CHINESE CONSUMER'S BEHAVIOR ON HEYTEA'S CO-BRANDING CAMPAIGN

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พฤติกรรมผู้บริโภคชาวจีนต่อแคมเปญตราสินค้าร่วมของเฮย์ที

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สารนิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญานิเทศศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
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รุ่ย ผู : พฤติกรรมผู้บริโภคชาวจีนต่อแคมเปญตราสินค้าร่วมของเฮย์ที. (CHINESE CONSUMER'S BEHAVIOR ON HEYTEA'S CO-BRANDING CAMPAIGN) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : รศ. ดร. ดร.สราวุธ อนันตชาติ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาพฤติกรรมของผู้บริโภคชาวจีนต่อแคมเปญตราสินค้าร่วมของเฮย์ที (ตราสินค้า โดฟ คีลส์ และเฟนตี้ บิวตี้) โดยใช้วิธีการวิจัยเชิงสำรวจ เก็บข้อมูลออนไลน์ ด้วยแบบสอบถาม จากผู้บริโภคมิลเลนเนียลชาวจีน ที่อาศัยอยู่ในประเทศจีน อายุระหว่าง 20 ถึง 40 ปี จำนวน 206 คน โดยต้องเป็นผู้ที่ซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ของเฮย์ทีในช่วง 6 เดือนที่ผ่านมา เพื่อศึกษาในเรื่องของการรับรู้ ทัศนคติ และความตั้งใจในการบริโภค ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ผู้บริโภคส่วนใหญ่มีการรับรู้และชื่นชอบเฮย์ที นอกจากนั้น สำหรับแคมเปญตราสินค้าร่วมของเฮย์ที พบว่า ผู้บริโภคส่วนใหญ่รู้สึกว่า คีลส์ และ เฟนตี้ บิวตี้ มีเอกลักษณ์ของตราสินค้าที่โดดเด่นกว่า โดฟ ส่งผลให้เขาเหล่านั้นมีทัศนคติเชิงบวกต่อโดฟน้อยกว่าอีกสองตราสินค้า ในขณะเดียวกัน ผู้บริโภคส่วนใหญ่มีทัศนคติเชิงบวกและความตั้งใจในการบริโภคผลิตภัณฑ์จากแคมเปญตราสินค้าร่วมของเฮย์ทีทั้งสามสินค้า

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Rui Pu : CHINESE CONSUMER'S BEHAVIOR ON HEYTEA'S CO-BRANDING CAMPAIGN. Advisor: Assoc. Prof. SARAVUDH ANANTACHART, Ph.D.

The objective of this research was to study Chinese consumer behaviors on Heytea's co-branding campaigns (i.e., Dove, Kiehl's, and Fenty Beauty). Based on the quantitative research approach, two hundred and six Heytea's current millennial consumers, aged between 20 and 40 years old in China, who had purchased Heytea's products in the past six months, were asked to complete online questionnaires, to study their perception, attitude, and behavioral intention. The findings illustrated that most respondents had favorable perceptions on Heytea. For co-branding campaigns, most respondents felt Kiehl's and Fenty Beauty had more distinctive brand identity than Dove, resulting in less positive attitudes toward Dove brand. In addition, most respondents had positive attitudes and behavioral intentions on all three co-branding campaigns.

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Introduction

1.1 Significances of the Study

Tea is one of the most popular drinks in China, where it has been consumed since ancient times. Indeed, for thousands of years, Chinese people have kept the habit of drinking tea, which is still an integral part of everyday life for many people. As the research by J. Li (2019) has found that in 2018 China's tea-related beverage consumption group reached 490 million, while in 2019 the retail sales of tea-related beverages in China reached ¥78.7 billion, growing around 3.8% annually between 2014 and 2019 (Statista, 2020). Moreover, these results have also shown that middle-aged and older adults make up the largest consumer group of traditional tea. However, in recent years, the emerging new-style tea drink products have succeeded in attracting a large number of young consumers, according to the report from the China Tea Marketing Association. More specifically, this organization found that the most popular tea drinks in the near future will be tho new-style tea, mixed or blended with fresh milk, cream, and fruit, and presented in innovative product designs (T. Li, 2018; X. Zhang, 2018). According to the survey conducted on Chinese new-style tea beverage consumers, around 83% of respondents said their favorite tea drinks were fruit teas, while 74% of respondents enjoyed cheese tea the most (Statista, 2019). Then, in 2020, a survey of Qianzhan Agency (Y. Li, 2020) found that there are more than 480,000 new-style tea beverage shops in China and that the market size of this product is around 640 billion baht (¥140 billion).

Among new-style fresh tea beverage brands in China, Heytea is one of the most popular. It was established at Jiangmen, Guangdong in 2012 and has became a well-known brand in a relatively short period of time. Indeed, according to Statista (2019), according to Statista (2019), from a sample of Chinese new-style fresh tea beverage consumers, 60% of respondents said that their favorite tea beverage brand was Heytea. This budding tea beverage chain mainly provides various Naigai Cha (cheese-topped tea) and fresh fruit tea. As of 2020, they own more than 600 Heytea outlets in mainland China, with 20 million cups of various tea beverages sold in Shenzhen alone in 2019 (Tencent, 2020).

Since the first day that Heytea came into the world, Nie Yunchen, founder of Heytea, positioned it as not only a lifestyle brand for post-95s consumers, but also as a cool brand, believing that “cool” can be an eternal attribute of the brand (Lou, 2019). Furthermore, “灵感之茶” (i.e., tea of inspiration in Chinese), the slogan of Heytea, materializes the abstract concept of “cool” into “inspiring” and innovative products which offer a unique experience to consumers. To maintain its inspirational and aesthetic character, a combination of traditional tea culture concepts, such as “zen,” “minimalism,” and “aesthetics,” are all integrated into the Heytea product packages, as well as Heytea store design. Due to the brand’s strong capabilities in product innovation and brand marketing, Heytea was given the honorary title of “New-Style Tea Drinking Pioneer” in the 4th “Shenzhen International Brand Week” and Heytea’s founder, Nie Yunchen, was selected as one of the “40 Persons Behind the Brands”(Xinhuanet, 2020).

As Fullerton (2017) notes, queuing for three to seven hours just to purchase one cup of Heytea has become a widespread phenomenon among Chinese millennilas. This, he argues, is largely owing to Haytea's successful marketing communication branding. Indeed, as a "cool" brand which mostly targets Chinese millennials, Heytea has designed innovative marketing communication strategies that rely less on celebrity endorsements and more on the power of electronic word-of-mouth marketing through popular social media platforms such as Weibo and WeChat. In addition, Heytea relies on co-branding campaigns, which resulted in the creation of more than 50 brands since 2017 across the food, beauty, and fashion industries (Ma, 2020).

Essentially, co-branding could refer to any pairing of two brands in a marketing context such as advertisements, products, product placements, and distribution outlets (Grossman, 1997). Narrowly, co-branding is the combination of two brands to create a single, unique product (Washburn, Till, & Priluck, 2000) and this marketing strategy has been used by numerous brands wordwide. In this research, the definition of co-branding proposed by Washburn et al. (2000) will be adopted.

The existing literature on co-branding is quite extensive. Namely, there are numerous studies examining consumer attitudes towards co-branded luxury and high involvement products and services, such as those related to the hotel and automobile industries (Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2012; Ho, Lado, Rivera-Torres, & Management, 2017). However, in this study, the researcher investigates consumer behaviors towards tea beverages, focusing on Heytea's co-branding with beauty brands.

For most people, there is no connection between tea drink brands and beauty brands (especially shower gel and color cosmetics). However, as many studies suggest, green tea consumption, just like beauty product usage, benefits human skin and appearance due to its anti-aging and anti-oxidation effect, as well as its ability to protect the epithelial surface from carcinogenesis (Hsu, 2005). At the same time, nowadays Heytea, as a new-style tea brand, presents its brand image and delivers its brand communication in a way that features bold, innovative, and is similar to products from other industries. For example, “natural, lively, real, adventurous” are used by the American beauty brand Kiehl's, while “cool, fresh, inspiring” are used by Heytea. This similarity has prompted Heytea to initiate three successful co-branding campaigns with three different beauty product companies, including Dove, Kiehl's, and Fenty Beauty, which resulted in positive feedback on social media and left an overall good impression on Heytea’s target customers. Therefore, co-branding campaigns between tea beverages and beauty products may seem unorthodox at first, but they, nevertheless, have great potential and should thus be more thoroughly investigated.

One of the co-branding campaigns initiated by Heytea was with Dove, an American personal care beauty brand owned by Unilever. In China, this brand presents a natural, confident, simple, and genuine image of beauty, which is consistent with Dove’s branding strategy in other markets (Qiong, 2019). In May 2020, Heytea and Dove launched a co-branding campaign, which included a peach-flavored tea drink and a peach-scented shower gel. From the report by DTcaijing (2020), the co-branded shower gel from Heytea and Dove sold more than 45,000 bottles per month on the e-commerce platforms, which is much higher than any shower gel branded by Dove alone (15,000 bottles per month).

Another co-branding campaign was done with Kiehl's, an American cosmetic beauty brand specializing in skin, hair, and body care products. It’s China CEO, Ivy Li, mentioned that Kiehl's is a natural, authentic, and lively brand with social and environmental responsibilities (Shene, 2019). In December 2019, Heytea and Kiehl's launched a co-branding campaign, which included a series of avocado-flavored drinks, foods, and beauty products, as well as a series of environment-friendly offline activities organized in many cities in China, including Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Shenzhen. After the release, the co-branded products were welcomed by most consumers, so much so that they sold out quickly every morning in many Heytea stores (Shuaiyu, 2019).

Also, Heytea did a co-branding campaign with Fenty Beauty, a cosmetic beauty brand created by the well-known pop singer Rihanna. Since the first launch of Fenty Beauty, this brand has claimed to represent the diversity of beauty by catering to all skin tones, with 40 shades of foundation (Jess, 2017). Also, Fenty Beauty aims to inspire consumers by marketing its makeup as something new and different that everyone can have fun with. On April 29, 2020, Heytea and Fenty Beauty launched a co-branding campaign, which included a peach-flavored tea drink and Fenty Beauty’s new Cheeks Out cream blush collection. By May 26, 2020, the two brands’ co-branding campaign received over 18 million impressions and 138k engagements on

Weibo alone, which brought greater attention to both parties and attracted new consumers (Kelly, 2020).

With the success of the above-mentioned co-branding campaigns, it inspired this study to investigate the nature of the innovative co-branding brands' activities with a special focus on consumer behaviors toward the co-brandings of Heytea in partnership with Dove, Kiehl's, and Fenty Beauty. The researcher argues that the results of this study will provide practical implications regarding co-branding strategies, which may be useful to managers of mass consumer brands. Furthermore, it is the researcher's contention that this study will significantly contribute to the existing literature on co-branding, and thus expand the overall knowledge in this field of study.

1.2 Objective of the Study

To study Chinese millennial consumers' behaviors on Heytea's co-branding campaigns

1.3 Research Question

What are Chinese millennial consumers' behaviors on Heytea's co-branding campaigns?

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study of Chinese millennial consumers' behavior on Heytea's co-branding campaigns with the three aforementioned beauty brands is divided into 1) consumer perception, 2) consumer attitude, and 3) behavioral intention. This research’s respondents are all Chinese millennials who have purchased Heytea’s products in the past six months, which means they are the current consumers of Heytea. A total of 206 valid samples were gathered through an online questionnaire survey by using the purposive sampling method. The survey was conducted from mid-October to early November 2020.

1.5 Operational Definitions of the Variables

Heytea’s co-branding campaigns refer to the marketing communication activities in which Heytea cooperated with partner brands to launch new products or promotions. In this study, three co-branding campaigns between Heytea and partner brands, Dove, Kiehl's, and Fenty Beauty, were selected as case studies. These three campaigns were held from 2019 to 2020 in China, during which all three campaigns introduced different products, including beverages, beauty products, and other merchandise in the theme of each co-branding campaign. Marketing was largely done through their official online channels featured on Weibo and WeChat, with customers being able to purchase the co-branded products at both online and offline stores.

