When Old Meets New: How China’s ‘Double-Eleven’ Day Challenges Confucianism

Wenkai Zhou
Austin E. Cofrin School of Business, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, USA

Yu-Feng L. Lee
College of Business, New Mexico State University, USA

Michael R. Hyman
College of Business, New Mexico State University, USA

Abstract

‘Double-Eleven’ Day (aka 11.11 [November 11th], Singles Day, and Bachelors Day) is an e-commerce shopping spree celebrated by millions of Chinese e-shoppers. Since 2013, Chinese e-tailers have experienced record one-day sales on that date. Qualitative secondary data about ‘Double-Eleven’ Day e-shoppers suggests they are short-term oriented and individualistic, anti-hierarchical in buyer-seller relationships, focused on immediate consumption and hedonic pleasure, and prone to spontaneous trust and superficial interactions when online. In contrast, traditional Chinese shoppers conform to long-established Chinese personal selling strategies by being long-term oriented, collectivistic, and seekers of long-term mutual trust in hierarchical buyer-seller relationships. Hence, Chinese e-tailers should adapt their selling practices to Chinese e-shoppers’ attitudes and behaviors.

Keywords: E-commerce, Personal Selling, ‘Double-Eleven’ Day, Confucianism
Introduction

‘Double-Eleven’ Day (aka 11.11 [November 11th], Singles Day, and Bachelors Day) quickly has become an important annual sales event in China. Inspired in the early 1990s by academic fellows in Nanjing, China to pamper ‘lonely hearts’ on Valentine’s Day, in 2013 China-based Alibaba Group (http://alibabagroup.com/en/global/home; a major e-tailer) transformed it into an Internet shopping spree for unmated adults who want to indulge themselves and celebrate their singlehood.

On 2013’s ‘Double-Eleven’ Day, Alibaba Group experienced record one-day sales of $5.8 billion via its Internet portals Tmall (http://tmall.com) and Taobao(http://taobao.com); on the same day in 2014, it exceeded that record by 50%. In 2015, ‘Double-Eleven’ Day sales reached a new record of $14.3 billion. Domestic and international Chinese e-shoppers consummated these sales, which surpassed post-Thanksgiving U.S. sales on Black Friday or Cyber Monday (BBC News2014; Xinhuanet 2014). As noted by Jack Ma, founder, chairman, and CEO of Alibaba Group, “E-commerce is like a fierce lion; it is devouring the traditional business as a timid sheep” (Bloomberg Business 2014; Sohu News 2012).

Why has ‘Double-Eleven’ become an important shopping day, especially in an emerging market where economic development and per capita income are ‘traditional (less-developed)’ and ‘low’ (The World Bank 2015)? Few sales researchers recognize Chinese adolescents’ and young adults’ shift from physical to virtual shopping, which may be attributable to diminishing Confucian influence on purchase and consumption behavior. To address this oversight, we consider the philosophical underpinnings of Confucianism and its repercussions on sales-related cultural practices. With e-shopping evermore complementing traditional selling in China, as evidenced by ‘Double-Eleven’ Day activities, we rely on qualitative data to explore Chinese e-shoppers’ purchase behaviors and their deviation from traditional Chinese shoppers’ purchase behaviors.

Background

Chinese e-commerce

In 2000, China's path to e-commerce was obscured. With few e-commerce platforms and only 2.1 million Internet users, China was a cybermarket laggard (KPMG Global China Practice 2014). Yet, by 2013 there were 600 million Chinese Internet users and e-commerce revenue growth from 2009 to 2012 exceeded 70% annually (Hoffmann and Lannes 2013). At that rate, China soon will surpass the U.S. as the largest e-commerce market (KPMG Global China Practice 2014; The Economist 2013; CNN News 2013). By 2020, China's e-sales likely will exceed combined e-sales for the U.S., U.K., Japan, Germany, and France (China Internet Watch 2013).

