs. neutral vs. no activation)  $\times$  2 (product category: high conspicuousness vs. low conspicuousness) design. We recruit participants among students in universities in Ningbo, China. In the whole process of the experiment, both oral information and written material is delivered in Chinese. Similar to the previous experiment in Study 1, participants are told that they are to be assigned to finish a series of different tasks. The first task involves recall and writing about a personal experience under shame primed and neutrally primed conditions. Thereafter, tests concerning the feeling of shame are conducted and, later, a task which tests preferences for status products with different levels of conspicuousness is followed. A total of 114 undergraduate students participated in this study for a lucky draw with 108 RMB for each 18 participants. This lucky draw is held together with participants from Study 3. Among those participants, 47.4% are male, and 52.6% are female.

#### *6.3.2.2. Experiment procedure*

For the manipulation process of the experiment, participants are randomly assigned to one of the three conditions (shame activation vs. neutral/no-shame activation condition vs. no activation condition). The shame manipulation is

similar to the manipulation process seen in Study 1 where participants respond to the questions of each manipulation (no question in the no activation condition) and write a brief description accordingly. Thereafter, the aroused feeling of shame is measured using the experience shame scale (ESS) following Andrews et al. (2002) and Qian et al. (2000).

After the priming process, each participant is given a scenario of attending an important party for which they are asked to buy a pair of sunglasses to wear. The status brand we select is Gucci as it is highly ranked as a luxury brand that reveals one's social status, according to the results of the pretest. Further, we choose sunglasses as the status product as their design for male and female consumers tends to be similar. Other products, such as shoes, clothes, and handbags, are generally clearly designed to be for either male or female consumers, not both. This could cause bias for female participants exposed to specifically male products, and vice versa. As a result, we choose a pair of classic Gucci sunglasses with product number of GG3660/N/K/S and download a picture from Gucci's official website.

To assess desire for status products with different conspicuousness, the dependent measure involves the size and placement of the logo for both status products (loud vs. quiet). Here, we use the original downloaded picture as the loud status product. The quiet status product is exactly the same as the loud status product in appearance, with the exception of its logo size and placement (see product detail in experiment design in Appendix 5 and 6). For this quiet status product, we Photoshopped the logo, made it smaller, and moved it to the inside of the product, a more subtle placement than in the loud status product.

In this stage, all participants are shown the two status products, the Gucci sunglasses: (1) loud products: high conspicuousness with bigger logo presented on the outside of the product where it is easily noticed; and (2) quiet products: low conspicuousness with smaller logo presented on the inside where it is difficult to see. In the introduction to the scenario, participants are told that the two products they see are both Gucci products, the only difference being the size and placement of the logo. Here, they are asked to complete the dependent measurement regarding their preferences for the conspicuousness of the status products (product category: loud product with high conspicuousness vs. quiet product with low conspicuousness). Finally, how reasonable the scenario is, is tested with a one-item measurement.

#### *6.3.2.3. Manipulation test*

We repeated the manipulation check in the previous study using the recall paradigm with three conditions: shame primed; neutrally primed; and, no activation. To check whether the manipulation process works to arouse the shame feeling for the shame primed group, we performed an ANOVA to test the three groups.

As shown in the following table, results suggest that participants in the shame primed group have a significantly stronger sense of shame feeling ( $M= 2.847$ ,  $p= .000$ ) than do the other two groups (neutral condition:  $M=1.942$ ,  $p= .326$ ; no activated condition:  $M= 1.826$ ). That is, the feeling of shame is aroused by the manipulation process. For the other two conditions, neutral activation and no activation, there is no significant difference and, thus, it is not the activation question, but the shame activation question that helps elicit the feeling of

shame. As a result, the ANOVA results in this study also confirm the manipulation results found in the previous study, i.e., that the manipulation process with a shame recall paradigm leads to an arousal of the shame feeling.

Table 6.2. Results of the manipulation check

	<i>Shame activation</i>	<i>Neutral activation</i>	<i>No activation</i>
Shame feeling activated	2.847	1.942	1.826
P	.000	.326	.326
N	38	38	38

#### 6.3.2.4. *Dependent measures*

To assess the impact of the shame feeling on consumers' preferences for status products with different conspicuousness, participants are asked to respond to two similar status products by their appearance, where the products have different levels of conspicuousness. The brand name of the status product is generated from the result of the pretest where Gucci was highly ranked in the list of luxury brands that reveal one's prestige among Chinese consumers. Also, we emphasize that the two products are both branded Gucci, only their logos differ in terms of size and placement. Participants responded to a total of three items using a 7-point scale of likelihood of intention to purchase. The two products are presented side by side on the same page, the status product with high conspicuousness is labeled "product A", and the status product with low conspicuousness is labeled "product B". Preferences are indicated on the 7-point scale with the labels *definitely product A* and *definitely product B* at the endpoints.

### ***6.3.3. Results and Discussion***

To control the product counterbalance presented on the left and right side of the scale, we transform the rating for the dependent measures in the analysis so that higher numbers indicate consumers' preferences for status products with high conspicuousness. The key prediction in this study is that participants with a primed shame feeling should have a higher preference for status products with high conspicuousness. Consistent with our hypothesis, participants from the primed group are significantly different from the other two groups in their preferences for status products with different levels of conspicuousness ( $F=17.228, p=.000$ ).

A one-way ANOVA revealed this prediction with results shown in Figure 6.3. When no shame feeling was primed, status products with high conspicuousness were less attractive to the participants in the neutral condition ( $M=3.219, p=.808$ ), and the no activation condition ( $M=3.421$ ). However, participants in the shame primed group demonstrate a higher interest in purchasing loud status products ( $M=4.956, p=.000$ ). Hence, a higher activated shame feeling makes status consumption with high conspicuousness more desirable, as expected.

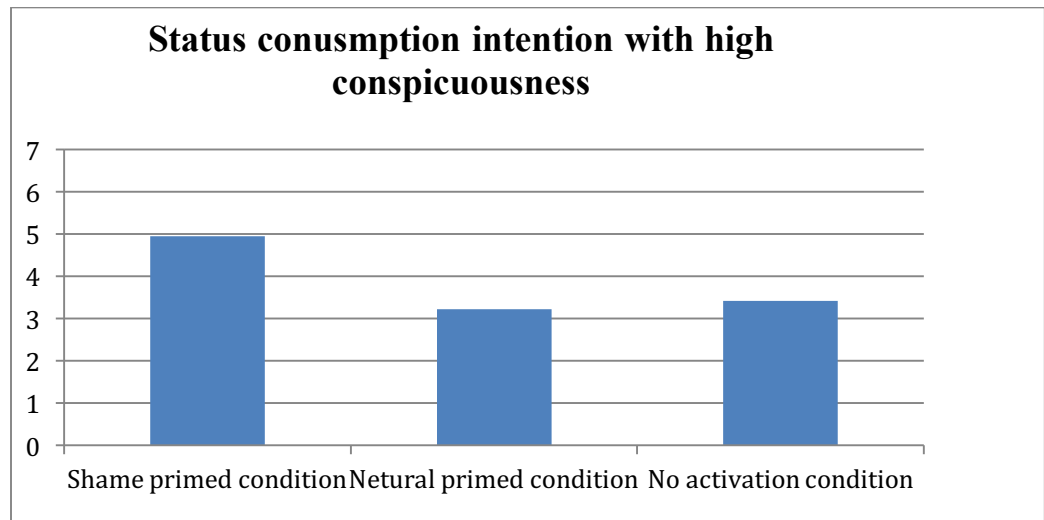
As suggested by Wilcox et al. (2009), products with high brand conspicuousness help fulfill consumers' social goals of expressing their value and displaying a good self-image. From this viewpoint, loud status products are better in serving this social goal than quiet products with low conspicuousness (Wang & Griskevicius, 2014). Particularly under the shame condition, consumers are more likely to choose loud status products with high



conspicuousness to repair the self by expressing their high social status with a good image. That is, with an aroused feeling of shame, a consumer's self is attacked and damaged and thus this individual is motivated to repair the defected self-image. Compared to the quiet status product with its relatively subtle demonstration of the social signal, the loud product with high conspicuousness reveals one's prestige explicitly.