Chinese millennials are people born between 1980 and 1999 in China, which means that they generally share some similar traits due to the similar time period in which they spent their formative years. Indeed, according to Generational Cohort Theory (Chung, Chen, & Lin, 2016), there are generations with similar values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors among all members. This study specifically focuses on Chinese millennial generation’s consumer behavior.

Consumer behavior is defined as the study of processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences in order to satisfy needs and desires. It emphasizes the entire consumption process, which includes the factors that influence the consumer before, during, and after a purchase (Solomon, White, Dahl, Zaichkowsky, & Polegato, 2017). To study and measure the Chinese millennial consumers' behavior related to Heytea's co-branding campaigns with Dove, Kiehl's, and Fenty Beauty, three variables are selected as the key focus of this study. Meanwhile, the three variables include a) consumer perception, b)consumer attitude, and c)consumer behavioral intention.

a) Consumer perception is how each consumer translates raw stimuli from the marketing environment into meaning. In the current research, the consumer perception reveals what Chinese millennial consumers think about the brand Heytea after receiving Heytea's marketing communication with certain attributes presented.

b) Consumer attitude is a consumer's evaluation of an object (including brand or company) and represents their feelings (Belch & Belch, 2017). This study examined the consumer attitudes toward each of the three partner brands (Dove, Kiehl's, and Fenty Beauty) and consumer attitudes toward each co-branding campaign Heytea in partner with the three brands.

c) Behavioral intention serves as an alternative and behavioral tendencies for measuring consumers' real behavior. This research focuses on the willingness of consumers to purchase co-branded products from Heytea which are the result of co-branding campaigns with Dove, Kiehl's, and Fenty Beauty, as well as to recommend and share those campaigns to their friends' circles.

1.6 Expected Benefits from the Study

There are two major benefits of using Heytea's three co-branding campaigns as case studies for this research.

Academically, the outcome of this study should provide insights to better understand Chinese millennial consumer's behavior.

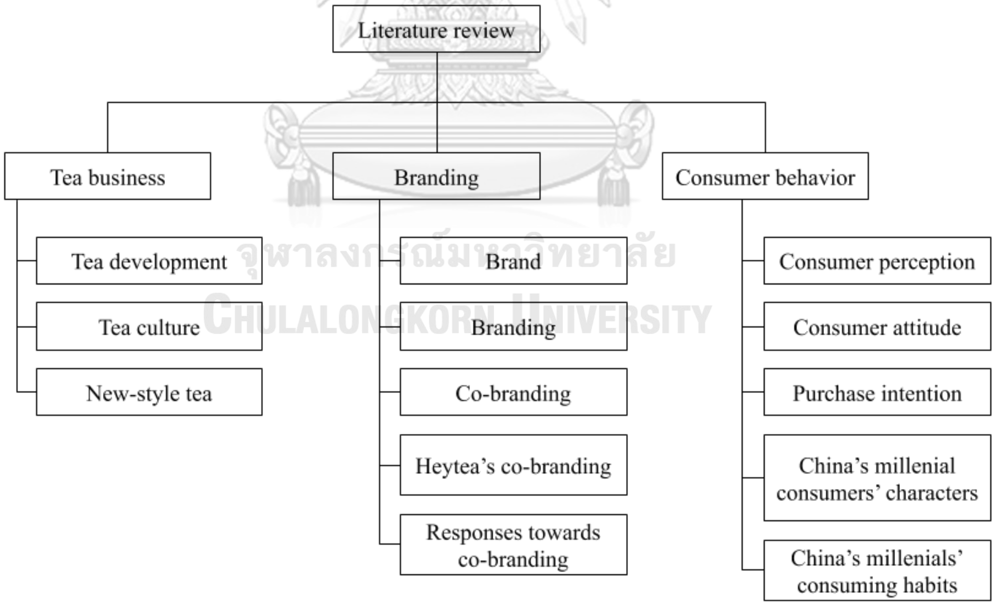
Professionally, the findings of the research should provide implications which will enhance marketer's knowledge, particularly on the consumer behavior of the Chinese millennial consumers. Moreover, the results will provide a set of guidelines for brands and marketers which will enhance their branding strategy and make it more effective and efficient.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This chapter is a review of relevant literature related to the tea business, branding, and consumer behavior. Begin with the tea development, tea culture, new-style tea in China. In the branding part, the definition of brand, branding, and co-branding are summarized with a brief review of Heytea's co-branding and consumers' responses towards co-branding. Finally, literature in consumer behavior covers the definition and theory of consumer behavior, including consumer perception, attitude, and behavioral intention, as well as China's millennial consumers' characters and China's millennials' consuming habits.

Figure 1 Map of Literature review



2.1 China’s Tea Business

In this part, prior literature on Chinese tea development and why Chinese consumers prefer tea are examined to provide a background on understanding China’s tea business and culture in general.

2.1.1 Chinese Tea Development

Tea is the raw material for making tea beverages and comes from the camellia plant (Karak & Bhagat, 2010). Tea drink, as a simple beverage, is popular for millions of lives, originally in China where there has a history of four or five thousand years to discover and use of tea, and now virtually worldwide (T. Liu, 2012). T. Liu (2012) stated there are six major types of tea in China, which are green tea, black tea, Oolong tea, dark tea, yellow tea, and white tea, distinguished mainly by different methods of production.

Among six types of tea, green tea has the longest history, the widest production area, the richest variety, the most output, and the widest consumption area, and in 2007, green tea accounted for three-quarters of China's total tea output (Z. Zhu, Lu, Mao, & Luo, 2008). China is currently one of the countries with the most tea production and consumption in the world (Guan & Yang, 2014). The main consumers of loose tea products are the 40-59-year-old group (Guan, Yang, Xie, Lin, & Li, 2019). Jiahua Li, Lu, Jiang, Shao, and Zhou (2012) found young students from 11 universities were willing to drink traditional tea, but they seldom purchase tea due to the high price, lack of knowledge of tea, and concerns of the inconvenience of making tea drinking.

2.1.2 Chinese Tea Culture

Chinese tea-making technology and tea-drinking methods have changed over thousands of years, from eating tea congee, drinking powdered tea, to brewing loose tea with boiling water (Jiang, 2019). Tea congee is cooked with tea powder and rice, and other ingredients may be added in different places (H. Huang, 2001; Z. Liu, 1983). Drinking powdered tea is the way to grand tea leaves which are pressed into dough shapes, and to brew the ground tea powder with water (Zheng, 2008). Drinking loose tea refers to directly brewing tea leaves in boiling water and it became the most common way of tea drinking since the Ming Dynasty (1386 - 1644) (Tao, 2013).

Chinese tea ceremony culture was developing in the way of tea-drinking itself rather than the form of drinking tea as in Japan, incorporating traditional Chinese art, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism cultures, which can represent harmony(和) and humble personality by tea's light fragrance (W. Chen, 2002). In China, drinking tea is not limited to a niche group, as Wu (2019) discovered in the Song dynasty (960 - 1279) "no matter the elite or the common, rich or poor, people all love tea". G. Chen (1994) also pointed out that tea drinking began to be popular in the Tang Dynasty(618 - 907), and by the Yuan Dynasty(1271 - 1368), tea drinking had become a common hobby of all ethnic groups and all classes in the country.

In addition to China is the hometown of tea and cultural factors, other functional reasons regarding why Chinese people drink tea include to relieve thirst, health effects, and refreshing since the early stage (Jianzong Li, 2017). Later scientific research confirmed there are many compounds that are beneficial to human health like fluoride, caffeine, and essential minerals in tea (Cabrera, Giménez, & López, 2003). Karak and Bhagat (2010) also stated polyphenols, the most active tea components, have the effect of antioxidative, antimutagenic, and anticarcinogenic, which is associated with the reduction of serum cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein oxidation, the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer. Besides, many studies suggested those benefits of green tea consumption also make impressions on human skin and appearance looking (Hsu, 2005).

A survey from Lan and Tu (2008) found that most college students in Hangzhou held a positive perception about drinking tea, mainly because they believe that the tea polyphenols in tea has health effects and helps the skin to resist oxidation, and they are willing to go to traditional tea houses. More studies have also proved that Chinese consumers believe in the health benefits of drinking tea in wide age groups (Du & Zhang, 2011; J. Liu, Li, & Tan, 2015).

Due to the prevalence of tea drinking in the whole society, tea houses dedicated to people drinking tea appeared in the Tang Dynasty (C. Huang, 1991). Teahouse culture remains in China to this day, and teahouse is an important place for Chinese people to consume tea. Sichuan tea houses are the most famous among the great number of Chinses tea houses (Q. Huang, 2019). The *General Survey of Chengdu* recorded there were 667 streets and alleys in Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan province, in 1909, and almost every street and alley had a teahouse (Jiang, 2019). According to statistics, there are nearly 10,000 teahouses in Chengdu today (Yan, 2017). Besides, the teahouses in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Guangdong, and Fujian are also quite famous (Q. Huang, 2019; Jiang, 2019). Those teahouses reflect how important tea is in Chinese life. Some research points out that the main purposes of modern consumers choosing teahouses are leisure gathering, chatting with friends, and traditional cultural experience (Pei, Zhang, & Wu, 2009; Y. Zhang, Gong, Shi, Zhang, & Qian, 2019).

2.1.3 New-style Tea

Tea plays a vital role in China's global economic, social, and political interactions. Since Korean and Japanese envoys brought tea back to their countries and the Tea-Horse Road allowed for the spread of tea to South Asia, the Middle East, and even East Africa, tea was introduced to more countries (D. Jia, 1994). In the same period, the Silk Road in North China started to export green tea to Russia, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean (Saberi, 2010).

Simultaneously, milk tea, initially created by Mongolians and Tibetans in the Yuan Dynasty, has also been spread to other parts of the world (G. Chen, 1994). X. Zhang (2018) summarized the history of milk tea:“ Milk tea was brought to India by the Silk Road and introduced to the West from India during colonial Indian period, formed to Dutch milk tea and English milk tea. When China was colonized, Dutch milk tea was brought to Taiwan, and local people added "tapioca pearl," which became famous as the “pearl milk tea,” while British milk tea became “Silk Stocking Milk Tea” in Hongkong later.”

The milk tea industry in China emerged in the 1990s and has gone through three stages so far(X. Zhang, 2018):

1. Stage one: In 1997, the Taiwanese milk tea chain brand "Quickly" entered mainland China with concentrated milk and tea powders, which is the so-called "powder age" of the tea industry.

2. Stage two: Brands such as Coco and Happy Lemon emerged, which use real tea leaves instead of powder, but the milk is still mainly powder.

3. Stage three: Since 2016, with the upgrading of consumption, brands are committed to creating premium milk tea and another tea-drinking, using professional equipment to extract high-quality tea paring fresh milk, natural cream, and fresh fruits to make various tea drinking.

There are the business and economic related reports referring to this kind of innovative tea as "new-type tea" or "new-style tea", using fresh materials to develop countless variants, and in Chinese, it is called "新式茶饮" (Euromonitor International, 2019; X. Li, 2019).

Regarding the "new", W. Chen (2019) suggested that it refers to the new and clear brand positioning, brand image, and a more comprehensive marketing strategy with more healthy and fresh tea drinks compared to previous powder-made milk tea.

A Chinese gastronomy data research organization NCBD (2020) also concluded the new-style tea beverages focus on healthy materials, stylish packaging with ingenious marketing methods, which are favored by many young consumers.

Ouyang (2019) divided the current tea service market in China into three major types: tea clubs, western afternoon tea, and instant drink shops with the trend of new-style tea. She also pointed out that the unique selling points of new-style tea drinks should be healthy raw materials, unique brand images and personalities, services that match the preferences of target consumers, and diversified marketing strategies.