Although business scholars generally acknowledge China’s e-commerce potential while fretting over her e-commerce impediments (Daley 2003; Downing 2006; Martinsons 2008), a minority of them have focused on challenges to China’s evolution into a mature e-market (Hussain et al. 2007; Wang 2002; Zhang, Bian, and Zhu 2013). This minority contends China’s heavily relationship-based and informal
society discourages dependable rules for economic and governance structuring (Holliday and Yep 2005; Martinsons 2008; Xin and Pearce 1996). As a result, their research tends to focus on the consumer side of the consumer-producer dyad.

In relating e-trust to Chinese e-shopping behavior, researchers found a lack of e-trust hinders e-market expansion (Cyr 2008; Fang et al. 2014; Pang, Yen, and Tarn 2007; Pavlou, Liang, and Xue 2006). In response to these findings, Chinese retailers sought ways to build online rapport reflective of China's relationship-based traditions. Face-to-face and negotiation-led personal selling strategies likely will remain the norm until China's national infrastructure and institutional mechanisms develop further (Haley 2002; Martinsons 2008; Ng 2009; Sharma 2008) and interpersonal relationships no longer dominate commerce.

Confucianism and Traditional Personal Selling in China

Skepticism about China's e-commerce development is grounded largely in a deeply engrained Confucian culture. Although discarded temporarily by early communist leaders, Confucian ideals have re-emerged in Chinese and East Asian schools, businesses, and governments (Fam, Yang, and Hyman 2009). Many scholarly discussions reflect Confucianism’s previous and continuing influence on Chinese business principles and practices (Beverland 2009; Fam, Yang, and Hyman 2009; Koehn 2001; Lee et al. 2009; Ma et al. 2014; Ramasamy, Yeung, and Chen 2013; Wang 2010; Zhu 2009). For example, the Chinese public originally doubted Alibaba’s long-run viability due to the discrepancy between Jack Ma’s prospectus for Alibaba and China’s Confucian roots (Davos World Economic Forum 2015).

Effective negotiating is vital to successful selling outcomes (Alexander, Schul, and McCorkle 1994; Dubinsky 1987; Jelinek 2014; Reynolds and Simintiras 2000; Wieseke, Alavi, and Habel 2014). Traditional Confucian values provide key insights into Chinese business-negotiation styles (Chuah, Hoffmann, and Larner 2014; Fang 2006; Graham and Lam 2003; Ma et al. 2014; Warden and Chen 2009). Traditionally, sales-related negotiations in China are conducted face-to-face because institutional deficiencies encourage ‘doing business’ with known and trusted parties (e.g., family, friends, in-group Guanxiwang) (Fan 2002; Simmons and Munch 1996). Business scholars have explored these traditional practices, which are grounded in personal relationship (Guanxi), personal communication (Sijiao), personal credibility (Xinyong), and personal affection (Ganqing) (Barnes et al. 2014; Chen and Chen 2004).

Confucianism Doctrines

Confucianism—the paramount guiding philosophy in Chinese life and cultural practice (Hofstede and Bond 1988; Huang, Ba, and Lu 2014; Yang 2012; Yum 1988)—has become a unifying and assimilating ethos for much of Asia (Chao 1990). The Figure summarizes four of its major philosophical constituents (i.e., the inner circle) and its respective cultural implications (i.e., the outer squared loop). Its Five Constants or Wuchang—Ren (humaneness), Yi (righteousness), Li (ritual), Zhi(wisdom), and Xin (integrity)—are the highest virtues for right-being and right-doing by people and society. Through Confucius’ Five Bonds or Five Relationships (Wulun)—ruler to ruled (or subordinate), father to son, husband to wife, elder brother
to younger brother, and friend to friend—interpersonal relationships are expected and regimented while social harmony is ensured (Bell 2000; Chen, Chen, and Huang 2013; Dawson 2005). *Jian*, interpreted as frugality or thrift, relates to the *Five Bonds* through long-run orientation (Yoon 2009).