As found in the first study, shame motivates an increased intention to purchase a status product. When two status products are available, under the shame condition the explicit demonstration of status signaling with high conspicuousness is a more efficient approach for revealing a good self-image than that signaled by quiet status products (Sundie, et al., 2011). Therefore, as would be expected from a rational perspective, consumers would choose a more efficient way of repairing their self-image under a shame condition with the direct display of social signaling via loud status products. Hence, importantly, this study extends results found in Study 1 by proving the power of high conspicuousness of status signaling in repairing the damaged self under the shame condition with its adjustive response of restorative tendencies.

Figure 6.3. Purchase intention of status products with high conspicuousness



#### **6.4. Study 3: Relationships, Shame, and Status Consumption**

In this study we investigate another important boundary condition, i.e., ones' personal relationship with others as companions in a shame scenario, and its impact on consumers' intentions to purchase status products. Individuals behave differently when accompanied by people with different psychological proximity, according to previous literature (Ghorbani, et al., 2013) and results from the pilot study of the interview. Study 3, therefore, examines how people with different relationships trigger consumers' different levels of desire for status products through the feeling of shame. We predict that a potential shame scenario involving close relationships of high psychological proximity with companions, such as close friends or parents, should lead to a higher preference for status products. In contrast, when accompanied by those with remote relationships, shame feelings as a consumption motive should result in lower intention to purchase status products.

##### ***6.4.1. Feeling of Shame, Relationships, and Status Consumption***

Limited research has considered the role played by one's relationships with others in shame and status consumption. Some studies investigate the behavior

of consuming status products in terms of family relationships (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998), and sexual relationships (Sundie, et al., 2011; Wang & Griskevicius, 2014). However, the impact of relationship closeness on status consumption under the shame feeling is not yet explored. Hence, we investigate the role of relationship closeness in status consumption under the shame condition in this study.

The experience and emotion of shame is acquired through an individual's interaction with other members of their social group. The degree of impact varies from one's identification of behavioral standards that a certain social group consider norms and which are applied as reference points (Smith & Louis, 2009). Here, there is an important role of "others", which has been highlighted in the interpersonal domain as "significant others". Reference points are created by the significant others in the reference group (Higgins, 1987). In addition, Gausel et al. (2012) suggests that the feeling of shame, which is caused by in-group failure, associates with restorative responses of reparation and self-improvement through the group proximity. That is, individuals place higher value on the appraisal of the in-group than of the out-group and, thus, are more motivated to act with restorative and pro-social behaviors. Likewise, Iyer and Leach (2008) find that individuals may respond strongly and adjustively to in-group moral failure.

Applying this point of view regarding group proximity to a smaller scope by taking an individual perspective, we suggest that personal psychological proximity also impacts on the shame response. Consumers are more likely to respond to shame by consuming status products which present a better image of the self when accompanied by those with whom they have a closer

relationship with intimate psychological proximity. Also, as Giguere et al. (2014) claim, one's reference group shapes one's behavior and one often values evaluations from the reference group more. As a result, one would be more likely to behave pro-socially and adjustively when accompanied by those significant others with whom they have a closer relationship, especially when confronted with a negative situation, such as a shame experience. In our case of feeling shame during consumption, the person will be more desirous to rebuild a better image with status products when surrounded by those significant others with higher psychological proximity. Indeed, in the non-Western context, with both a high collectivist and an in-group condition, appraisal from other social members is considered to be highly important. Hence, in China, where there exists high interdependence, the restorative action of the purchase of a status product as a shame response is more frequent when an individual is with companions with whom they have a close relationship. Thus, we hypothesize:

H8: When consumers are accompanied by those with whom they have a close relationship, they are more likely to purchase status products as a response to the emotion of shame.

#### **6.4.2. Method**

##### *6.4.2.1. Participant and design*

In this study, we have a 3 (condition: remote relationship as strangers vs. medium relationship as acquaintances vs. close relationship as close friends or family members)  $\times$  2 (product category: status vs. neutral) design. All participants are recruited from students at the University of Nottingham

Ningbo. Similar to the earlier studies, all participants receive the introduction and the experiment material in Chinese. They are also informed that a series of different tasks are to be assigned during the experiment. Differing from the previous studies in the recall paradigm where only one of the three groups received a recall paradigm of a shame experience during consumption, here all participants receive the shame priming process via this shame recall paradigm. Then, their aroused feeling of shame is measured. Thereafter, they are randomly assigned with materials of different psychological proximity and their consumption intentions regarding status products are measured. A total of 125 students participated in this study for a lucky draw with 108 RMB for each 18 participants. This lucky draw is held together with participants from Study 3. Among these participants, 21.6% are male and 78.4% are female.

#### *6.4.2.2. Experiment and procedure*

In this experiment, we prime the feeling of shame for all participants instead of for a particular group, as in the earlier studies. To arouse the feeling of shame, the procedure is similar to the shame priming process described in the previous studies whereby participants are asked to recall a personal shame-related experience during consumption by writing a description of the experience in 150 to 200 words. With this process, respondents are expected to evoke the negative feeling of shame before the following steps. Also, as with the previous studies, the aroused feeling of shame is measured following Andrews et al. (2002) and Qian et al. (2000).

After the feeling of shame is evoked and measured, the manipulation process occurs. In this stage, we set three different conditions for companions with

different relationships in terms of their level of psychological proximity (condition: remote relationship as strangers vs. medium relationship as acquaintances vs. close relationship as close friends) with the shame feeling. In these three conditions, all participants are told they are going to attend a beach party and they want to leave a good impression. They also need to buy a pair of sunglasses for this party.

They are told that during the party they will spend their time with other attendees with whom they have one relationship condition of the three conditions seen above, i.e., each participant is randomly assigned to one of those three conditions. For the group with potential shame exposure accompanied by those with whom they have a remote relationship with low psychological proximity, respondents are given a scenario where other attendees at the party are all strangers. In the medium relationship with medium psychological proximity condition, respondents are told that those attending the party are all acquaintances (such as colleagues or classmates). Respondents in the close relationship with high psychological proximity condition are informed that the party attendees are all family members or close friends of theirs.

Thereafter, participants are asked to complete the dependent measurement regarding their preferences for the shown products. The status product we selected is same as the status product with high conspicuousness used in Study 2. The neutral product we provide is exactly the same in design, but contains no logo. In the introduction of the scenario and the product description, participants are informed that the neutral product is a non-branded product.

Finally, we measure how reasonable the scenario is by testing with a one-item measurement.

#### *6.4.2.3. Manipulation test*

We explore the three relationship conditions via the pilot interview introduced in section 6.1, with different relationships in terms of the levels of psychological proximity. In China, family bonding or relationships between close friends clearly suggest a close relationship with high psychological proximity, while the relationship between strangers is relatively remote. Such relationships are clearly identified by Chinese consumers in terms of closeness. As a result, we apply the three conditions of: close relationship with high psychological proximity, like close friends or family members; medium relationship with medium psychological proximity, like classmates or colleagues; and remote relationship with low psychological proximity, like strangers. However, we fail to find a significant difference in the result between the groups.

Then, checking the material participants wrote in the recall paradigm, we find that some participants had recalled their shame related experience during consumption in the company of those with whom they have a close relationship when they had actually been assigned the condition of remote relationship. Thus, there is non-conformity between the assigned condition and the shame related experience actually recalled by the participants.

It is possible that participants did not have a clear anticipation or imagination of the shame experience when accompanied by those with close, or medium, or remote relationships if their experience in the recall paradigm differed from the

condition assigned to them. That is, when one recalls a shame feeling experienced when accompanied by friends in a close relationship, it may be difficult for that individual to imagine a possible shame situation when accompanied by strangers, with whom a remote relationship exists. Consequently, the manipulation process we designed with three conditions, and presented to participants in the introduction section of the experiment, may not work well since some participants lack experience and thus lack imagination for certain situations when accompanied by those of a particular psychological proximity.