S. Chen (2019) emphasized that designing a unique brand image through integrated marketing communication strategies plays an important role in attracting young consumers who keen on new things.

According to 36Kr's research, the market for new-style tea drinks in China is currently 50 billion CNY; therefore, many new-style tea brands are favored by investors. The top ten new-style tea brands in China are drawn from it: Heytea, Nayuki, Coco, inWE, Alittle-tea, Luckintea, 1314 tea, Lele cha, The Alley and Sexytea (X. Li, 2019).

Table 1 Ten new-style tea brands favored by investors

Heytea	Nayuki	Coco	InWe	Alittle-tea
Luckintea	1314 tea	Lele cha	The Alley	Sexytea

Source: Adapted from Li, J. (2019). 2019 China Tea Consumer Market Report. *Tea World(11), 43-51.*

2.2 Branding

This section will examine and summarize the literature and past research on branding and co-branding in order to develop a full understanding of the co-branding environment.

2.2.1 Brand and Branding

Branding is the way you endow some recognizable identities to your business, products and services.

American Marketing Association (2017) defined a brand is “a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other sellers." To gain benefits from owning a brand, branding is the process adopted to differentiate a brand's offerings from those of its competitors by adding value to products and services (Palumbo & Herbig, 2000). Rooney (1995) stated that organizations develop brands as a way to attract and keep customers by promoting value, image, prestige, or lifestyle, and branding is a technique to build sustainable, differential advantage by playing on the nature of human beings. Further, Keller (2003) noted consumers must be convinced that there are meaningful differences among brands in the product or service category:

1. Brand differences are often related to the attributes or benefits of the product itself. For example, brands such as Gillette, Merck, Sony, 3M, and others have been leaders in their product categories for decades due, in part, to continual innovation.

2. Other brands create competitive advantages through non-product-related means. For example, Coca-Cola, Calvin Klein, Chanel No. 5, Marlboro, and others have become leaders in their product categories by understanding consumer motivations and desires and creating relevant and appealing images surrounding their products.

Hence, while relating the unique identity to a brand, branding hopes to influence some future transaction by establishing a commercial entity as a known quantity and seeking to encourage loyalty among current and potential customers (Molyneux, Holton, & Lewis, 2018).

Murphy (1992) mentioned that branding should constitute a whole “marketing mix,” which refers to the product itself, the packaging, the brand name, the promotion, the advertising, and the overall presentation in a synthesis of all these elements, physical, aesthetic, rational and emotional. From McDonald's online branding, Rowley (2004, 2009) concluded branding might start with creating and registering logos, brand marks, and brand straplines, which it is necessary to teach consumers ‘who’ the product is (Keller, 2003), and creating brand awareness and presence by using other brand elements to help identify the brand such as “what” the product does and “why” consumers should care, but long term, branding is the process of creating value through the provision of a compelling and consistent offer, (the brand promise) backed by positive customer experience (the brand experience) that will satisfy customers and encourage them to return.

The consequence of adding value to a business/brand, the branding process, is called brand equity (Aaker, 2009; De Chertony & McDonald, 1992; Rowley, 2009). Keller (2003) also stated four major steps about building a strong brand equity or branding:

1. Achieving the right brand identity: This first step is about creating brand salience with enabling consumers to easily recognize the brand and maintain a top-of-mind choice across a variety of settings.

2. Creating brand meaning: This requires establishing a brand image by telling what the brand is characterized by and should stand for in the minds of consumers. A brand image should include “Brand performance” (more about consumer’s functional needs when using the product or service) and “Brand imagery”(consumer’s psychological and social needs from using the product, which refer to the brand personality, experience, history, heritage, and user imagery).

3. Brand responses: Responses from consumers towards a brand’s marketing activity could be brand judgments and brand feelings. Brand judgments are more from the “head” when consumers evaluate the brand by putting together all the different performance and imagery associations. And the most four important four types of brand judgments are brand quality, brand credibility, brand consideration, and brand superiority. Brand feelings are the consumer’s emotional responses and reactions about a brand from “heart.” Six important types of brand-building feelings are warmth, fun, excitement, security, social approval, and self-respect.

4. Brand relationships: Brands manage to build “brand resonance” with consumers by providing brand knowledge in an “in sync” feeling which enables them to build favorable relationships. Brand relationships can be divided into two dimensions: intensity and activity. Intensity refers to how deeply the consumers feel the attitudinal attachment to the brand and send of community with other brand users or the brand itself, while activity means how often the consumer engages with the brand or purchases and consumes the brand’s products.

2.2.2 Co-Branding

Co-branding is a popular strategy for brand managers and researchers, as evidenced by the practitioner-oriented articles and empirical studies published since the mid-1990s (Helmig, Huber, & Leeflang, 2008). Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal (2000) stated that manufacturers and retailers compete intensively in the saturated markets, especially for fast-moving consumer goods, brand managers realized the importance of adopting a co-branding strategy. Nowadays, co-branding strategy is not only limited to fast-moving consumer goods, and consumers can also see co-branding relevant to high-involvement, luxury, and durable products and services as well, such as the co-branding from BMW and Louis Vuitton, as well as the co-branding from Nike and Apple.

Co-branding could refer to any pairing of two brands in a marketing context such as advertisements, products, product placements, and distribution outlets (Grossman, 1997). Denizci Guillet and Tasci (2012) commented co-branding is a marketing strategy that involves at least two brands to enhance brand equity for all brands involved. Narrowly, co-branding means the combination of two brands to create a single, unique product (Washburn et al., 2000). Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal (2000) concluded that co-branding strategy could benefit new products created in different categories and the same category by transferring the high name recognition and significant consumer loyalty from existing brands. Ruekert and Rao (1994) explained that consumers tend to assume and evaluate the products from co-branded brands with higher perceived quality than a single brand product. Helmig et al. (2008) proposed that one brand should select equally strong, positively evaluated partner brands to triggers positive associations in consumers' minds; however, co-brand with less-positive partner brands could work as well when entering a category without strong competitors.

Ruekert and Rao (1994) defined "signals" as claimed characteristics from brands and are sent to consumers; moreover, in co-branding cases, when an individual brand cannot signal a product's quality by itself, the second brand name can serve as quality signals. Sarmaniotis, Wickens, Singh, Kalafatis, and Ledden (2014) proposed that consumers take brand positioning strategy as indicators to measure product quality; hence, partner brands' positioning strategies can be "signals" interpreted by consumers for cognitive processing to form cobrand positioning perceptions.

Helmig et al. (2008) identified "brand-fit" is essential for co-branding as customers perceive compatibility or similarity of the two product categories of the partner brands and their brand concepts. When consumers evaluate co-brands, the two partner brands are evaluated as one whole entity (Vaidyanathan & Aggarwal, 2000). A good "brand-fit" perceived by consumers enhances current associations, while a poor "brand-fit" co-branding may lead to undesired consumer perceptions (Martinez & De Chernatony, 2004; Ruekert & Rao, 1994). Previous studies confirmed that "brand-fit" is more likely to be based on an evaluation of image (luxurious, high tech) than attributes (leather interior, fast processor speed), and consumers do conduct a higher-order category search as they evaluate the "brand-fit" of co-brandings. Further explanation of the higher-order category is the category attributes with higher abstraction. One example is the co-branded credit card from American Airlines and

Visa. If each product's attributes are considered at the concrete category level of “airline service” and “credit card service”, it is unlikely that common attributes will emerge. However, consider the higher-order category of “services useful for travel”, which seems to readily come to mind in consideration of airline service and credit card service (Norman, 2017).

Furthermore, the acceptance of good “brand-fit” can affect behavioral consequences, such as purchase intention in co-branded hotels (Y. C. Lin, 2013). However, Sarmaniotis et al. (2014) argued though there is transfer of partner brands’ positioning perceptions to the new cobrands, “brand-fit” did not have an impact of consumer evaluation on cobrands as positioning perceptions are formed over time, and new cobrands are unlikely to exhibit well-formed positioning perceptions.

2.2.3 Heytea’s Co-Branding

Nie Yunchen, the founder of Heytea, talked about the three characteristics of Heytea products (L. Jia, 2018):

1. Using good materials, recipes, and techniques make products memorable by rich taste and multi flavors.

2. Redefining product standards: naming each tea beverage with the innovative word instead of listing raw materials: The signature tea used in Heytea is called “King Fone”(金凤茶王). However, there was no such tea in the world before.

Heytea just made it by mixing oolong, Jinxuan, and green tea, trying to define a new tea culture by doing this.

3. Always beta version: Inspired by Gmail, which has always been a beta version, Heytea considers they are creating the first cup of new-style tea all the time to keep its creativity, no matter how many other tea brands there are in the world.

As for the branding strategy, Nie also indicated Heytea is extracting the elements from traditional Chinese culture and expressing in modern ways instead of building it into another traditional teahouse. At the same time, the soul of the Heytea brand is “inspiration,” “cool,” and “tea art,” but these words rarely appear in its communication when young consumers less believe direct advertisements nowadays, but they will feel inspired by consuming your unique products.

Figure 2 Heytea’s interior decoration 1

Source: Adapted from Heytea. (2020b). *Store List*. Retrieved from https://www.heytea.com/indexEn.html

Figure 3 Heytea’s interior decoration 2

Source: Adapted from Zeng, Z. (2018). *Heytea's Daydream Plan* [Photograph]. Retrieved from https://www.archdaily.cn/cn/906995/xi-cha-bai-ri-meng-ji-hua-aan-jian-zhu-she-ji-shi-wu-suo

Therefore, Heytea does not use traditional advertisements to increase brand awareness but uses other marketing strategies such as online social media and co-branding campaigns. Yan Jie, head of strategic cooperation of Heytea, once said that Heytea’s marketing activities are not to increase sales but to raise brand awareness and popularity among consumers (DTcaijing, 2020). DTcaijing (2020) also concluded that Heytea’s marketing activities did successfully create discussions online: Heytea has been on the trends of Weibo for 24 times since 2017, while Heytea’s competitor Nayuki has only two times, and zero for Lele Cha.

Since the first co-branding in 2017, Heytea has cooperated with more than 50 brands, covering food, fashion apparel, cultural and creative, daily necessities, beauty and skincare, Internet platforms, and public welfare industries (DTcaijing, 2020).

Table 2 Examples of Heytea's co-branding campaigns

Partner brand category	**Partner brands**	**Product types**	**Visual design**	**Year**
Fashion	Peacebird	- Seasonal beverages - Merchandises		2019
	Lee	- Seasonal beverages - Merchandises - Clothes		2019
	AAPE	- Seasonal beverages - Merchandises - Clothes		2019
	Adidas	- Seasonal beverages - Shoes		2020

Partner brand category	Partner brands	Product types	Visual design	Year
Food and beverage	OVALTINE	-Seasonal beverages		2019
	OTALY	-Seasonal beverages		2019
	7UP	- Seasonal beverages - Ice-cream - Merchandises		2019
Daily necessities	Durex	- Beverage -Coupon gift box		2019

Partner brand category	**Partner brands**	**Product types**	**Visual design**	**Year**
Daily necessities	Roseonly	- Flower gift box		2019
	Corkcicle	- Water bottles		2020
	Manito	-Scented candles		2020
Beauty	Kiehl's	- Beverage -Bakery -Merchandise - Mug		2019
	Dove	- Shower gel		2020
	Fenty Beauty	-Cosmetic products		2020

Source: Adapted from Heytea. (2020a). *Heytea's Offical Weibo Page*. Retrieved from https://weibo.com/u/2804387887

Regarding the co-branding campaign, Ma (2020) divided it into two main stages:

1. "On the superficial level": Heytea tried to strengthen brand personality by releasing co-branded merchandise, such as mobile phone cases with fashion brands AAPE, which is presented in trendy, cool, and attractive visual designs.