The *Five Bonds* should be maintained for interpersonal relationships in a hierarchical society. *Benevolence* normally is conveyed from higher- to lower-hierarchy members and reverence is offered from lower- to higher-hierarchy members (Bond and Hwang 1986; Ho 1998). Friend-to-friend relationships are mutual, so equal respect is appropriate. Well-ordered interpersonal relationships imply a stable long-term orientation—pragmatic, thrifty, and forward-looking—in China (Emery and Tian 2010).

![Confucianism's Philosophical Constituents and Their Cultural Implications](image)

**Figure 1:** Confucianism’s Philosophical Constituents and Their Cultural Implications

Social harmony—whereby people uphold their respective status hierarchically and interact accordingly—is the ultimate goal of the *Five Bonds*. In Chinese culture, social harmony implies collectivism, and under Confucianism a collectivist society promotes cooperative efforts and communal interests abetted by personal self-sacrifice, self-restraint, and downplayed self-importance (Lin and Huang 2014).

*Li* (ritual), which stresses rites between persons, manifests as people treating one another with reverence within *Five Bonds*-related hierarchical constraints.*Xin* (integrity) stresses mutual trust (or faithfulness), accountability, and reliability. *Xin* fosters harmonious societal outcome as mutual trust diminishes uncertainty, promotes consensus, and nourishes interpersonal relationship. *Jian* (frugality) encourages conservatism in resource usage and allocation, which should be dictated by need and utility rather than desire and pleasure. In traditional Chinese economies, frugal people are viewed favorably and, as a whole, a society with savings and prudence is believed to create communal prosperity (Dawson 2005).
Analytical Method

To further explore traditional personal selling strategies in China and the contrary mindset and consumption behavior of Chinese e-shoppers, we conducted a qualitative review of selected news stories (e.g., CNBC 2015; BBC News 2015; Bloomberg Business 2014) about ‘Double-Eleven’ Day, interviews of Alibaba’s executives (e.g., Stanford University Graduate School of Business 2015; Davos World Economic Forum 2015), book collections published by Alibaba Group (2014) and Ke (2015), and other sources. The diverse list of investigative materials and sources is summarized in Table 1. Although many other unselected sources cover similar topics, our sources provide more comprehensive coverage about the Alibaba Group and ‘Double-Eleven’ Day produced by many established and highly-renowned publishing media from both Western countries and China (such as BBC News, CNN News, NPR, CNBC, Forbes China, Bloomberg Business, the Economist; Reuters, Xinhuanet, China Press, Oriental Broadcast, Liaoning TV, Sohu News) and institutions (such as Stanford University, Credit Suisse, and Davos World Economic Forum).

Table 1: Publicly Accessible Materials and Sources Related to the Alibaba Group and ‘Double-Eleven’ Day Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Type</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
<pre><code>          | Alibaba Group (2014) |
</code></pre>
| News Entries| CNBC (2015)     
              | BBC News (2015)    
              | NetEase (2015)     
              | NetEase (2014)     
              | Forbes China (2014)  
              | China Press (2014)  
              | NPR (2014)         
              | Bloomberg Business (2014)  
              | Reuters (2014)      
              | Liaoning Television (2014)  
              | Shenzhen News (2014)  
              | Xinhuanet (2013)     
              | Sohu News (2012)    |
| Interviews  | Jack Ma, by Stanford University, Graduate School of Business (2015)  
              | Jack Ma, by Davos World Economic Forum (2015)  
              | Joseph Tsai, by Bloomberg Business (2014)  
              | Jack Ma, by CBS News (2014)  
              | Jack Ma, by Credit Suisse at Asian Investment Conference (2013)  
              | David Wei, by CNN News (2013) |
| Others      | Nielsen Company (2014)  
              | Oriental Broadcast (2014)  
              | Topic Studio (2014)  
              | The Economist (2013) |

Due to the nature of our discovery-oriented exploration, the selection process for source materials was systematic and focused on major publishing media, as they are
the most credible non-proprietary sources for constructing ‘Double-Eleven’ Day narratives. Duplicate messages were excluded to eliminate redundancy. These qualitative data predominantly describe examples and events; hence, no formal test of hypotheses was possible. Analytical methods entailed deconstruction of news stories manifesting Chinese e-shoppers’ thoughts and behaviors before and during ‘Double-Eleven’ Day and unstructured viewings of recorded interviews with Alibaba executives.