Hence, we read the written material in the recall paradigm and re-classified the data in the original three categories with two additional categories, thus: close relationship with high psychological proximity; medium relationship and remote relationship with low psychological proximity; purchase alone online; and a few samples hard to identify.

Here, close psychological proximity includes family members and close friends. Medium psychological proximity refers to classmates, colleagues, and roommates. For those accompanied by a stranger with relatively remote psychological proximity, participants often consume alone in certain malls or shops or accompanied by newly known schoolmates. For the two additional re-categorized groups, we identify consuming alone online as an alternative condition since such consumption behavior and shame experience actually occur in a private setting of which others may be unaware. This is quite different from condition three where consumption takes place in a mall or shop, since the individual is surrounded by strangers and under public exposure. We



have a few samples from which it is difficult to identify the relationship of the individual with the company. Detailed results are shown in the Table 6.3.

Table 6.3. Sample size and means of the re-categorized groups

	Close	Medium	Remote	Purchase online	Hard to identify
Shame feeling	2.662	2.573	2.552	2.785	2.675
Status consumption	5.973	4.137	3.990	4.262	4.167
N	37	34	36	14	4

#### 6.4.2.4. *Dependent measures*

The dependent measures in this study involve how much participants desire to buy the status products and the neutral products. The status product is presented via a picture of Gucci sunglasses, and the neutral product is presented via a picture of non-branded sunglasses. The neutral product is exactly the same in design as the status product except that it carries no logo, and participants are informed that it is a non-brand product. Similar to Study 3, participants respond to measurements of their purchase intention with a total of three items using a 7-point scale of likelihood. The two products are presented side by side on the same page with the status product labeled “product A”, and the neutral product labeled “product B”. In this way, participants are exposed to the two products at the same time. We also use labels of *definitely product A* and *definitely product B* at the endpoints to measure their preferences.

#### 6.4.3. *Results and Discussion*

Similar to Study 2, consumers purchase intentions regarding status and non-branded products are presented on the left and right sides of the scale. We then transform the rating of the dependent measures where higher numbers

indicate consumers' preferences for status products to meet the counterbalance. We perform a one-way ANOVA to test our prediction and the results are revealed in Figure 6.4. Our results find that participants in their recall paradigm accompanied by those with whom they have a close relationship are significantly different from the other four re-categorized groups in their preferences for status products ( $F= 16.931, p= .000$ ).

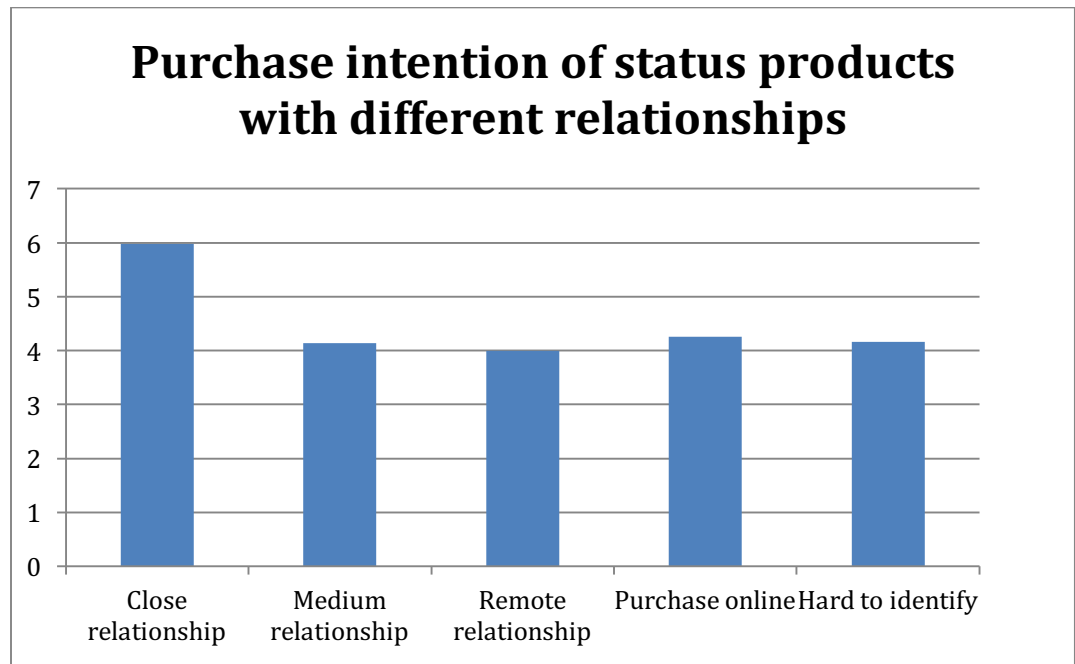
Moreover, as predicted in Hypothesis 8, consumers in their recall paradigm accompanied by those with whom they have a closer relationship are more likely to have a favorable attitude toward status consumption with the activated shame feeling. Our results suggest that those participants ( $M = 5.973, P = .000$ ) show a much higher interest in buying status products, i.e., the Gucci sunglasses. However, we fail to find a significant difference in status consumption between the other two groups who are accompanied by those with whom they have medium or remote relationships. Moreover, our results show that the intention to buy the status product remains insignificant when extends to the four re-categorized groups (medium relationship:  $M= 4.137$ ; remote relationship:  $M= 3.990$ ; purchase online:  $M= 4.262$ ; hard to identify:  $M= 4.167$ ).

Although similar levels of emotion are aroused by the shame feeling between groups (Close relationship = 2.662; Medium relationship = 2.573; Remote relationship = 2.552; Purchase online = 2.785; Hard to identify = 2.675), consumers respond differently when accompanied by people with whom they have a close relationship compared to each of the other four groups. A possible explanation for this is that the role of others and their power to influence consumers' decisions differs in terms of different relationship proximity. The

role of others is highly important to consumers in the group that were accompanied by others with whom they have a close relationship and high psychological proximity (Giguere, et al., 2014; Smith & Louis, 2009). When ashamed with companions of close relationship, the self-image is devalued with the significant other at present. It is only in this condition that the significant other in the reference groups has a strong impact on consumers' decisions (Flynn, 1999). In this case, restorative behavior need to be taken to re-build the image and reputation, since the evaluations generated by the significant others with high psychological proximity are of great importance (Ghorbani, et al., 2013). Thus, in this condition, consumers with an aroused shame feeling have a higher preference to purchase status products in order to avoid potential negative evaluations.

Meanwhile, for those with medium and remote relationships, the power of influence fades. In these cases, the role of others is not that significant since the psychological proximity for medium relationships is relatively distant already. Besides, their image and reputation in their own social group may not be devalued. Consequently, the power of the other in the medium psychological proximity condition is not strong enough to influence, nor to sway the influence of those with a far and remote relationship.

Figure 6.4. Purchase intention of status products with different relationships



### 6.5. General Discussion on the Experiments

These experimental studies contribute to the application of shame with its restorative behavior in consumption, and grow our understanding of further conditions of the feeling of shame in motivating consumers' preferences for status products. We started with a simple question: whether the shame feeling would influence status consumption among Chinese consumers in the shame-affirming culture which exists in China? Specifically, we go beyond the obvious social motivation of gaining privilege that is found in most previous studies (e.g., Mason, 1984; Monkhouse, et al., 2012; O'Cass & McEwen, 2004; Wang & Griskevicius, 2014; Wilcox, et al., 2009). In this research, we delve into a psychological perspective regarding the feeling of shame and its restorative response.

Traditional explanations for the rising trend in status consumption among Chinese consumers suggest economic reasons as the main trigger. That is, this

rising trend is caused by the rapid increase in economic development in China, which has itself resulted in a rising group of new rich who now have the buying power to purchase status products. Yet such enthusiasm for status consumption found in the Eastern market, where a shame-affirming culture exists, is seldom found in other countries whose consumers have even stronger buying powers (Monkhouse, et al, 2012; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Hence, we investigate from this particular psychological aspect of shame, which is deeply embedded in Confucian culture in China.