2. "Focus on the original product": When Heytea began to co-brand with food brands such as Ovaltine, it started to focus on making the original products more innovative with factors from two brands.

DTcaijing (2020) concluded Heytea is trying to keep consumers to recall Heytea in more scenarios by co-branding with different brands and industries, and even make its products to be the top-of-mind choices from common flavors such as peach tea or grape tea.

Actually, there are more Chinese beverage brands starting co-branding campaigns. Yingxiaoguan (2020) analyzed four main reasons are listed below:

1. "Traffic anxiety": With more and more new-style tea brands, product homogeneity is common, so co-branding is a popular way to make products different.

2. "Brand differentiation": To be chased by consumers when they face various choices, brands must establish unique brand awareness in consumers' perception by providing differentiation in terms of taste, vision, touch, etc,.

3. "Nonstop communication with young people": Through diversified co-branding campaigns, not only can brands give consumers a new experience, but also

continue to strengthen emotional communication with them. For example, the brand impression that Heytea brings to consumers is “playful” and “interesting.”

4. “The threshold for co-branding tea brands is low”: Originally, new-style tea brands need to continually update the product menu, so it is better to launch co-branded products rather than designing a new package and a new flavor by a brand alone.

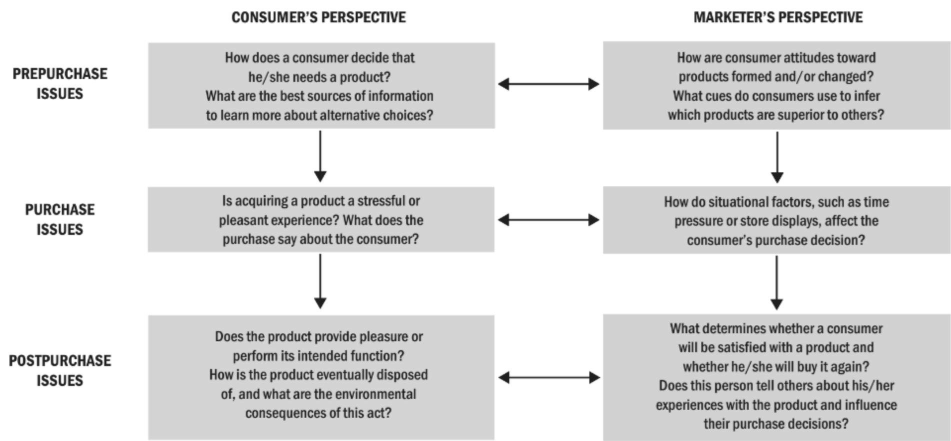
2.2.4 Responses Toward Co-Branding

A limited but growing number of studies have embarked on China's millennial consumers' response towards co-brandings. H. Yang, Zhang, and Zhou (2020) revealed that China’s millennials have a strong awareness of co-branded collections in fashion brands. Moreover, China’s millennials prefer to co-branded products with a perfect fit of two brand images and perfect connection connecting the co-branded image with consumers’ self-image, which helping people to show their individual characteristics. Besides, online and social media platforms are emphasized on releasing information and providing purchase channels for fashion co-branding products (H. Yang et al., 2020). Xiang (2018) argued the effects of cosmetic co-branding on China’s millennials might lead to panic buying at the first stage, but the challenges are emerging when consumers are more rational, fatigued, and caring about the connection with co-branding products and brands.

2.3 Consumer Behavior

Not many years ago, consumer behavior (usually called as buyer behavior) was defined as the study of how consumers decide to buy products, and it reflected an emphasis on the interaction between consumers and producers at the time of purchase (F. Kardes, Cronley, & Cline, 2010; Solomon et al., 2017). Since the late 1940s, when many firms shifted from a selling orientation to producing goods that consumers actually needed and wanted, the study of consumer behavior emerged as a young social science to benefit the marketing process, consumers, and society (F. Kardes et al., 2010). The contemporary definition of consumer behavior is broader, which refers to the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. The latter consumer behavior view emphasized the entire consumption process, which includes the issues that influence the consumer before, during, and after a purchase (Solomon et al., 2017). Figure 4 below illustrates the issues that are addressed during each stage of the consumption process.

Figure 4 Stages in the Consumption Process



Source: Adapted from Solomon, Solomon, M. R., White, K., Dahl, D. W., Zaichkowsky, J. L., & Polegato, R. (2017). *Consumer behavior: Buying, having, and being*. Boston: Pearson, pp.29.

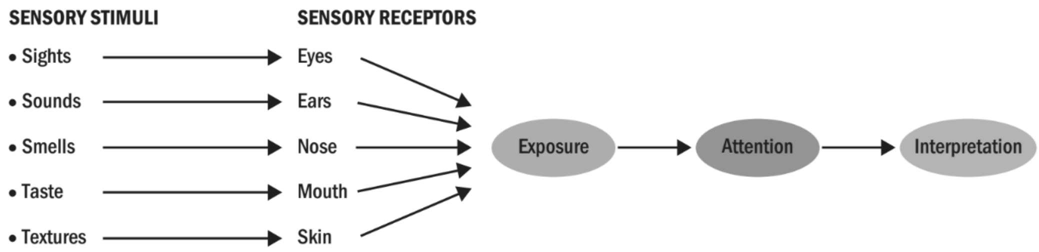
In the marketing context, Solomon et al. (2017) indicated that firms exist to satisfy consumers' needs, and marketers can satisfy these needs only to the extent that they understand consumer behaviors, including the people or organizations who will use the products and services they sell. At the same time, consumer behavior, such as consumers' buying decisions, will indicate how well the company's marketing strategy fits market demand (Furaiji, Łatuszyńska, & Wawrzyniak, 2012).

When consumer behavior study exams consumers' acquisition, usage, and disposition on products or services, there are psychological, cultural, and social factors are involved (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008). The following parts of this section will delve into the fundamentals of consumer behavior, which includes the review of consumer perception, consumer attitude, and consumer purchase intention.

2.3.1 Consumer Perception

Consumer perception is a three-stage process that each consumer translates raw stimuli from the marketing environment into meaning. The three-stage process includes exposure to the environment, paying attention to the stimuli, and interpretation. In the first step, physical sensations, such as sights, sounds, and smells, are selected, organized, and interpreted. Consumers perceive the raw stimuli when sensory receptors, including eyes, ears, nose, mouth, fingers, and skin, are exposed in the environment (Solomon et al., 2017). Figure 5 illustrated an overview of the perceptual process below.

Figure 5 An Overview of The Perceptual Process



Source: Adapted from Solomon, Solomon, M. R., White, K., Dahl, D. W., Zaichkowsky, J. L., & Polegato, R. (2017). *Consumer behavior: Buying, having, and being*. Boston: Pearson, pp.108.

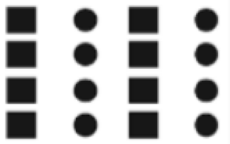
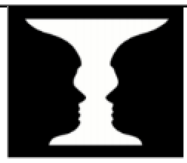
After receiving stimuli, consumers prefer to classify and organize them according to the principles of perceptual organizations instead of taking a stimulus as isolated. Based on Gestalt psychology, some grouping principles suggested consumers will group information from parts into a meaningful whole, such as the principle of closure, the principle of grouping, and the principle of context (Amanatiadis, Kaburlasos, & Kosmatopoulos, 2018):

1. The closure principle means humans can perceive several objects even in an incomplete structure when some information is missing.

2. The grouping principle is also called the proximity principle, declaring that objects similar to certain attributes are more likely to be grouped together when the human brain builds connections between similar elements to make it easier to remember.

3. The context principle is also called the figure and ground principle, which implies that particular objects in a figure have a more prominent role and are first perceived by people.

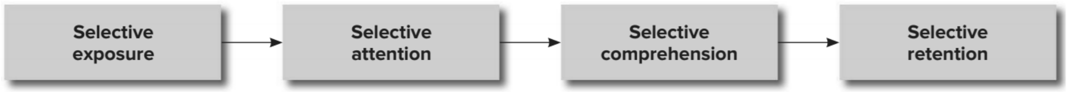
Figure 6 Gestalt Psychology

Principle of closure	Principle of similarity	Principle of context
		

Source: Adapted from Jansson-Boyd, C. V. (2010). *Consumer psychology*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill Education, pp. 40.

However, what an individual interprets or perceives may be substantially different from reality and another person (Pickens, 2005). Each person may notice or ignore different numbers of stimuli from the environment due to the limited attention ability by the individual, and interpret it into various meanings from the same exposures because of individual biases, needs, and previous experiences (Haase, Wiedmann, & Labenz, 2018; Krishna, 2012). Belch and Belch (2017) mentioned selectivity occurs throughout the various stages of the consumer’s perceptual process. Perception may be viewed as a filtering process in which internal and external factors influence what is received and how it is processed and interpreted. Selective perception may occur at the exposure, attention, comprehension, or retention stage of perception. The selective perception process is illustrated in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7 The Selective Perception Process



Source: Adapted Belch, G. E., & Belch, M. A. (2017). *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective.* New York: McGraw-Hill Education, pp.121.

Schema theory explained schemata as human's learned memory-stored cognitive structures of prior knowledge will determine consumer's future responses towards stimuli, which is perception (Halkias, 2015). After organizing received information, consumers will translate sensory inputs (or marketing information) and assign specific meanings, which majorly through perceptual categorization and perceptual inference processes (F. R. Kardes, Posavac, & Cronley, 2004). The perceptual categorization process is regarding the consumers' tendency to process and place information into their interpretation of logical categories. The perceptual inference principle refers to consumers' reasoning out and developing an association between two stimuli.

Washburn et al. (2000) discussed that co-branding could link two brands together; hence, these links can enhance or detract from consumers' perceptions of each constituent brand and create a new, unique perception of the co-branded product. Besides, co-branding improves the brand equity perceptions of consumers regardless of whether the co-branding partner is a high or low equity brand. Specifically, "high-quality" or "high-image" brands can leverage quality perceptions towards partner brands with lesser status, and Rao, Qu, and Ruekert (1999) found Coca-Cola endorsed Nutrasweet by using it in Diet Coke, thereby allaying fears about the safety of the ingredient. Oeppen and Jamal (2014) stated a co-branding is always an effective tool for fashion brands to improve perceptions of the brand image through "borrowing" certain associations of values or brand images from a partner brand.

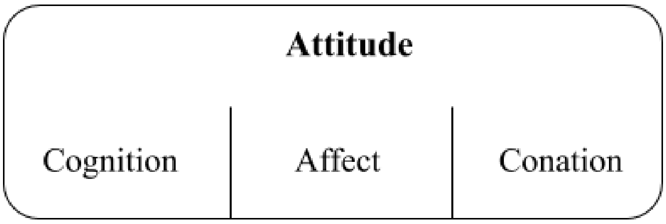
2.3.2 Consumer Attitude

Attitudes are learned predispositions to respond to an object and are some of the most heavily studied concepts in consumer behavior. Pickens (2005) concluded a simpler definition of attitude is a mindset or a tendency to act in a particular way due to both an individual's experience and temperament. Attitudes are important to marketers because they theoretically summarize a consumer's evaluation of an object (or brand or company) and represent positive or negative feelings and behavioral tendencies (Belch & Belch, 2017). Solomon et al. (2017) indicated that an attitude is a lasting, general evaluation of people (including oneself), objects, advertisements, or issues. Wilkie (1986) mentioned the evaluation stemmed from the significant benefits or image of the brand; in other words, the consumer judges the benefits and image from a brand and forms an overall brand attitude. Moreover, marketers assume that consumers' attitudes are related to consumers' purchase behavior (Belch & Belch, 2017).

There are two major theoretical orientations can be identified in attitude research (Lutz, 1991), which are the tripartite view of attitude and the unidimensional view of attitude.