Our qualitative approach follows Boje (2001)’s narrative storytelling methodology, which is one of the most established qualitative procedures. Antenarrative is defined by Boje as the process by which retrospective narrative is linked to a living story (Boje 2001, 2011). To develop the ontological story of ‘Double-Eleven’ Day and its influence on traditional Chinese business ideologies under Confucianism, retrospective meanings extracted from the qualitative sources were deconstructed in light of the antenarrative mindset. Collectively, the deconstructive analysis of the chosen qualitative sources should suggest how Chinese e-shoppers differ from traditional Chinese shoppers relative to the Five Bonds, Li, Xin, and Jian. In turn, such differences may suggest Chinese e-tailers adopt non-traditional selling strategies compatible with Chinese e-shoppers’ purchasing preferences and behaviors.

The main inquiry is divided into two parts. In the following section, based on the aforementioned Confucian criteria, traditional Chinese personal selling strategies are discussed. Subsequently, major changes in Chinese e-shoppers’ consumption behaviors are assessed, especially as they reflect their mindset on ‘Double-Eleven’ Day.

**Findings**

Both the reviewed literature and ‘Double-Eleven’ Day narratives suggest buying attitudes and behaviors differ between traditional Chinese shoppers and Chinese e-shoppers (e.g., Forbes China 2014; Reuters 2014; Liu et al. 2008; Davos World Economic Forum 2015; Richards and Shen 2008; NPR 2014; BBC News 2015; CNBC 2015; U.S. News & World Report 2015; NetEase 2015). As summarized in Table 2, the latter group’s attitudes and behaviors represent a discontinuous change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confucian Philosophical Constituents</th>
<th>Confucian Philosophical and Cultural Implication</th>
<th>Traditional Personal Selling Strategies Based on Confucian Teaching</th>
<th>Revolutionary Mentality: Chinese e-shoppers’ Emotional Intelligence in E-commerce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Five Bonds:</strong> Interpersonal Relationship</td>
<td>Long-term orientation</td>
<td>Long-term plans and ongoing relationship</td>
<td>Short-term orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Five Bonds:</strong> Social Harmony</td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>Inclusive and intertwined communal goal</td>
<td>Individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Li:</strong> Ritual</td>
<td>Reverence and hierarchy</td>
<td>The business concept of ‘face’: saving/giving ‘face’</td>
<td>Anti-hierarchical order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Xin:</strong> Integrity</td>
<td>Mutual trust and</td>
<td>‘Walk the walk and’</td>
<td>Spontaneous trust based</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consistency</th>
<th>talk the talk’; consistent and trustworthy personal selling approach</th>
<th>on superficial interaction and perceived control over the deal-making process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jian</strong>: Frugality</td>
<td>Conservative consumption</td>
<td>Emphasis on practicality, utility, durability, and affordability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immediate consumption; Theory of Rational Addiction (Becker and Murphy 1988); hedonism</td>
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**Five Bonds**

Social harmony is the utmost Confucian goal. As reflected in traditional personal selling practice in China, a conventional sales agent develops business relationships with buyers while making crony connections with their families, friends, and acquaintances. Such inclusive and communal tactics prevail in townships and villages (Zhang 2009). Traditional Chinese shoppers maintain long-term relationships with trusted salespeople. In contrast, Chinese e-shoppers are somewhat individualistic, as e-commerce lacks the ‘human element’.