Additionally, previous research (e.g., Chaudhuri & Majumdar, 2006; Han, et al., 2010) often considers the objective of status consumption to be gaining status or appreciation by presenting one's social image in a neutral situation, rather than in a passive condition when consumers are feeling psychologically defected. For instance, in Monkhouse et al.'s (2012) study, they examine the influence of face on the consumption of luxurious products, mostly from an active perspective of gaining face. However, in a hygiene condition, when there is a psychologically defected need to be compensated, the desire for status products would be stronger. That is, when one experiences the shame feeling during consumption, the desire to erase such a negative feeling is very strong. As a result, differing from Monkhouse et al. (2012), our study focuses on another angle, the influence of shame on status consumption with a negative, but restorative, perspective of re-gaining the lost face or reputation through status products. Such restorative behavior is used to compensate for the negative psychological condition of shame. Here, it must be noted that, although shame is associated with the concept of face, it is often related to face

from the negative perspective, such as losing face, rather than gaining or maintaining face.

To investigate the shame feeling as the motive behind the success of a status product as status signaling in China, we turn to self-regulation and self-affirmation theories, which suggest one regulates one's damaged self with adjustive strategies to achieve self-integrity (Baumerister, et al., 2006; Steele, 1988). To support our predictions, a series of experiments show that the activated shame feeling leads people to purchase status products. Across three studies, status products are found to be more attractive to those participants with a primed shame feeling. Moreover, between status products with either high conspicuousness or low conspicuousness, participants with an aroused shame feeling have a higher preference for loud status products with larger and more obvious logo placement.

Also in line with our prediction, when accompanied by those with whom they have a close relationship, such as family or close friends, the shame feeling motivates a higher preference for status products compared with those accompanied by people with whom they have a medium or remote relationship. However, there is no linear relationship between the impact of shame and the distance of the relationship. No significant difference in status consumption was found between the groups accompanied by others with a medium relationship, those with a remote relationship, and those who purchase online in private. Thus, it is noteworthy that people only care about, and value, negative evaluations from those significant others, so that they often show a stronger desire for products with status signaling under the shame situation when accompanied by those of high psychological proximity. Meanwhile,

evaluations from medium or distant others are not that important in motivating the desire for status products.

## **6.6. Implications, Limitations, and Further Research Directions**

The findings presented in this chapter offer insights with both theoretical and practical implications. In terms of theoretical implications, we prove the existence of the shame response of restorative tendency in the consumption area in the shame-affirming culture of China through the purchase of status products to rebuild one's self-integrity during consumption. This insight also broadens the theorist's discernment of shame studies with adjustive response in the psychological (Tangney, et al., 2014) and managerial (Bagozzi, et al., 2003) areas. We also provide an alternative perspective of status consumption by examining shame as a psychological drive for status seeking in China. Instead of purely demonstrating one's wealth with a snobbish view, status products are actually used to protect one's self-integrity and to save people from the painful feeling of shame.

In terms of practical implications, we provide insights for marketers to apply shame appeal, or to use shame-related strategies, such as designing and launching status products with high conspicuousness, especially for Chinese consumers. However, marketers should identify what is the exact possible restorative behavior in response to shame. For example, the current trend of restorative behavior among Chinese consumers is to reveal their status and present their self-image with a luxurious product. As found in Griskevicius et al.'s (2010) research conducted in Western culture, the consumption of green products is seen as an alternative consumption behavior to show one's status.

Thus, the product category with status signaling may be different in different cultures. Additionally, even in one culture, the trend of using a product category to demonstrate one's status and privilege is also changing. As a result, marketers should pay special attention to the product category. From this perspective, investigating the association of the shame feeling and green consumption is suggested as one direction for further research, since consuming green products is seen as a new trend for revealing one's social status.

There are a few limitations to this work. One is that we only use student samples in our study. Moreover, our experiments did not involve actual purchase of the products. Further studies on shame response with actual behavior with restorative tendencies during consumption among real consumers are highly welcomed. Another limitation is that we only rely on participants from one culture, i.e., Chinese. It may be hard to generalize the shame response of restorative tendencies by purchasing status products as the typical product category during consumption into other shame-affirming cultures (Bagozzi, et al, 2003). That is, in different Eastern countries, at different stages of economic development, products for the display of status signaling may be different (Mason, 1992; Veblen, 1934). As a result, the experiments may be difficult to duplicate in other countries due to different stages of economic development among those countries with shame-affirming cultures. Therefore, we also recommend further research into shame with restorative tendencies by investigating different product categories to fit particular economic conditions. Further, future research is suggested, not only



in shame-affirming cultures, but in Western countries with shame-devaluing cultures by employing cross-cultural studies.

### **Chapter Summary**

Whereas traditional shame studies often relate shame to withdrawal and externalizing behavioral tendencies (e.g., Dickerson, et al., 2004; Gilbert, 1997; Tangney, et al., 1996; Tangney, et al., 2005), our results show that the shame feeling motivates the desire for status products among Chinese consumers. The major focus of this chapter has been to examine the restorative action by displaying products with privilege and status signaling as a response to the shame feeling during consumption through an experimental approach. We conducted three experiments on Chinese consumers, participants were all students in Universities in Ningbo, China. The first study confirmed our prediction that the shame feeling motivates participants' desires for status product. Further, Study 2 extended results found in Study 1 and showed that those with an aroused shame feeling are more attracted to status products with high conspicuousness. That is, with high brand prominence, status signaling is delivered directly to the surroundings, and thus, the damaged self is more likely to be repaired. Study 3 focused on the influence of the distance of relationships on the shame feeling and status consumption. The feeling of shame strongly motivates participants' desires for status products only when accompanied by those significant others with whom they have a close relationship.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter reviews the research, which has investigated shame and its influence on status consumption within a Chinese context. Section 7.1 provides a summary of the thesis, while section 7.2 discusses contributions and implications. Sections 7.3 and 7.4, discuss limitations of the research and make recommendations for further research.

### **7.1. Thesis Summary**

This thesis is comprised of three empirical studies, each one building on its predecessor. A substantial first step was taken with the qualitative corpus analysis conducted in order to better understand the shame phenomenon and its causes and responses. Results in this stage confirm the recent finding of a shame response of restorative tendency (Gausel. et al., 2012; Sheikh, 2014) with a large amount of linguistic evidence. Withdrawal and externalizing tendencies found in traditional shame studies are also found with linguistic support from both Chinese and English corpora.

While our results clearly support the existence of a shame response of restorative tendency, this research further uncovers the potential connection between shame and status consumption among Chinese consumers. Specifically, the thesis gains insights from self-affirmation theory that every individual is driven to maintain their self-integrity, and from self-regulation theory that one may regulate and adjust one's behaviors to achieve a desirable situation. When one feels shame during consumption, or in a related situation, the self is attacked, and thus, self-integrity is damaged, as in a general shame

situation. Then, to maintain self-integrity, one regulates their current performance, or behavior, and seeks status consumption as a restorative response to repair the self. As suggested by Sivanathan and Pettit (2010), status products often function as affirmational commodities that protect and repair the self. These products help to display one's self, especially from the aspect of achieving a better self-image, through social status signaling. Our results regarding this process suggest that there is a positive relationship between shame and status consumption in individuals with a high independent construal of self.

To further investigate this linkage between shame and status consumption, a third step in the experimental process was conducted. Results in this step add more aspects to the previous step. Empirical evidence not only shows that there is a causal relationship between the shame feeling and status consumption, but also suggests there is a positive linkage between shame and the conspicuousness of the status products. That is, consumers with a shame feeling choose products with high conspicuousness, even when the products displayed are both branded products. Additionally, results in the experimental process also highlight the role of the relationship a consumer has with the person/s accompanying them. Consumers with a shame feeling showed a significantly higher intention to purchase status products when accompanied by individuals with whom they have a close relationship.