The tripartite view of attitude posits three measurable components in the structure of the overall attitude: cognition, affect, and conation(behavior) (Mathews, 2009). Cognition refers to all beliefs that an individual holds with respect to the attitude object; affect pertains to positive or negative emotional reactions to the object; conation encompasses intended and actual behaviors with respect to the attitude object. Under the tripartite view, all three components are integral parts of any attitude; that is, every attitude consists of greater or lesser degrees of each component. Moreover, the three components are expected to exhibit a basic consistency in terms of favorability or unfavourability toward the attitude object. In other words, if a consumer believes that a brand will deliver positive benefits (cognition), then the consumer will also be expected to like the brand (affect) and engage in favorable behaviors toward it (conation) (Lutz, 1991). The tripartite view of the attitude model is depicted in Figure 8 below.

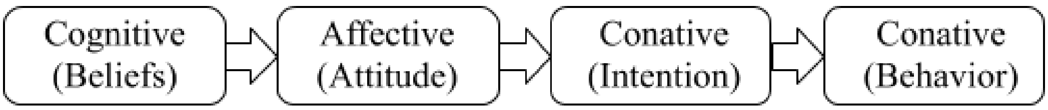
Figure 8 The Tripartite View of Attitude



Source: Adapted from Lutz, R. J. (1991). The role of attitude theory in marketing. *Perspectives in consumer behavior*.

Lutz (1991) also proposed the unidimensionalist approach of attitude as an evolution of the tripartite view. Under the unidimensional view, an attitude consists of the affective construct only, while the cognition and conation parts are not considered part of consumer attitude. Cognition is treated as the antecedents of attitude, representing beliefs about brands or products. Consumers will form an attitude by evaluating the brands after these beliefs are acquired. Conation is divided into two parts: behavioral intention and actual behavior, resulting from an individual’s attitude. Figure 9 illustrated the unidimensional view of attitude below.

Figure 9 The Unidimensional View of Attitude



Source: Adapted from Lutz, R. J. (1991). The role of attitude theory in marketing. *Perspectives in consumer behavior*.

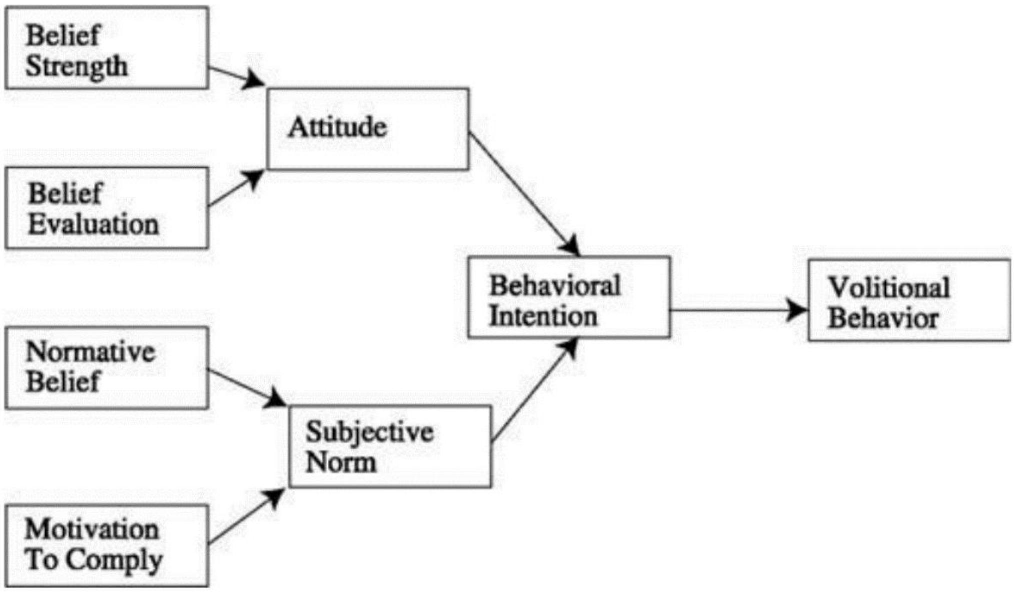
2.3.3 Purchase Intention

As Lutz (1991) introduced in the unidimensional view of attitude, beliefs cause one's attitude, which leads to the formation of an intention to purchase or not purchase. Purchase intentions are generally based on matching purchase motives with attributes or characteristics of brands under consideration, involving many of the personal subprocesses such as motivation, perception, attitude formation, and integration (Belch & Belch, 2017). S. Kim and Pysarchik (2000) examined the strong relationship between the overall attitude toward a product and purchase intention and suggested that purchase intention serves as an alternative for measuring consumers' purchase behavior. Hence, marketing managers routinely use purchase intentions to predict sales (Morwitz, Steckel, & Gupta, 2007).

Therefore, consumers' intention toward a particular behavior has remained the central focus of well-known theories like the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Haque et al., 2015).

TRA was introduced by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), aiming to explain the relationship between attitudes and behaviors within human action. In TRA, the individual's attitude and subjective norm are two antecedents of behavioral intentions, which contribute to whether or not the person will actually perform the behavior. The attitude is defined as a positive or negative feeling in relation to the achievement of an objective, and the subjective norms, which are the very representations of the individuals' perception in relation to the ability to reach those goals with the product (Salgues, 2016).

Figure 10 The Theory of Reasoned Action



Source: Adapted from Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). Theory of Reasoned Action in understanding attitudes and predicting social behaviour. *Journal of Social Psychology*.

As for the purchase intention towards co-branded products, Mazodier and Merunka (2014) examined the purchase intention on symbolic co-branded products (associating to the host brand a second brand that will give it additional symbolic attributes rather than functional attributes). However, their findings indicated that self-congruity with the secondary brand and the need for uniqueness have significant positive impacts on symbolic co-branding purchase, in addition to perceived congruence and attitude toward the primary brand. In contrast, attitude toward the secondary brand does not relate to the purchase of symbolic cobranded products.

2.3.4 China’s Millennial Consumers’ Characters

From Generational Cohort Theory, Chung et al. (2016) proposed that there are similar values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors among all members in each individual generation. Gao, Zhang, and Huang (2018); Liang and Xu (2018); Yi, Ribbens, and Morgan (2010) indicated that different Chinese generations have various thinking perspectives and behaviors.

Born in the 1980s to 1990s, the millennial generation in China is also called the “post-80s and -90s”, the “me,” the “individualistic,” the “one-child generation,” the “Affluent generation,” or the “Spoiled generation” (Yi et al., 2010). China's millennials represent a vast army of educated, independent, tech-savvy consumers (Allen, 2017) when China’s economy has been growing steadily at high speed for a long time (Cao, 2019), which creates a unique and affluent growth environment. Also, due to the new generation born under China’s one-child policy (stated in 1979) and grew up alongside the Internet, mobile phones, and online social networks (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010), China’s millennials have the chance to gain more knowledge in a fast-moving world, which lead China’s millennials are experience-oriented, demand uniqueness, value lifestyle upgrade and social media presence (Wang, 2009).

Meanwhile, based on the study of Howe and Strauss (2008), seven distinguished core characteristics of millennials are suggested: special, sheltered, very confident, team-oriented, conventional, pressured and achieving. Jacobsen and Barnes (2017) explained the embodiment of team-orientation on social media of millennial users refers to the trend of millennials receiving social influence or word-of-mouth of social media to obtain corporate information. Liwen Zhang, Song, and Li (2020) also found that influencers' recommendations from live streaming play an important role as references for China's millennial social media users.

According to reports from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Tencent Research Institute, China's millennials are heavy users of social media in the context of China's rapid developing Internet industry, and there are 73% of post-80s and post-90s checking their social media every 15 minutes (Sinatech, 2017). Ken (2020) introduced WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin (Tiktok) are mostly monthly active social media platforms in China. WeChat started as an instant messaging mobile application; now, it has developed into an all-in-one service application in China, which owns more than 1 billion Chinese monthly active users, including most of China's millennials. Moreover, Heytea has launched an official mini-program in WeChat for placing orders online, and 82.31% of Heytea's consumers choose to order in this way (Tencent, 2020).

After purchasing online, China's WeChat users prefer to adopt WeChat Moments Timeline as a channel to post travel photos and luxury experiences, which can bolster those users' self-concept and achieve a favorable self-image by building favorable self-presentation and highlight positive aspects in life (Chu, Lien, & Cao, 2019). Y.-R. R. Chen (2017) examined China's millennial WeChat user's engagement with brand official account's activities. The results indicated there is a direct result on business-consumer relationship quality (trust, commitment, control mutuality, and satisfaction) as well as purchase intention through WeChat user engagement with brand official accounts. They also found millennial WeChat users are enthusiastic about novel experiences from brands, and innovation differentiation indirectly increased the level of trust in and commitment to the given brand through consumer engagement with the account.

The research about China's millennials Weibo users from Y. Lin, Marjerison, and Kennedyd (2020) indicated that China's millennials repost or share content more frequently on Weibo compared to the other age groups by various motivations. Their findings suggested that China's millennials prefer to share content related to celebrities, resonated opinions, financial gains such as raffles and spiritual incentives, and something could help them build recognition on Weibo, and those motivations slightly differ in genders. Boardman, Cano, and Deng (2018) emphasized that critical drivers for using Weibo among millennials are convenience, immediacy, social standing/status, and entertainment. Furthermore, Weibo users read comments and tagged their friends when they find fashion information, latest product releases, and videos, emphasizing the importance of electronic word-of-mouth (e-wom) and the influence that it can have on purchasing behavior.

2.3.5 China's Millennial Consumers' Consuming Habits

When China's millennials embrace social media lifestyle, a growing influence is putting on the Chinese and international marketplaces, disrupting traditional economic models and driving innovation as this generation are more worldly, entrepreneurial, individualistic, open-minded, and willing to spend (Allen, 2017).

Moreover, Wang (2009) defined China's millennial consumer as the Little Emperor generation with the following characters:

1. With spoiled by parents in a more affluent environment, the Little Emperor generation consumers demand what they want and spend what they have.

2. Most Chinese families do everything they can to support the Little Emperor generation's education, enabling the young generation to get high-paying jobs early and develop self-indulgent consumerism habits.

3. Although the traditional Chinese culture highly values being thrifty and frugal, under the influence of globalization and rapid economic development, young Chinese consumers have begun to embrace modern consumption values, such as materialism and hedonic consumption, and seek instant gratification through excessive purchasing.

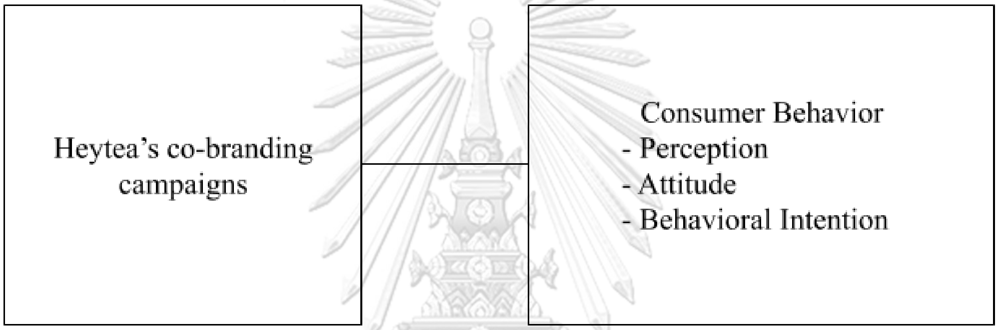
The China Youth Daily interviewed Chinese millennial consumers' consumption habits and found that cost performance (53.7%) and practicality (50.0%) were the main factors considered by the interviewed youths, while other factors included: exquisite packaging (45.1%), brand (34.5%), novelty (33.0%), and recommendations from people around (13.4%) (Sun, 2018).