Under the *Five Bonds*, interpersonal relationships between salespeople and customers are hierarchical, with the former commonly working for and/or serving the latter (i.e., as per the ‘customer is King’ marketing maxim) (Moreno 2012). However, the reviewed secondary data suggest Chinese e-shoppers do not prefer a long-term sales orientation, as they are relatively impatient, short-term focused, and indifferent to interpersonal relationships with sellers; hence, these shoppers’ revolutionary shopping attitudes and behaviors.

Consistent with the *Five Bonds’* friend-to-friend dyad (i.e., non-hierarchical), e-shoppers typically consider themselves to be a salesperson’s peer. A conventional hierarchical relationship between e-shoppers and e-tailers is less relevant when transactions are consummated quickly (Alibaba Group 2014; CBS News, 60 Minutes 2014).

Most Chinese e-shoppers asked about ‘Double Eleven’ Day regard it as an opportunity to acquire discounted products easily and quickly (CNBC 2015; Topic Studio 2014: an online series of Youku-produced street interviews). These e-shoppers primarily focus on competitive features, such as limited purchasing time, substantial discounts, and speedy checkout. Although they recognized the sales hype fostered by some Chinese e-tailers (e.g., Taobao and Tmall) and may have experienced next-day buyer’s remorse, they plan to continue making ‘Double Eleven’ Day online purchases due to “temptation and such behavior becoming a social norm on that single day” (Topic Studio 2014). Yet, Chinese e-shoppers accepted this e-tailing practice, as their goal was ‘to buy what they want’ rather than ‘to socialize and associate with others’. Although e-shoppers can connect instantly and comment via social media and other e-communication channels, e-shopping behavior is personal and private.

In anticipation of ‘Double-Eleven’ Day, some e-shoppers reserved money for self-indulgent big-ticket items (e.g., personal computers, smart phones, and tablets). They “save[d] money in advance” to prepare for opportunities “under [a] limited time frame” (i.e., e-retailers restricted their discounts to that single day), made “fast and broad online searches for ideal items,” and “save[d] these ideal items in online

In summary, the popularity of ‘Double-Eleven’ Day is unrelated to long-term nurturing of personal relationships between e-shoppers and e-tailers. Rather, it is wide selection, low prices, simple transaction procedures, and convenience that prompts e-shoppers’ purchases. The online click-and-buy/order-and-go sales setting has pared the ‘human element’ (i.e., interpersonal interaction) while embracing the ‘system element’ (i.e., computerized business management) requisite to speedy exchange (NetEase 2015). Given the gradual maturity and development of Chinese e-commerce, more e-shoppers will benefit from instant product search across multiple sellers, competitive pricing, speedy check-out, and convenience (CNBC 2015; NetEase 2015; Bloomberg Business 2014).

Li

In accord with Confucianism, traditional exchange behavior in China is relationship-based and long-term oriented (Martinsons 2008). Such relationship-based exchange encourages sales agents to build on-going patronage. Asked how he created trust among Alibaba users when Chinese shoppers are used to face-to-face transactions, Jack Ma answered that U.S. venture capitalists unanimously doubted his e-commerce initiative 15 years ago due to their belief all Chinese business is anchored in guanxi (Davos World Economic Forum 2015).

Guanxi, which implies proper rites and manners (manifested as Li), relate to Chinese use of ‘face’, where ‘saving/not losing face’ means straining to avoid disgrace (Shaalan et al. 2013). Conversely, ‘giving face’ to other people (i.e., treating them kindly and respectfully) is a gracious gesture that invites reciprocity (Dong and Lee 2007; Martinsons 2008). In China, traditional personal selling strategies include the use of ‘face’—especially sales agents learning to facilitate transactions and/or to mitigate business dissatisfaction and dispute by ‘giving face’ to customers (Dong and Lee 2007; Martinsons 2008).

‘Double-Eleven’ Day e-shoppers focus on obtaining the best value instead of giving ‘face’. Wide selections of products on ‘Double-Eleven’ Day predispose Chinese e-shoppers to conduct intensive online product research. As they grow more demanding and pragmatic, Chinese e-shoppers are converging on Western e-shoppers, attending to higher quality and better value by researching product features rather than relying on sales pitches (Atsmon et al. 2010).