## **7.2. Contributions and Implications**

Most of the existing research on shame argues that shame only leads to withdrawal tendencies, such as hiding and escaping, or externalizing

tendencies, such as anger and hostility (Dickerson, et al., 2004; Tangney, et al., 1996). Recent findings suggest that beyond the main stream findings of a shame response of withdrawal or externalizing tendencies held by most Western researchers, restorative tendency is found as an alternative response to shame, especially in Eastern cultures, which are shame-affirming. However, to our knowledge, limited research has focused on the shame response of restorative tendency. Among those studies, most research only deals with this conceptually (e.g., De Hooge, et al, 2008; Sheikh, 2014). Only a few studies empirically investigate its impact on actual behavioral tendencies in the field of psychology (Gausel, et al., 2012; Tangney, et al., 2014), let alone any investigation into the influence of shame in the consumption area. Actually, to the author's best knowledge, there is no existing study which explores the impact of shame from the perspective of restorative tendency in the consumption field.

Hence, this research focuses on an examination of the shame response of restorative tendency and investigates the impact of shame on status consumption where the purchase of status products is its restorative response. Our results prove restorative tendency as a shame response with linguistic evidence, and show that shame leads to a higher intention to purchase status products during consumption. In this way, our research contributes to both the shame literature and the consumer psychology and behavior literature in several ways.

First, it adds to existing shame literature by providing a different perspective to the traditional shame response with a response of restorative tendency. The proposed conceptualization of shame responses, as well as the reasons that

cause such differences in response, broadens the theorist's discernment of shame. Moreover, as this research categorizes different shame responses (i.e. restorative tendency; withdrawal tendency; externalizing tendency) and provides linguistic examples for each response, it provides new insights for restorative tendency in that such a behavioral tendency is not only found in Eastern culture, but also in English-speaking Western cultures.

Then, applying shame into the consumption field also adds to the consumption literature by providing a new angle on shame appeal from a restorative perspective. As no previous study has investigated the influence of shame on consumption from this aspect, this study covers not only a theoretical gap in terms of a positive and restorative shame impact in consumption area, but also provides new insights to the strategy development of status consumption. That is, marketers in status consumption should pay special attention to the social function of status products and focus on their social signaling which helps prevent, or save, consumers from their painful shame feeling. However, one point marketers should keep in mind is that they should identify the particular product category that helps to restore the shame-damaged self in different economic stages and cultures as well.

Furthermore, this research also contributes to the self-construal literature with the impact of independent and interdependent construal of self on status consumption among Chinese consumers. Previous studies (O'Cass & Frost, 2002; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998) found one's desire for status product is motivated by both the independent and interdependent construal of self. While the influence of interdependent construal of self on status consumption is profoundly found in China, the independent construal of self impacts as a

moderator that strengthen the relationship between shame and status consumption. This finding helps building self-construal literature with research on shame and consumption by further confirming the role of self in shame emotion and connecting the feeling of shame and status products with its self-affirmation and self-protect function.

### **7.3. Limitations**

As we have mentioned, this research consists of systematic processes with each study building on the previous study, thus, limitations of the first study are remedied by the second study, and limitations of the second study are remedied by the analogy. However, the research is not without limitations.

One limitation is that though we have applied a real consumer sample in the survey part, the experiments recruit college students with both undergraduate and postgraduate level as participants. Since the major source of financial income among Chinese students are often from their family rather themselves, their buying intention, especially on status products might be biased. Further, this study didn't investigate the influence of shame on the actual behavior of buying status products. What this research has examined is consumers' buying intentions, rather than their actual behavior. So, this research reveals the influence of shame on the intention to purchase status products, rather than actual status consumption behavior. Nevertheless, there may be gaps between purchasing intention and actual consumption behaviors, thus, further studies into the influence of shame on actual purchasing behavior among real consumers are suggested.

Moreover, this study investigates the response of shame on status consumption only within a shame-affirming culture in China. As we have discussed, recent studies (Gausel, et al., 2012; Tangney, et al., 2014) found that shame lead to restorative tendencies as shame response even in shame devaluing cultures, where see shame as a totally negative emotion that need to be avoid rather than as a motivator for self-improvement and self-enhancement. While this study lacks a broader sight on shame restorative response considering different types of shame cultures, a comparison of shame response with restorative tendencies between different shame culture would be novel and interesting. Thus, cross-culture study focus on shame response with restorative tendencies are highly recommended.

A further limitation is that the generalization of this research may be relatively limited due to the differences in types of shame culture and the product categories that help repair one's self in different regions. As Chinese culture is considered a shame-affirming culture, while Western culture is seen as a shame-devaluing culture, linguistic evidence for restorative tendency as a shame response are more profound within the Chinese context, though such restorative behavior is also evidenced in the English corpora (see Chapter 4). Thus, replication of this research in a shame-devaluing culture may be interesting. Moreover, in different economic development stages, the product that may affirm one's self and repair the negative feeling of shame, may also be different. Hence, the type of shame culture and its major potential response to shame, as well as a specific product category, are recommended to be taken into careful consideration in the event of future cross-cultural research.

#### **7.4. Recommendations for Further Studies**

While the research presented in this thesis has filled the gap by investigating the response to shame in the consumption area, and advanced our understanding of consumers' reaction to shame through status products, it also provides directions for further studies.

First, generalization of the shame response of restorative tendency into areas other than consumption is recommended. For example, in the managerial area, it would be interesting to investigate how this negative feeling impacts employee's performance following certain shame-related situations, especially with the particular perspective of restorative behavioral tendency. Also, in entrepreneurship, future research could explore the influence of shame on entrepreneurs. Though restorative behavior is less profound in the Western context than in the Chinese context, as we found in Chapter 4, cross-cultural study is still recommended. This may be a huge gap which further research could fill as only a few of the previous Western studies empirically investigate the shame response of restorative tendency, while our linguistic evidence, along with some recent Western works (e.g., Sheikh, 2014; Tangney, et al., 2014) supports restorative tendency as a shame response in the Western context.

In addition, scale development for shame, especially with shame response of restorative tendency, is also suggested. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the most popular and widely adopted shame measurements for current shame studies are Tangney et al.'s (2000) TOSCA, and Cohen et al.'s (2011) GASP. However, these measurements are specifically developed in Western shame-devaluing



cultures, which only cover SNSE for one's perception of shame, and SW for the shame response with withdrawal tendency. They neglect measurements for externalizing tendencies. More importantly, measurements for the recently identified shame response with restorative tendency are also neglected, and these may be insufficient, or even result in flaws, when conducting shame-related research in Asian countries with shame-affirming cultures. Therefore, we recommend further shame scale development covering additional shame responses of restorative tendency and externalizing tendency.

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## Appendices:

### Appendix 1: Shame and Status Consumption Survey (English Version)

Date:



Location:

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

**Please decide how much disagree or agree with the following statements with items scored on 7-point scales from 1 as strongly disagree to 7 as strongly agree.**

1. I would buy a product just because it has status.
2. I am interested in new products with status.
3. I would pay more for a product if it had status.
4. The status of a product is irrelevant to me.
5. A product is more valuable to me if it has some snob appeal.

**Please decide how much degree the following statements have revealed, with items scored on 9-point scales from 1 to 9 with different standard.**

6. If I am buying a product, I would prefer the logo to be

Visible								Nonvisible
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

7. If I am buying a product, I would prefer the logo to be

Big								Small
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

8. If I am buying a product, I would prefer the logo to be

Noticeable								Unnoticeable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

9. If I am buying a product, I would prefer the logo to be

Conspicuous								Inconspicuous
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

**Please decide how much disagree or agree with the following statements with items scored on 7-point scales from 1 as strongly disagree to 7 as strongly agree.**

10. When I am shopping, I try to buy from companies that are working to improve conditions for employees in their factories.
11. I avoid buying products or services from companies that discriminate

against minorities.

12. I avoid buying products made using child labor.
13. I try to buy from companies that hire people with disabilities.
14. I will buy from companies that harm animals or plants.
15. I make special efforts to buy from companies that support charitable causes.
16. I avoid buying a product from a company whose values I do not share.
17. I avoid products or services that cause environmental damage.
18. When given a chance to switch to a brand that gives back to the community, I take it.