Han and Guo (2018) investigated how the value of consumer ethnocentrism and ethnocentric marketing affect China's millennial consumers' purchase intentions, and the findings indicated China's millennial consumers' behavior would be driven more by personal attitudes than by in-group norms and ethnocentric stimuli. Su, Watchravesringkan, Zhou, and Gil (2019) argued that hedonism, security, and self-direction are the three value types rated as most important when China's millennials make a clothing purchase. At the same time, China's millennials prefer products that can bring them a unique sense of superiority, such as niche brands, limited edition products, and customized products. J.-H. Kim, Hsu, and Yuen (2020) described both individual (i.e., materialism) and social elements (i.e., need for uniqueness and social comparison) positively influence China's millennials' desire for status consumption of luxury fashion products, while social factors are the critical drivers of low-income group's desire for status consumption. Besides, C. Yang (2019) mentioned that opinions on social media influence China's millennials' willingness to consume. China's millennials use WeChat extensively to engage with luxury clothing brands to meet utilitarian and hedonic gratifications, but in doing so, China's millennials receive fashion and products information mostly from WeChat friendship groups and WeChat fashion bloggers rather than directly with the brands themselves (Siddiqui, Mannion, & Marciniak, 2019). Q. Zhu and Zhang (2019) employed Symbol Consumption, which means using mass media as the carrier, through the symbolic meaning of consumer goods, to express the self-identity of consumers and the identification of group belonging in the society, to explain the phenomenon that China's millennials consume high fashion, bags and suitcases, cosmetics and perfume products.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is portrayed in Figure 11 below. The illustration represented the overview of the consumer behavior on Heytea’s co-branding campaign through three aspects, containing perception, attitude, and behavioral intention.

Figure 11 Conceptual Framework for the Current Research



CHAPTER 3
Methodology

In this study, a quantitative research approach using an online survey questionnaire was employed to investigate the behaviors of Heytea's Chinese millennial consumers. The questionnaire consists of six parts regarding consumers' behaviors, including perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. This chapter will delve into the details of this research methodology, including research sample, sampling method, questionnaire format, measurement of variables, and data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The research employed a quantitative research method to realize the research objective. An online survey questionnaire was distributed through a Chinese survey service website called WJX.

3.2 Research Sample and Sampling Method

Since this study was aiming to understand Chinese millennial consumers' behaviors toward Heytea's co-branding campaigns, one online questionnaire survey was designed on WJX and distributed to Chinese millennials who are interested to Chinese tea, beverage, and Heytea. As the challenging situation under pandemic of covid-19 during the current study period, conducting an online survey provides a more comfortable and guaranteed environment for all participants. There was a total of 344 respondents took part in this survey. In total, 206 responses who know the brand Heytea and purchased Heytea more than one time in the past six months are valid to analyze for this study. All respondents of this study are from 20 to 40 years old, which are Chinese millennial segmentation (consist of post-80s and post-90s) and the primary target consumers of Heytea.

3.3 Questionnaire Format

As mentioned earlier, the questionnaire of this research was distributed through China's online social media services in order to maximize the reach to cover as many of Heytea's millennial customers as possible. The questionnaire was formulated in both English and Chinese versions and consisted of six sections. The questions of the questionnaire are comprised of close-ended questions, with some are in the form of multiple-choice (see Appendix A). Overall, the questionnaire has details as follows:

Part one is comprised of two screening questions that are used to screen out the respondents who are not qualified for this research. The respondents, who did not meet the requirements at this screening stage, were directed to end the survey.

Question 1 asks the respondents if they knew the new-style tea brand Heytea by using a dichotomous question.

Question 2 asks the respondents how many times they purchased Heytea in the past six months using a nominal scale.

Part two is comprised of three questions on the respondents' demographic information about the age range, gender, and monthly income using a nominal scale.

Part three contains five questions on the respondents' perceptions toward attributes of Heytea's brand and product characteristics, using an interval scale, including Heytea is cool, with inspirational designs, delicious, premium, luxury, and the top-of-mind choice from new-style tea brands.

Part four contains nine questions on the respondents' attitudes toward Dove as well as their attitudes and behavioral intentions toward the co-branding between Heytea and Dove, including four questions about attitude toward Dove, one question about consumer attitude toward Heytea and Dove's co-branding, and four questions about consumer behavioral intentions toward Heytea and Dove's co-branding, using an interval scale.

Part five contains nine questions on the respondents' attitudes toward Kiehl's as well as their attitudes and behavioral intentions toward the co-branding between Heytea and Kiehl's, including four questions about attitude toward Kiehl's, one question about consumer attitude toward Heytea and Kiehl's's co-branding, and four questions about consumer behavioral intentions toward Heytea and Kiehl's's co-branding, using an interval scale.

Part six contains eight questions on the respondents' attitudes toward Fenty Beauty as well as their attitudes and behavioral intentions toward the co-branding between Heytea and Fenty Beauty, including three questions about the attitude toward Fenty Beauty, one question about consumer attitude toward Heytea and Fenty

Beauty’s co-branding, and four questions about consumer behavioral intentions toward Heytea and Fenty Beauty’s co-branding, using an interval scale.

3.4 Measurement of the Variables

In the studies of consumer behavior, the researcher studied the three major key variables which are perception, attitude, and behavioral intention.

Questions and statements for measuring each variable in this research come from observation on the official websites, official publications, and communication contents from Heytea, Dove, Kiehl's, and Fenty Beauty. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher to collect respondents’ feedbacks in this study. The validity of each measurement was checked by Cronbach’s Alpha. A pilot study was conducted to eliminate errors before running the main study.

The variables that were studied in perception were if consumers perceived Heytea’s brand image as it was portrayed. 5 statements were designed to check consumers’ perception:

Perception 1: I think Heytea is a cool brand.

Perception 2: I think Heytea is a brand with inspirational designs.

Perception 3: I think Heytea’s drinks are delicious.

Perception 4: I think Heytea presents premium and luxury products.

Perception 5: When I think of New-style tea, Heytea is the brand that comes to mind first.

The variables that were studied in attitude were if consumers felt each partner brand with attributes those brands communicate to the target consumers, and if consumers felt each co-branding in a positive way. 14 statements were designed to check consumers' attitudes toward each partner brand, which are Dove, Kiehl's, and Fenty Beauty.

5 Attitude statements for Dove:

Attitude 1: I feel Dove represents Natural beauty.

Attitude 2: I feel Dove represents the Sense of Confidence.

Attitude 3: I feel Dove represents Simpleness and Genuineness.

Attitude 4: I feel Dove represents Reliability.

Attitude 5: I feel the co-branding of Heytea and Dove is positive.

5 Attitude statements for Kiehl's:

Attitude 1: I feel Kiehl's represents Natural.

Attitude 2: I feel Kiehl's represents Lively.

Attitude 3: I feel Kiehl's represents Authenticity.

Attitude 4: I feel Kiehl's represents Responsible and environmental-friendly.

Attitude 5: I feel the co-branding of Heytea and Kiehl's is positive.

4 Attitude statements for Fenty Beauty:

Attitude 1: I feel Fenty Beauty represents Diversity.

Attitude 2: I feel Fenty Beauty represents Fun.

Attitude 3: I feel Fenty Beauty represents "Dare to do something new or different".

Attitude 4: I feel the co-branding of Heytea and Fenty Beauty is positive.

The variables that were studied in behavioral intention were if consumers would like to purchase those co-branded products in the future, and consumers' tendency to share each co-branding information on their social media pages. 12 statement was designed to check consumers' behavioral intention toward each co-branding campaign that Heytea cobrands with Dove, Kiehl's, and Fenty Beauty.

4 Behavioral Intention statements for Heytea and Dove's co-branding:

Behavioral intention 1: I would like to purchase the co-branded products from Heytea and Dove in the future.

Behavioral intention 2: I will introduce Heytea and Dove's co-branded product to my friends.

Behavioral intention 3: I will repost information about Heytea and Dove's co-branding on social media.

Behavioral intention 4: I would take photos and share them on social media if I purchased Heytea and Dove's co-branding products.

4 Behavioral Intention statements for Heytea and Kiehl's's co-branding:

Behavioral intention 1: I would like to purchase the co-branded products from Heytea and Kiehl's in the future.

Behavioral intention 2: I will introduce Heytea and Kiehl's's co-branded product to my friends.

Behavioral intention 3: I will repost information about Heytea and Kiehl's's co-branding on social media.

Behavioral intention 4: I would take photos and share them on social media if I purchased Heytea and Kiehl's's co-branding products.

4 Behavioral Intention statements for Heytea and Fenty Beauty's co-branding:

Behavioral intention 1: I would like to purchase the co-branded products from Heytea and Fenty Beauty in the future.

Behavioral intention 2: I will introduce Heytea and Fenty Beauty's co-branded product to my friends.

Behavioral intention 3: I will repost information about Heytea and Fenty Beauty's co-branding on social media.

Behavioral intention 4: I would take photos and share them on social media if I purchased Heytea and Fenty Beauty's co-branding products.

The five-point, Likert scale was applied to measure the respondents' level of agreement on consumer behavior including perception, attitude, and behavioral intention toward Heytea's co-branding campaigns. The scale ranges are outlined below:

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

3.5 Data Collection and Data Analysis

The data of this research was collected using an online questionnaire survey distributed from mid-October to early November 2020. The analysis of the data was computed by the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) program and all statistical data was run at a 95% confidence level.

For the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics analysis was utilized to describe the means and standard deviation of the data.

CHAPTER 4
Findings

In this chapter, the findings of the data collected from 206 Haytea's Chinese millennial consumers' behavior toward Heytea three co-branding campaigns have been presented. In this survey, 344 respondents participated in the survey to submit their responses, and 128 samples who did not know the new style tea brand Heytea or did not purchase Heytea in the past six months are eliminated. In this chapter, the demographic profile of the respondents and the descriptive analysis will be applied to examine the consumer behaviors regarding perception, attitude, and behavioral intention.

4.1 Demographic Profile

This part contains four tables on Haytea consumer demographic questions consisting of the knowhow of the new style tea brand, frequency to purchase the product in past 6 months, age range, gender, and average monthly income.

All the 206 respondents answered yes to the question "Do you know the new-style tea brand Heytea?".

The respondents were asked "How many times have you purchased Heytea's product in the past 6 months?" The frequency distribution Table 3 for this question shows that 134 (65.0%) respondents had purchased Heytea 1-5 times, 49 (23.8%) respondents had purchased Heytea 6-10 times, 14 (6.8%) respondents had purchased Heytea 11-15 times, 2 (1.0%) respondents had purchased Heytea 16-20 times, and 7 (3.4%) respondents had purchased Heytea more than 20 times.

Table 3 Times of purchasing Heytea's product in the past 6 months

Frequency	***f***	**%**
1 - 5 times	134	65.0
6 - 10 times	49	23.8
11 - 15 times	14	6.8
16 - 20 times	2	1.0
more than 20 times	7	3.4
Total	**206**	**100**

Table 4 shows gender distribution which indicates there were 75 (36.4%) male respondents while 131 (63.6%) female respondents. This indicates that the majority of respondents were females.

Table 4 What is your gender?

Gender	***f***	**%**
Male	75	36.4
Female	131	63.6
Total	**206**	**100.0**

Next, Table 5 shows the age distribution table in which there were 65 (31.6%) respondents who belonged to the age group 20-24 years, 104 (50.5%) belonged to age group 25-29 years, 26 (12.6%) belonged to the age group 30-34 years and 11 (5.3%) belonged to the age group 35-40 years. The results indicate that the maximum number of people was between 25-29 years and the minimum number of people was between 35-40 years.

Table 5 What is your age range?