Chinese e-tailers are adjusting their selling strategy in accord with Chinese e-shoppers’ emerging self-indulgent buying style (Shenzhen News 2014). For example, Xiu.com—the foremost luxury and fashion e-commerce outlet—searches worldwide for high value and high quality products. Its employees believe expanding product assortment, providing excellent value, and ensuring product quality dictate ‘Double-Eleven’ Day sales; in contrast, they believe attempting to establish guanxi with e-shoppers...
by enhancing the *Li* mindset is less important and mostly entails promotional approaches rather than relational approaches (Shenzhen News 2014).

**Xin**

*Xin* (integrity) is an essential moral keystone, with trust at its core. A person of integrity is faithful (which entails self-governance based on mutual trusts) and whole (fortified by honesty, truthfulness, and consistency) (Ke 2015; Lee 2013).

Traditional personal selling strategies in China rely on ‘walking the walk and talking the talk’ or ‘doing as one promises’. E-tailers can avoid the traditional seller-searching-for-buyer approach when e-shoppers initiate the buying process. Trustworthy Chinese e-tailers invite recurring sales (Alibaba Group 2014; Ke 2015; Davos World Economic Forum 2015). Alibaba’s 60 million daily e-transactions occur despite online buyers’ and sellers’ lack of personal familiarity (Davos World Economic Forum 2015). Although Alibaba’s escort account system Alipay makes this sales volume possible, Alibaba’s ‘trust system’ with e-shoppers has been critical to its success (Davos World Economic Forum 2015).

Unlike traditional long-term business relationships grounded in mutual trust and developed through numerous get-togethers and personal events (e.g., dining together), e-trust is established quickly. Chinese e-shoppers are tradition-inverting (e.g., indifferent to the buyer-seller hierarchy) in that immediate trust based on superficial virtual interactions tends to induce one-shot exchanges. Many ‘Double-Eleven’ Day e-shoppers attribute their shopping spree to large discounts and promised speedy deliveries rather than e-tailer reputation, as e-shoppers patronize e-tailers who offer ‘the best deal’ (China Press 2014).

**Jian**

*Jian* (frugality) stresses the Chinese tradition of creating goods for practical use. Frugality and hard work were critical to *Confucian capitalism*, which allowed Chinese enterprises to prosper (Yao 2002). Traditional Chinese shoppers tend to believe an ephemeral and flimsy good is wasteful and thus undesirable; hence, they seek durable, affordable, practical (e.g., high usage value), and functional (e.g., easy to use) goods (Zhang 2009).

In contrast, Chinese e-shoppers are more concerned about immediate consumption, which relates to the *Theory of Rational Addiction* (Becker and Murphy 1988). Under this theory, consumers are utility maximizing agents whose past consumption of highly satisfying goods nurtures their plans for future consumption and lasting happiness. Many ‘Double-Eleven’ Day e-shoppers do not focus on buying needed goods; rather, they participate in this one-day buying spree because they find buying itself is pleasurable, cannot ignore the discounts, and assume other e-shoppers are snatching up the remaining bargains (BBC 2015; Credit Suisse 2013; Sohu News 2012). These e-shoppers, also known as ‘palm cutters’ (connoting hand fatigue induced by placing many online orders), were addicted to e-shopping regardless of the utility created (NetEase 2014; Nielsen Company 2014). Because “a greater number of ‘palm cutters’ face the dilemma of making credit payments after their online shopping impulsion” (Liaoning Television 2014), many e-shoppers “often regret excessive...
consumption and want to 'cut their fingers' afterwards for being 'overly impulsive’” (NetEase 2014).