**Read the following scenarios, please decide how much unlikely or likely with the following statements with items scored on 7-point scales from 1 as very unlikely to 7 as very likely.**

19. After realizing you have received too much change at a store, you decide to keep it because the salesclerk doesn't notice. What is the likelihood that you would feel uncomfortable about keeping the money?
20. You secretly commit a felony. What is the likelihood that you would feel remorse about breaking the law?
21. At a coworker's housewarming party, you spill red wine on their new cream colored carpet. You cover the stain with a chair so that nobody notices your mess. What is the likelihood that you would feel that the way you acted was pathetic?
22. You lie to people but they never find out about it. What is the likelihood that you would feel terrible about the lies you told?
23. You are privately informed that you are the only one in your group that did not make the honor society because you skipped too many days of school. What is the likelihood that this would lead you to become more responsible about attending school?
24. You reveal a friend's secret, though your friend never finds out. What is the likelihood that your failure to keep the secret would lead you to exert extra effort to keep secrets in the future?
25. You strongly defend a point of view in a discussion, and though nobody was aware of it, you realize that you were wrong. What is the likelihood that this would make you think more carefully before you speak?
26. While discussing a heated subject with friends, you suddenly realize you are shouting though nobody seems to notice. What is the likelihood that you would try to act more considerately toward your friends?

**Please decide how much disagree or agree with the following statements with items scored on 5-point scales from 1 as not at all characteristic of me to 7 as extremely characteristic of me.**

27. I am frequently afraid of other people noticing my shortcomings.
28. I am afraid that others will not approve of me.
29. I am concerned about others people's opinions of me.
30. When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking about me.
31. I am usually worried about what kind of impression I make.
32. If I know someone is judging me, it has little effect on me.
33. I often worry that I will say or do the wrong things.
34. I worry about that other people will think of me even when I know it doesn't make any difference.

**Read the following scenarios, please decide how much unlikely or likely with the following statements with items scored on 7-point scales from 1 as very unlikely to 7 as very likely.**

35. You rip an article out of a journal in the library and take it with you. Your teacher discovers what you did and tells the librarian and your entire class. What is the likelihood that this would make you would feel like a bad person?
36. You give a bad presentation at work. Afterwards your boss tells your coworkers it was your fault that your company lost the contract. What is the likelihood that you would feel incompetent?
37. You successfully exaggerate your damages in a lawsuit. Months later, your lies are discovered and you are charged with perjury. What is the likelihood that you would think you are a despicable human being?
38. You make a mistake at work and find out a coworker is blamed for the error. Later, your coworker confronts you about your mistake. What is the likelihood that you would feel like a coward?
39. After making a big mistake on an important project at work in which people were depending on you, your boss criticizes you in front of your coworkers. What is the likelihood that you would feign sickness and leave work?
40. A friend tells you that you boast a great deal. What is the likelihood that you would stop spending time with that friend?
41. Your home is very messy and unexpected guests knock on your door and invite themselves in. What is the likelihood that you would avoid the guests until they leave?
42. You take office supplies home for personal use and are caught by your boss. What is the likelihood that this would lead you to quit your job?

**Please decide how much disagree or agree with the following statements with items scored on 7-point scales from 1 as strongly disagree to 7 as strongly agree.**

- 43. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.
- 44. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in.
- 45. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than own accomplishments.
- 46. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

- 47. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.
- 48. My personal identity independent of others, is very important to me.
- 49. I'd rather say "No" directly, than risk being misunderstood.
- 50. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met.

51. I perceive myself as a wealthy person.

52. Are you male or female?

Male	Female
------	--------

53. What is your age?

Below 20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	Above 60
----------	-------	-------	-------	-------	----------

54. Please specify your job:

Student	Public functionary	Teacher	Doctor	Worker
Self-employed	Employee	Retired	Housewife	Other_____

55. Please specify you educational background:

Junior high school or below	Senior high school	Bachelor	Master	Doctor(Ph.D)
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56. Do you have religion beliefs:

Buddhism	Christian	Other religion_____	No religion belief
----------	-----------	---------------------	--------------------

57. Are you single child in your family?

Yes	No
-----	----

58. What is your income source?

Family support	Self-earned
----------------	-------------

59. What is your personal income per year?

Below 50 T	50 T to 100 T	100 T to 300 T	300 T to 1000 T	More than 1000 T
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60. What is your family income per year?

Below 50 T	50 T to 100 T	100 T to 300 T	300 T to 1000 T	More than 1000 T
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61. What is your household size?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2: Shame and Status Consumption Survey (Chinese Version)

时间: \_\_\_\_\_

地点: \_\_\_\_\_



Nottingham University  
Business School

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

请您以从 1 到 7 评价是否会不赞同或赞同/不选择或选择以下行为，1=十分不赞同/绝对不会，7=十分赞同/绝对会，请根据程度以此类推。

1. 我会因为一件产品显示了地位而买它。
2. 我对于能够显示地位的新产品很感兴趣。
3. 如果一样产品能够显示地位，我愿意付更多钱。
4. 产品所显示的地位跟我无关。
5. 如果一样产品能够满足我的虚荣心，它对我来说更有价值。

请您以从 1 到 9 评价一下几个标准，其程度会根据 1 到 9 递增或递减，请根据不同程度进行相应的选择。

6. 如果我买一件产品，我希望它的标志

可见				一般				不可见
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

7. 如果我买一件产品，我希望它的标志

大				一般				小
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

8. 如果我买一件产品，我希望它的标志

显眼				一般				不显眼
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

9. 如果我买一件产品，我希望它的标志

引人注目的				一般				不引人注目的
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

请您以从 1 到 7 评价是否会不赞同或赞同/不选择或选择以下行为，1=十分不赞同/绝对不会，7=十分赞同/绝对会，请根据程度以此类推。

10. 当我在买东西时，我会尝试从那些致力于提高他们工厂中员工环境的公司买。
11. 我避免向那些歧视少数群体的公司购买他们的产品和服务。
12. 我避免购买用童工生产的产品。
13. 我会尝试从那些雇佣残疾人的公司购买产品。
14. 我会避免向那些伤害动植物的公司购买产品。
15. 我会特地去想那些参加或支持慈善活动的公司购买产品。
16. 我会避免向跟我价值观不同的公司购买产品。
17. 我会避免为那些会对环境产生伤害的产品或服务付钱。
18. 当有机会选择一个回馈社区的品牌时，我会选择它。



请以从 1 到 7 评价以下情境中您可能有的感受，1=十分不可能，7=十分可能，以此类推。

19. 你在图书馆里把一本期刊里的一篇文章撕下来并带走。你的老师发现了这件事并把这件事告诉图书管理员以及全班同学。你是否有可能会认为这事让你感觉像个坏人？
20. 你在工作上进行了一个糟糕的演讲。之后你老板告诉你同事，是因为你的过错导致了公司失去了这个合约。你是否有可能会觉得自己是不称职的？
21. 你在一项诉讼里成功地夸大了你朋友的损失。几个月之后，你的谎言被发现了，而且你被控告作伪证。你是否可能会认为你自己是一个卑鄙的人？
22. 你在工作上犯了一个错误，然后发现你的一个同事因此被责备。之后这个同事当面跟你对峙你的错误。你是否可能会觉得自己是个懦夫？
23. 在一个你主导的重要项目里，你犯了一个很大的错误。你老板在你同事面前批评你。你是否有可能会装病不来工作？
24. 一个朋友说你总是吹牛，你是否有可能会选择不和这个朋友在一起？
25. 你家很乱，不想有客人来你家敲门并进到屋子里来。你是否有可能会选择避免他们进来？
26. 你把办公用品挪回家自己使用，这件事被你老板抓住。这件事是否可能会影响你的离职倾向？

请您以从 1 到 5 评价以下声明不赞同或赞同的程度，1=完全不是我的性格，5=完全就是我的性格，以此类推。

27. 我经常担心别人注意到我的缺点。
28. 我担心别人不认可我。
29. 我担心别人对我的看法。
30. 当我和别人说话时，我担心他们是怎么想我的。
31. 我经常担心我会给别人留下什么样的印象。
32. 如果我知道别人在评判我，这个对我影响不大。
33. 我经常担心我会说错或者做错某些事。
34. 尽管我知道这不会改变任何事情，我仍然会担心别人是怎么想我的。