Age Range	*f*	%
20 - 24 years old	65	31.6
25 - 29 years old	104	50.5
30 - 34 years old	26	12.6
35 - 40 years old	11	5.3
Total	**206**	**100.0**

Table 6 shows the average monthly income distribution in which 28 (13.6%) respondents had an average income of less than ¥2,000, 40 (19.4%) had an average income of ¥2,001 - 4,000, 54 (26.2%) had an average income ¥6,001 - 8,000, 32 (15.5%) had an average income ¥6,001 -84,000 and 27 (13.1%) had an average income More than ¥10,000. This indicated that the maximum number of people had an average monthly income between ¥4,001 - 6,000.

Table 6 What is your monthly average income in the Chinese Yuan?

Income Range	*f*	%
Less than ¥2,000	28	13.6
¥2,001 - 4,000	40	19.4
¥4,001 - 6,000	54	26.2
¥6,001 - 8,000	32	15.5
¥8,001 - 10,000	25	12.1
More than ¥10,000	27	13.1
Total	**206**	**100.0**

4.2 Consumer Perception on Heytea

This part contains five questions for what people think about the new style brand- Heytea. A five-point Likert scale where 5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 2= disagree and 1=strongly disagree was used to see the level of the agreeableness of the respondents.

The results of the respondents' perception of Heytea are shown in Table 7. The data depicted that the majority of Heytea's Chinese millennial consumers agree with the five statements given the total mean score is at 3.56. The respondents agree most that Heytea's drinks are delicious (M = 3.87), Heytea is a brand with inspirational designs (M = 3.81), Heytea is a cool brand (M = 3.70), and Heytea presents premium and luxury products (M = 3.70). On the other hand, the respondents neither agree nor disagree on statements on that Heytea is in their top-of-mind when thinking about new-style tea brand (M = 3.42).

Table 7 Perception toward Heytea

Perception Toward Heytea	M	SD
I think Heytea is a cool brand.	3.70	0.98
I think Heytea is a brand with inspirational designs.	3.81	0.90
I think Heytea's drinks are delicious.	3.87	0.86
I think Heytea presents premium and luxury products.	3.70	0.91
When I think of new-style tea, Heytea is the brand that comes to mind first.	3.42	1.08
Total	**3.56**	**0.87**

Note: Likert scales, score 5 as the highest rank and 1 as the lowest. Cronbach's Alpha = .88

4.3 Consumer Attitude

This part contains 14 questions about consumer attitudes on Dove, Kiehl's, Fenty Beauty, and their co-brandings with Heytea.

Firstly, there are five questions about what people feel about American personal care beauty brand Dove, as well as the co-branding from Heytea and Dove. A five-point Likert scale where 5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 2= disagree and 1=strongly disagree was used to see the level of the agreeableness of the respondents.

The results on respondents' attitude toward Dove and its co-branding with Heytea are shown in Table 8. The data depicted that the majority of Heytea's Chinese millennial consumers neither agree nor disagree with the statement but came close to an agreement given the total mean score is at 3.49. As for the attitudes toward the brand Dove, the respondents agree most that Dove represents Reliability (*M* = 3.53) and Dove represents simpleness and genuineness (*M* = 3.43). On the other hand, the respondents neither agree nor disagree on statements that Dove represents natural beauty (*M* = 3.33) and Dove represents the sense of confidence (*M* = 3.28). At the same time, most respondents still feel the co-branding of Heytea and Dove is positive (*M* = 3.59).

Table 8 Attitude Toward Dove

Attitude Toward Dove	**M**	**SD**
I feel Dove represents Natural beauty.	3.33	0.84
I feel Dove represents the Sense of Confidence.	3.28	0.83
I feel Dove represents Simpleness and Genuineness.	3.43	0.90
I feel Dove represents Reliability.	3.53	0.84
I feel the co-branding of Heytea and Dove is positive.	3.59	0.89
Total	**3.49**	**0.76**

Note: Likert scales, score 5 as the highest rank and 1 as the lowest. Cronbach's Alpha = .89

Secondly, there are five questions for what people feel about the American cosmetic brand Kiehl's, as well as the co-branding from Heytea and Kiehl's. The results on respondents' attitude toward Kiehl's and its co-branding with Heytea are shown in Table 9 below. Overall, the participants of this research's survey are apt to agree to the statements with a total mean score of 3.77. According to the data, as for the brand Kiehl's , respondents agree most that Kiehl's represents natural (*M* = 3.80), followed by Kiehl's represents responsible and environmental-friendly (*M* = 3.70), Kiehl's represents authenticity (*M* = 3.61), and Kiehl's represents lively (*M* = 3.56).

As for the co-branding of Heytea and Kiehl's, most respondents hold a positive attitude toward it (*M* = 3.75).

Table 9 Attitude Toward Kiehl's

Attitude Toward Kiehl's	**M**	**SD**
I feel Kiehl's represents Natural.	3.80	0.75
I feel Kiehl's represents Lively.	3.56	0.83
I feel Kiehl's represents Authenticity.	3.61	0.82
I feel Kiehl's represents Responsible and environmental-friendly.	3.70	0.87
I feel the co-branding of Heytea and Kiehl's is positive.	3.75	0.85
Total	**3.77**	**0.69**

Note: Likert scales, score 5 as the highest rank and 1 as the lowest. Cronbach's Alpha = .89

The third part contains four questions for what people feel about the American cosmetic brand Fenty beauty, as well as its co-branding with Heytea. The results in Table 11 illustrate that the majority of the respondents have positive attitudes toward the Fenty Beauty brand and its co-branding with Heytea with a total mean score of 3.78. Overall, the respondents show a high level of agreement with all three positive terms. The statements for the brand Fenty Beauty with the highest mean score is that Fenty Beauty represents diversity and Fenty Beauty represents fun (*M* = 3.78, equally). Another statement with the lower mean score is that Fenty Beauty represents "dare to do something new or different" (*M* = 3.74). As for the co-branding between Heytea and Fenty Beauty, most respondents feel it is positive (*M* = 3.77).

Table 10 Attitude Toward Fenty Beauty

Attitude Toward Fenty Beauty	**M**	**SD**
I feel Fenty Beauty represents Diversity.	3.78	0.84
I feel Fenty Beauty represents Fun.	3.78	0.85
I feel Fenty Beauty represents "Dare to do something new or different".	3.74	0.88
I feel the co-branding of Heytea and Fenty Beauty is positive.	3.77	0.87
Total	**3.78**	**0.79**

Note: Likert scales, score 5 as the highest rank and 1 as the lowest. Cronbach's Alpha = .93

4.4 Behavioral Intention

Next, the mean and standard deviation for the statements on behavioral intention toward each co-branding campaign were calculated.

Table 11 below portrays the findings on the respondents' intention to purchase products from Heytea and Dove's co-branding. Generally, the respondents hold neutral intention on all four statements with a total mean score of 3.19. The lowest result is from if respondents would like to repost information about Heytea and Dove's co-branding on social media, which indicates most respondents disagree with this statement (*M* = 2.93). The highest result is from if respondents would like to purchase the co-branded products from Heytea and Dove in the future with a mean score of 3.24. The other two statements also received answers tending to the neutral intention (*M* = 3.15 and 3.20, respectively).

Table 11 Behavioral intention on Heytea & Dove

Behavioral intention on Heytea & Dove	**M**	**SD**
I would like to purchase the co-branded products from Heytea and Dove in the future.	3.24	1.02
I will introduce this co-branded product to my friends.	3.20	1.08
I will repost information about this co-branding on social media.	2.93	1.12
I would take photos and share them on social media if I purchased these co-branded products.	3.15	1.07
Total	**3.19**	**0.94**

Note: Likert scales, score 5 as the highest rank and 1 as the lowest. Cronbach's Alpha = .92

The respondents' behavioral intention towards co-branded products from Heytea and Kiehl's are depicted in Table 12 below. Generally, the respondents tend to agree to all four statements with a total mean score of 3.54. The respondents agree most that they would like to purchase the co-branded products from Heytea and Kiehl's in the future (M = 3.60), that they will introduce Heytea and Kiehl's's co-branded product to their friends (M = 3.55), that they would take photos and share them on social media if they purchased those co-branded products (M = 3.50). At the same time, the respondents agree least that they will repost information about Heytea and Kiehl's's co-branding on social media (M = 3.32).

Table 12 Behavioral intention on Heytea & Kiehl's

Behavioral intention on Heytea & Kiehl's	**M**	**SD**
I would like to purchase the co-branded products from Heytea and Kiehl's in the future.	3.60	0.91
I will introduce this co-branded product to my friends.	3.55	0.95
I will repost information about this co-branding on social media.	3.32	1.05
I would take photos and share them on social media if I purchased these co-branded products.	3.50	1.01
Total	**3.54**	**0.86**

Note: Likert scales, score 5 as the highest rank and 1 as the lowest. Cronbach's Alpha = .89

Results in Table 13 show that, in general, the respondents tend to have a positive intention to purchase co-branded products from Heytea and Fenty Beauty with a total mean score of 3.54. The respondents mostly agree that they would like to purchase the co-branded products from Heytea and Fenty Beauty in the future (*M* = 3.58). The majority of the survey participants also agree that they would take photos and share them on social media if they purchased those co-branded products (*M* = 3.51) and that they will introduce the co-branded products from Heytea and Fenty Beauty to their friends (*M* = 3.50). Furthermore, the data shows that the respondents hold less tendency to repost information about Heytea and Fenty Beauty's co-branding on social media (*M* = 3.40).

Table 13 Behavioral intention on Heytea & Fenty Beauty

Behavioral intention on Heytea & Fenty Beauty	**M**	**SD**
I would like to purchase the co-branded products from Heytea and Fenty Beauty in the future.	3.58	1.02
I will introduce this co-branded product to my friends.	3.50	1.07
I will repost information about this co-branding on social media.	3.40	1.07
I would take photos and share them on social media if I purchased these co-branded products.	3.51	1.09
Total	**3.54**	**0.98**

CHAPTER 5
Summary and Discussion

This chapter contains the summary and in-depth discussion of this research study. First, the summary of relevant results will be presented, followed by three parts of the study related to consumer behavior, which are perception, attitude, and behavioral intention. Then the limitations and directions for future research will be discussed, followed by the practical implications.

5.1 Summary

This summary section will discuss the results of the quantitative research from the study of Chinese millennial consumer behavior toward Heytea's co-branding campaigns that were surveyed from mid-October to early November 2020. The results of this study consist of computations regarding demographics, perception, attitude, and behavioral intention.

In this research, the *demographics* part is comprised of 1) the outcomes related to the know-how of the new style tea brand Heytea, 2) customers' frequency of Heytea products purchase in the past six months, 3) age range, 4) gender, and 5) average monthly income. The results indicate that the majority of respondents are female. More specifically, they make 63.3% of the sample, which is equivalent to 131 respondents. Furthermore, most of the samples are aged between 25 and 29 years old, accounting for 50.5% of the sample. As for the monthly average income range of respondents, most of the respondents earn an estimated ¥4,001-6,000 per month, which accounts for 26.2% of the sample, or 54 responses. As for the frequency of

Heytea products purchase in the past six months, 65% of the sample, an equivalent of 134 respondents, identified that they purchased Heytea products 1-5 times.

To measure the *perception*, *attitude*, and *behavioral intention*, a five-point Likert scale was used, with "5" meaning Strongly Agree and "1" meaning Strongly Disagree.

The *perception* part of this research covers the outcomes on the consumer perception toward the brand Heytea. In general, the respondents agreed to all five statements, with the overall mean score being 3.56. Indeed, this shows that the respondents feel positive that "Heytea's drinks are delicious" and that "Heytea is a brand with inspirational designs" as the mean scores of these two statements are 3.87 and 3.81, respectively, which is relatively high compared to the other three statements.

Next, the *attitude* part covers measurements of respondents' attitudes on each of the three partner brands, and their co-brandings.

In general, the outcomes show that most respondents had less favorable attitudes toward Dove and its co-branding with Heytea (M = 3.49), compared to their attitudes toward Kiehl's and its co-branding with Heytea (M = 3.77), as well as the attitudes toward Fenty Beauty and its co-branding with Heytea (M = 3.78).