Like their Western counterparts, Chinese e-shoppers are undertaking evermore excessive consumption (U.S. News & World Report 2015; Stanford Graduate School of Business 2015) (i.e., buy unneeded items paid for on installment), which contradicts the Confucian teaching of Jian. This practice has become so commonplace that it has been depicted on television; during one broadcast, a boyfriend berated his girlfriend for buying needless goods on 'Double-Eleven’ Day (Oriental Broadcast Room 2014). She defended herself by claiming e-shopping “brings her pleasure,” and online ordering helps “release herself from pressure” (Oriental Broadcast Room 2014). Seemingly, ‘Double-Eleven’ Day-e-shopping is about ‘following the trend and enhancing self-pleasure from online purchases’ rather than ‘buying what one needs’.

**Implications**

The personal selling literature posits China’s heavily relationship-based society precludes commercial transactions without attempting or perpetuating a long-term and mutual buyer-seller relationship. However, increasingly popular e-commerce in China does not support such efforts.

Findings about ‘Double-Eleven’ Day gleaned from non-scholarly source materials have implications for both sales research and practice. Although institutional and infrastructure deficiencies remain, e-tailers are impressed by the ‘magnitude’ of China’s ‘Double-Eleven’ Day e-shopping spree. Qualitative data suggest this ‘magnitude’ is attributable largely to the revolutionary mindset of Chinese e-shoppers, whose decision-making processes differ markedly from traditional Chinese shoppers. Chinese e-shoppers represent huge opportunities to Chinese (and other) e-tailers because a relation-based sales approach no longer pertains in cyberspace. Like most e-shoppers, Chinese e-shoppers decide more pragmatically, with the goal of fulfilling personally driven demand.

Pursuit of personal happiness by Chinese e-shoppers reflects a hedonistic philosophy. Hedonic consumption leads to physically driven pleasures, either from goods consumption (e.g., eating or drinking) or product-related experience and event engagement (e.g., watching a movie) (Alba and Williams 2013). Economic growth and domestic development since the 1990s allowed Chinese household and personal income to surge. Due to their growing affluence and affordability, traditional Chinese shoppers and Chinese e-shoppers have become more self-indulgent and self-interested, as reflected by shopping increasingly as a personal award (Atsmon et al. 2010). Consistent with ‘Double-Eleven’ Day purchases, e-shoppers admitted their shopping goals were merely for self-indulgence and immediate enjoyment (i.e., for the event’s sake regardless of how the purchased items would increase user benefits) (Atsmon et al. 2010; Credit Suisse 2013; Sohu News 2012).

Despite profound Confucian influence, traditional Chinese retailers might re-evaluate Chinese shoppers' emotional intelligence and adapt sales practices accordingly. To cope with Confucian mindsets in e-commerce, Chinese retailers should rely more on platforms to promote products, diversify product categories, and simplify purchasing procedures. As this recommendation pertains to any emerging economy, and...
technological advance and globalization will become more prominent, consumers worldwide will become increasingly similar despite differences in their traditional values.

**Limitations and Future Research**

The current research adopts a qualitative approach to uncover major cultural transformations of a Chinese e-commerce revolution, manifested as the ‘Double-Eleven’ Day shopping spree. There is no formal testing of hypotheses due to the phenomenon’s novelty and lack of related academic literature; thus, the scope of this study is limited to unstructured reviews and deconstruction of non-scholarly narratives. Although such methodology has its constraints in establishing structured casual relationships, findings from the qualitative evaluation provide an encouraging start toward understanding key aspects of Confucian values as they pertain to Chinese e-commerce practices. Specifically, much evidence indicates the fading of Confucian influence, which provokes theoretical challenges to the existing paradigm of relationship-based e-commerce.

The research scope may be extended as follows. Qualitative interviews of Chinese e-shoppers may provide insights into their ever-changing consumption behavior, which might lead to discovery of additional psychological processes crucial for theory building and further refining of relevant constructs. Researchers could conduct a series of semi-structured interviews, incorporating findings from this research, to create structured questionnaires meant for consumers. Researchers also could examine differences among Chinese buyer-seller relationships, in online and offline contexts, to advance understanding of how these difference pertain to marketing outcomes.

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