请以从 1 到 7 评价以下情境中您可能有的感受，1=十分不可能，7=十分可能，以此类推。

35. 在意识到你在一家店里收到过多零钱时，由于店员没有发现，你决定留下多余零钱。对于保留这些多余的零钱，你是否有可能会觉得不舒服？
36. 你偷偷犯了一项重罪。你对于触犯法律是否可能会感到懊悔？
37. 在一个同事的新家乔迁派对上，你把红酒洒在了他们新的奶油色地毯上。你搬来把椅子把污渍覆盖住，所以没人知道。你是否可能会觉得

你这种行为是内疚的。

38. 你对别人说谎，但他们从来没有发现。你是否可能会对于你说过的谎言而感到不好？
39. 由于你翘了太多课，你被私下通知你是你们组里唯一一个没有进荣誉学会的人。这件事对你未来更负责任地去上课是否有可能会有影响？
40. 尽管你的朋友永远不会发现，你泄露了你朋友的秘密。由于你泄露朋友的秘密这件事带来的影响，你是否有可能会在未来更尽力保守秘密？
41. 在一次讨论中，你强烈地辩护了一个观点。尽管没有人发现，你意识到自己是错的。这件事是否可能会让你将来在说话前三思？
42. 当你和一群朋友正在热烈讨论一个话题时，你突然意识到你在冲着他们大喊大叫。尽管没人意识到，你是否可能会对你朋友更加体贴？

请您以从 1 到 7 评价以下声明同意或不同意的程度，1=十分不赞同，7=十分赞同，以此类推。

43. 对我来说，保持群体内的和谐很重要。
44. 我会为我所在的组群牺牲自己的利益。
45. 我经常会有种感觉，我跟别人的关系比我自己的成就更重要。
46. 对我来说，尊重群体所做的决定很重要。
47. 在很多方面，我都喜欢自己特立独行一点。
48. 我的个人身份独立于他人，这对我十分重要。
49. 我宁愿直接说不，而不是冒风险被误会。
50. 在应对跟我刚认识的人时，我更喜欢直接一点。

51. 我认为自己是个有钱人。

52. 您是男性还是女性？

男性	女性
----	----

53. 请问您的年龄是？

低于 20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	高于 60
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54. 请问您的职业是

学生	公务员	教师	医生	工人
个体经营者	公司职员	退休	家庭主妇	其他_____

55. 请指出您的教育背景：

初中或初中以下	高中	大学（学士）	研究生（硕士）	博士
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56. 请问您是否有宗教信仰？

佛教	基督教	其他宗教_____	无任何宗教信仰
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57. 请问您是否是家中的独生子女？

是	不是
---	----

58. 请问您的经济来源？

家里支持	自己
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59. 请问您的个人年收入是多少？

少于 8 万 RMB	8-15 万 RMB	15-30 万 RMB	30-100 万 RMB	多于 100 万 RMB
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60. 请问您的家庭年收入是多少？

少于 8 万 RMB	8-15 万 RMB	15-30 万 RMB	30-100 万 RMB	多于 100 万 RMB
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61. 请问您家中有多少人一起生活？

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## **Appendix 3: Experiment 1. Shame Motives and Status Consumption (English Version)**

### **Priming question**

Condition (no activation): No recall paradigm with question.

Condition (neutral primed):

*Please describe a recent experience of watching a video and describe your feeling.*

Condition (Primed):

*Please describe a recent experience in which your possession is in derision by others or a disrespectful experience during consumption, and describe your feelings as well as reactions in that situation.*

### **Manipulation Check**

**Everybody at times can feel embarrassed, self-conscious or ashamed. These questions are about such feelings if they have occurred at any time in the past year. There are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers. Please indicate the response which applies to you with a tick.**

1. Have you felt ashamed of any of your personal habits?
2. Have you worried about what other people think of any of your personal habits?
3. Have you tried to cover up or conceal any of your personal habits?
4. Have you felt ashamed of your manner with others?
5. Have you worried about what other people think of your manner with others?
6. Have you avoided people because of your manner?
7. Have you felt ashamed of the sort of person you are?
8. Have you worried about what other people think of the sort of person you are?
9. Have you tried to conceal from others the sort of person you are?
10. Have you felt ashamed of your ability to do things?
11. Have you worried about what other people think of your ability to do things?
12. Have you avoided people because of your inability to do things?

13. Do you feel ashamed when you do something wrong?
14. Have you worried about what other people think of you when you do something wrong?
15. Have you tried to cover up or conceal things you felt ashamed of having done?
16. Have you felt ashamed when you said something stupid?
17. Have you worried about what other people think of you when you said something stupid?
18. Have you avoided contact with anyone who knew you said something stupid?
19. Have you felt ashamed when you failed in a competitive situation?
20. Have you worried about what other people think of you when you failed in a competitive situation?
21. Have you avoided people who have seen you fail?
22. Have you felt ashamed of your body or any part of it?
23. Have you worried about what other people think of your appearance?
24. Have you avoided looking at yourself in the mirror?
25. Have you wanted to hide or conceal your body or any part of it?

**You are going to attend a very important party and you are going to buy a new handbag for the party.**

Product A is a Chanel back handbag and product B is an ordinary no brand handbag. Please look at the pictures of both products below and answer the following questions.

***Product A***



***Product B***



## Appendix 4: Experiment 1. Shame Motives and Status Consumption (Chinese Version)

### 激活问题

分组 1 (无激活问题): 该组在此阶段不面临任何问题.

分组 2 (无关激活问题): 请描述一下您最近一次看的视频以及您当时的感受。(150-200 字)

分组 3 (羞耻激活问题): 请描述一下您最近一次在消费期间被无礼对待的经历, 或者是您买的东西被别人嘲笑的经历。然后描述您当时的感受以及您所做出的反应。(150-200 字)

### 激活检查

每个人都有时候会感到尴尬, 难为情或羞愧。这些问题是关于过去一年中产生的这类情绪。这些问题没有“对”或“错”的答案。请根据您有的反映做出选择。1=十分不赞同, 4=十分赞同, 以此类推。

1. 你是否为你的个人习惯而感到羞耻?
2. 你是否为他人如何看待你的个人习惯而担心?
3. 你是否试图掩盖或隐瞒你的个人习惯?
4. 你是否为你对待他人的方式而感到羞耻?
5. 你是否为他人如何看待你对待别人的方式而感到担心?
6. 你是否因为自己的行为方式而避开他人?
7. 你是否因为自己是某种人而感到羞耻?
8. 你是否为他人认为你是某种人而感到担心?
9. 你是否试图对别人隐藏你的为人?
10. 你是否为你的能力而感到羞耻?
11. 你是否为他人如何认为你的能力而感到担心?
12. 你是否试图在你无能为力是避开他人?
13. 在做错某些事时, 你是否感到羞耻?
14. 你是否为他人认为你做错事而感到担心?
15. 你是否试图掩盖或隐瞒让你觉得羞耻的事?

16. 你是否在你说了一些蠢话是感到羞耻？
17. 你是否有为他人认为你说了蠢话而感到担心？
18. 你是否会避开那些知道你说了蠢话的人？
19. 你是否会为你在竞争中失败而感到羞耻？
20. 你是否会为他人认为你在竞争中失败而感到担心？
21. 你是否会避免别人看到你的失败？
22. 你是否会为你的身体或者你身体的任何一部分而感到羞耻？
23. 你是否会担心他人如何看待你的形象或外貌？
24. 你是否会避免看镜子里的自己？
25. 你是否会想隐藏你的身体或身体的某部分？

请想象一下情境：

你要参加一个非常重要的聚会。为了这个聚会，你需要买一个新的手包。如图所示，A 产品是一个黑色的香奈儿手包，B 产品是一个普通的没有牌子的手包。

请看一下图片中的两个产品，回答接下来的问题。

*Product A*



*Product B*



## Appendix 5: Experiment 2. Brand Consciousness, Shame and Status Consumption (Chinese Version)

### Priming question

Condition (no activation): No recall paradigm with question.

Condition (neutral primed):

*Please describe a recent experience of watching a video and describe your feeling.*

Condition (Primed):

*Please describe a recent experience in which your possession is in derision by others or a disrespectful experience during consumption, and describe your feelings as well as reactions in that situation.*

### Manipulation Check

**Everybody at times can feel embarrassed, self-conscious or ashamed. These questions are about such feelings if they have occurred at any time in the past year. There are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers. Please indicate the response which applies to you with a tick.**

1. Have you felt ashamed of any of your personal habits?
2. Have you worried about what other people think of any of your personal habits?
3. Have you tried to cover up or conceal any of your personal habits?
4. Have you felt ashamed of your manner with others?
5. Have you worried about what other people think of your manner with others?
6. Have you avoided people because of your manner?
7. Have you felt ashamed of the sort of person you are?
8. Have you worried about what other people think of the sort of person you are?
9. Have you tried to conceal from others the sort of person you are?
10. Have you felt ashamed of your ability to do things?
11. Have you worried about what other people think of your ability to do things?
12. Have you avoided people because of your inability to do things?
13. Do you feel ashamed when you do something wrong?



14. Have you worried about what other people think of you when you do something wrong?
15. Have you tried to cover up or conceal things you felt ashamed of having done?
16. Have you felt ashamed when you said something stupid?
17. Have you worried about what other people think of you when you said something stupid?
18. Have you avoided contact with anyone who knew you said something stupid?
19. Have you felt ashamed when you failed in a competitive situation?
20. Have you worried about what other people think of you when you failed in a competitive situation?
21. Have you avoided people who have seen you fail?
22. Have you felt ashamed of your body or any part of it?
23. Have you worried about what other people think of your appearance?
24. Have you avoided looking at yourself in the mirror?
25. Have you wanted to hide or conceal your body or any part of it?

**You are going to attend a very important beach party and you need to buy a new pair of sunglasses for this party.**

As shown in the pictures below, product A is a pair of Gucci sunglasses with obvious logos that easily noticed by other; product B is also a pair of Gucci sunglasses, but with its logos less obvious and hardly to be noticed.

*Product A*



*Product B*



## Appendix 6: Experiment 2. Brand Consciousness, Shame and Status Consumption (Chinese Version)

### 激活问题

分组 1 (无激活问题): 该组在此阶段不面临任何问题.

分组 2 (无关激活问题): 请描述一下您最近一次看的视频以及您当时的感受。(150-200 字)

分组 3 (羞耻激活问题): 请描述一下您最近一次在消费期间被无礼对待的经历, 或者是您买的东西被别人嘲笑的经历。然后描述您当时的感受以及您所做出的反应。(150-200 字)

### 激活检查

每个人都有时候会感到尴尬, 难为情或羞愧。这些问题是关于过去一年中产生的这类情绪。这些问题没有“对”或“错”的答案。请根据您的反映做出选择。1=十分不赞同, 4=十分赞同, 以此类推。

1. 你是否为你的个人习惯而感到羞耻?
2. 你是否为他人如何看待你的个人习惯而担心?
3. 你是否试图掩盖或隐瞒你的个人习惯?
4. 你是否为你对待他人的方式而感到羞耻?
5. 你是否为他人如何看待你对待别人的方式而感到担心?
6. 你是否因为自己的行为方式而避开他人?
7. 你是否因为自己是某种人而感到羞耻?
8. 你是否为他人认为你是某种人而感到担心?
9. 你是否试图对别人隐藏你的为人?
10. 你是否为你的能力而感到羞耻?
11. 你是否为他人如何认为你的能力而感到担心?
12. 你是否试图在你无能为力是避开他人?
13. 在做错某些事时, 你是否感到羞耻?
14. 你是否为他人认为你做错事而感到担心?
15. 你是否试图掩盖或隐瞒让你觉得羞耻的事?

16. 你是否在你说了一些蠢话是感到羞耻？
17. 你是否有为他人认为你说了蠢话而感到担心？
18. 你是否会避开那些知道你说了蠢话的人？
19. 你是否会为你在竞争中失败而感到羞耻？
20. 你是否会为他人认为你在竞争中失败而感到担心？
21. 你是否会避免别人看到你的失败？
22. 你是否会为你的身体或者你身体的任何一部分而感到羞耻？
23. 你是否会担心他人如何看待你的形象或外貌？
24. 你是否会避免看镜子里的自己？
25. 你是否会想隐藏你的身体或身体的某部分？

请想象一下情境：

你要参加一个非常重要的沙滩派对。为了这个派对，你需要购买一副新的太阳眼镜。

如图所示，产品 A 是一副古奇的太阳眼镜，这幅太阳眼镜的标志很明显，因此很容易被别人认出来；产品 B 同样也是一副古奇的太阳眼镜，然而这幅眼镜的标志并不明显，因此别人很难认出来。请看以下的两个产品的图片并回答下列问题

产品 A



产品 B



**Appendix 7: Experiment 3. Relationship, Shame and Status Consumption  
(English Version)**

**Condition1: (strangers-distant relationship)**

**Please read the following scenario and make your choice of purchasing.**

You are going to attend a beach party. *Other attendees at this party are all strangers.* You wish you could make a good impression in this party and you don't want to embarrass yourself. Now you are going to buy a pair of new sunglasses for the party. Product A is a pair of Gucci sunglasses and product B is a pair of no brand name sunglasses. Please look at the pictures of both products below and answer the following questions.

**Condition2: (acquaintance-moderate relationship)**

**Please read the following scenario and make your choice of purchasing.**

You are going to attend a beach party. *Other attendees at this party are all acquaintances (such as colleges or normal classmates).* You wish you could make a good impression in this party and you don't want to embarrass yourself. Now you are going to buy a pair of new sunglasses for the party. Product A is a pair of Gucci sunglasses and product B is a pair of no brand name sunglasses. Please look at the pictures of both products below and answer the following questions.

**Condition3: (friends-close relationship)**

**Please read the following scenario and make your choice of purchasing.**

You are going to attend a beach party. *Other attendees at this party are all close friends of yours.* You wish you could make a good impression in this party and you don't want to embarrass yourself. Now you are going to buy a pair of new sunglasses for the party. Product A is a pair of Gucci sunglasses and product B is a pair of no brand name sunglasses. Please look at the pictures of both products below and answer the following questions.

***Product A***



***Product B***



## Appendix 8: Experiment 3. Relationship, Shame and Status Consumption (Chinese Version)

### 分组 1:

请阅读以下情境并作出您的选择:

你要去参加一个沙滩派对。*别的参加这次聚会的人都是陌生人, 跟你不熟。*你希望你能够在本次聚会中留下一个良好的印象。并且, 你希望能够避免令自己难堪的情况。现在你需要为聚会买一副新的太阳镜。如图所示, 产品 A 是一副古奇的太阳眼镜, 而产品 B 是一副没有牌子的太阳镜。请看以下的两个产品的图片并回答下列问题。

### 分组 2:

请阅读以下情境并作出您的选择:

你要去参加一个沙滩派对。*别的参加这次聚会的人都是你的熟人 (如同事或普通同学)。*你希望你能够在本次聚会中留下一个良好的印象。并且, 你希望能够避免令自己难堪的情况。现在你需要为聚会买一副新的太阳镜。如图所示, 产品 A 是一副古奇的太阳眼镜, 而产品 B 是一副没有牌子的太阳镜。请看以下的两个产品的图片并回答下列问题。

### 分组 3:

请阅读以下情境并作出您的选择:

你要去参加一个沙滩派对。*别的参加这次聚会的人都是你特别熟悉的好朋友。*你希望你能够在本次聚会中留下一个良好的印象。并且, 你希望能够避免令自己难堪的情况。现在你需要为聚会买一副新的太阳镜。如图所示, 产品 A 是一副古奇的太阳眼镜, 而产品 B 是一副没有牌子的太阳镜。请看以下的两个产品的图片并回答下列问题。

产品 A

产品 B