The third part of the study addressed the Chinese millennial consumers' *behavioral intention* toward each of the three co-branding campaigns.

Firstly, the researcher found that the respondents neither strongly agree nor strongly disagree with the statements regarding the behavioral intention of the Heytea-Dove co-branded products, the overall mean score being 3.19. Besides, the results showed that respondents have the same level of agreement toward behavioral intention statements regarding both Heytea-Fenty Beauty co-branded products and Heytea- Kiehl's co-branded products, with the overall mean score of 3.54.

By and large, this research focuses on Chinese consumers' behavior toward Heytea's co-branding campaigns. All the results are listed from chapter one to chapter five in this report. Hopefully, this research will expand the knowledge on Chinese millennial consumers' behavior and provide implications for successful co-branding strategies that marketers can use to enhance their marketing communication.

5.2 Discussion

This section covers the discussion and analysis of the research study, which is comprised of three parts: perception, attitude, and behavioral intention.

5.2.1 Consumer Perception

The findings of this research study show that, in general, Heytea's Chinese millennial consumers consider Heytea a "cool" brand with inspirational designs that provides delicious and premium products. As Ruekert and Rao (1994) proposed consumers evaluated brand attributes as “signals” from brands to consumers. This research found Heytea has successfully executed marketing communication to consumers, consequently, consumers could perceive Heytea as a brand with cool and inspirational attributes. Besides, the researcher found that Heytea is their top-of-mind new-style tea brand. These outcomes are consistent with the previous survey done by Statista (2019) which indicated that nearly 60% of Chinese new-style fresh tea beverage consumers chose Heytea as their favorite tea beverage brand.

As mentioned above, the Chinese millennial is a group of people who are fond of a cool and unique lifestyle (Howe & Strauss, 2008; Wang, 2009). Thus, when Heytea employs “cool” and contemporary designs and launches its products into the marketplace, most consumers can receive the intended signals, which are translated into the consumers’ perception toward Heytea. This, in turn, leads to a successful match between what consumers think and what the brand promotes.

5.2.2 Consumer Attitude

As for respondents’ *attitude* toward each of Heytea’s partner brands (i.e., Dove, Kiehl's, and Fenty Beauty) as well as the co-branding between them and Heytea, the researcher found that it depends on what these brands deliver to consumers through marketing communication.

Firstly, Dove, a well-known brand under Unilever, receives wide consideration because consumers link its products with the moisturizing characteristics it promotes (Lu Zhang & Fan, 2020), which can explain why most respondents in this study feel that Dove presents reliable products as a skincare brand (*M* = 3.53). However, due to the fact that Unilever ignored the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, Dove meets divergence in the quantitative value chain among consumers. For instance, Dove's "Real Beauty campaign" has been ineffective after it landed in China while achieving great success in the European and American markets. Namely, Ran (2019) found there are gaps between the audiences' feelings and Dove's creation of empathy on "Real Beauty campaign" communication regarding the establishment of self-confidence and the presentation of the product values. This, he argues, is due to the differences in gender presentation in the Chinese context, which caused that Chinese consumers ignored or less paid attention on Dove's marketing communication messages as Belch and Belch (2017); Halkias (2015) mentioned that individuals would perceive same information into various meanings or ignore certain information due to differences of the environment, context, prior knowledge and experience. This could explain why it was hard for respondents in this research to feel that Dove's brand image is related to natural beauty, confidence, simplicity, and genuineness (*M* = 3.33, 3.28, and 3.43, respectively).

On the other hand, Kiehl's and Fenty Beauty have achieved success when targeting the right consumer segment and communicating through proper strategies. Indeed, since entering the Chinese market, Kiehl's focus on post-80s and post-90s consumers by highlighting lively, authentic, and environment-friendly products, has helped it achieve successful marketing performances (Lina, 2014). Fenty Beauty entered the Chinese market in 2019, borrowing the power of KOLs and the social media in general to amplify the brand image of diversity and promote its new definition of beauty among the young generation (Jingyu, 2019). In this study, most respondents presented they have a positive attitude toward the marketing communication messages sent by both Kiehl's and Fenty Beauty, which proves previous findings from Lina (2014) and Jingyu (2019).

In short, this survey reveals that most respondents have a more positive attitude toward the brand image of Kiehl's and Fenty Beauty than toward Dove. This may be due to the uneven levels of brand communication that these brands applied in the Chinese market, which lead to the differences in consumer perception and attitude process. The outcomes confirmed that the theory from Belch and Belch (2019); Halkias (2015) on how individuals perceive information from different environments and it will lead to the attitude change.

As for the respondents' *attitudes* toward each co-branding campaign tends to align with the combination of the perception toward Heytea and the attitudes toward each partner brand, which confirms what Washburn et al. (2000) pointed that co-branding could link two brands together with each brand's attributes, and what Oeppen and Jamal (2014) noted about co-branding in the fashion industry. Namely, they found that co-branding could transfer certain associations of values or brand images to a partner brand. Moreover, Ruekert and Rao (1994) indicated that characteristic signals of two brands can be sent to consumers at the same time to form a complete perception toward the co-branded products, and then the complete perception forms the attitudes toward the co-branding, which explains why the co-branding campaign between Heytea and Dove receives less positive attitudes as compared to Heytea co-branding campaign with Kiehl's and Fenty Beauty.

Furthermore, Norman (2017) states that in a co-branding campaign, consumers prefer to analyze brand attributes with higher-order category and higher abstraction. Indeed, this study found that respondents' attitudes toward each co-branding campaign advances the idea that the success to deliver attractive brand images, such as "fun" for Fenty Beauty, are important to raise positive co-branding attitudes among Chinese millennial consumers. The outcomes in the research also confirmed the theory about "brand-fit" and "higher-order category concept" among co-branding from Norman (2017) when respondents hold more favorable attitudes toward co-branding of Heytea and Fenty Beauty as those two brands own higher-order similar abstraction attributes.

5.2.3 Consumer Behavioral Intention

The final section of this research paper explores the *behavioral intention* part of consumer behavior, which delves into the behavior of Heytea's Chinese millennial customers regarding their intention to purchase and share information toward three co-branding campaigns.

According to the outcomes from this research, respondents' behavioral intentions toward Heytea- Kiehl's co-branded products (M = 3.54, $S.D.$ = 0.86) and Heytea-Fenty Beauty co-branded products (M = 3.54, $S.D.$ = 0.98) are almost identical, being slightly higher than Heytea-Dove co-branded products (M = 3.19, *S.D.* = 0.94). This implies that most respondents intend to purchase co-branded products and to share them on social media, which is conflicting with the results of Hasan and Hasan (2019), as they found that consumers do not prefer to purchase products on the basis of co-branding. Nonetheless, their study also indicates that consumers prefer and intend to purchase products from a renowned company. Also, S. Kim & Pysarchik (2000) mentioned that consumers' attitudes on a certain brand would determine consumers' behavioral intentions on that brand, which could explain why Heytea's consumers have a positive attitude toward Kiehl's and Fenty Beauty, as all three of these renowned companies present similar values and consumers formed favorable attitudes toward those brands. Therefore, the behavioral intention toward their co-branded products is increased.

The second part of the *behavioral intention* is about consumers' intentions to share or get involved in the co-branding campaigns, as it is a company's means to amplify brand awareness. Overall, most respondents have more positive intentions to interact with the co-branding campaigns of Heytea partnered with Kiehl's and Fenty Beauty, rather than the co-branding campaign between Heytea and Dove, which is consistent with the findings of attitudes toward each partner brand. Furthermore, the Chinese millennials, as is mentioned in the literature review section, are a group of people who pay attention to social life and social status upgrades, which is why they use superiority products and tend to present a positive social media image of themselves (Su et al., 2019; Wang, 2009). Moreover, Chu et al. (2019) mentioned China's millennials prefer to adopt social media and post luxury and premium experience contents to bolster their self-concept and achieve a favorable self-image.

Since Dove is treated as an ordinary shampoo and shower gel brand in China, most respondents hardly feel that Dove has a meaningful and representative brand image. At the same time, there are totally 45.6% respondents who claimed they earn ¥2,001 – 6,000 per month in this study, which is the relatively low income range in China, and J.-H. Kim et al. (2020) indicated that for Chinese millennials' low-income groups it is common to have status consumption. This might explain why most of the respondents chose not to post Heytea and Dove's co-branded products on social media platforms or to recommend such products to friends, which means that they generally refuse to adopt Dove in an effort to build their social media image or social status. In contrast, the respondents demonstrated more positive intentions toward co-branding campaigns from Kiehl's and Fenty Beauty, as these two brands meet the consumers' preferences and are therefore well-recognized among consumers' social circles. This suggests that choosing Dove as a co-branding partner makes it hard for Heytea to reach its objective of amplifying brand awareness through co-branding campaigns.

Thus, this study found that most of Heytea's Chinese millennial consumers tend to think and feel they receive high-quality products and cool experience from the brand. In this research, the respondents demonstrated a higher tendency to accept co-branding campaigns between Heytea and a partner brand with a similar brand image as Heytea, such as Fenty Beauty, which promotes diversity and fun attributes. Therefore, by partnering with brands that Heytea's consumers *perceive* as positive (i.e. positive *attitude*), Heytea could raise consumers' behavioral intention as well as its overall brand awareness.

5.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite the researcher's efforts to minimize the limitations of this study, there are still some points that should be more thoroughly addressed by future research.

The questionnaire in this study was created by the researcher. Therefore it lacks validity and reliability. For future studies, future researchers should employ valid questionnaires with a professional structure in order to ensure the validity and reliability of their questionnaires.

Furthermore, this study is solid based on a quantitative research approach. For future studies, a qualitative method with interviews, focus groups, and first-hand observations to gain in-depth insights into consumer behavior will be highly recommended.

Lastly, another limitation is all selected campaigns for this study have been over prior to the research was taken place. For future studies, an ongoing campaign will be an ideal selection for the study.

5.4 Practical Implications

The findings of this research study provide valuable insights into consumer behavior toward Heytea's three co-branding campaigns, from which the researcher can derive various practical implications.

Firstly, the results reveal that the co-branding campaign between Heytea and Dove received less positive consumer feedbacks regarding consumer attitude and behavioral intention as compared to the other two campaigns (i.e., Heytea- Kiehl's and Heytea-Fenty Beauty). This could be due to the fact that Dove failed to build a strong and attractive brand image among Heytea's target segment. Indeed, when brands intend to amplify brand awareness by conducting co-branding campaigns, choosing the right partner brand with matching target group attributes is crucial for the product to succeed.

Secondly, the results reveal that Chinese millennial consumers would like to share commercial information regarding co-branded products on their social media. However, the possibility of them doing so depends on whether the brands match consumers' recognized values and expectations. Thus, conducting a strong and recognizable communication strategy among the consumer community is crucial for brands to succeed in today's dynamic and ever-changing market.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH VERSION)

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The Study of Chinese Consumer's Behavior on Heytea's Co-branding Campaign

This research is conducted as a required component of the Professional Project, achieved by a student of M.A. Program in Strategic Communication Management from Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University. The purpose of this survey is to study Chinese millennial consumer behavior on Heytea's co-branding campaigns. The questionnaire is voluntary, and the data collected will be kept confidential. Respondents are NOT going to be identified and are given the option not to answer any particular question. Data collected will be analyzed and used for educational purposes only and will be implemented appropriately

Part 1 Instruction – Please tick (√) your selection of answer

1. Do you know the new-style tea brand Heytea?
☐ Yes ☐ No (End the survey)

2. How many times have you purchased Heytea's product in the past 6 months?
☐ (1) Less than one time (End the survey) ☐ (2) 1 - 5 times
☐ (3) 6 – 10 times ☐ (4) 11 – 15 times
☐ (5) 16 – 20 times ☐ (6) More than 20 times

Part 2 Instruction – Please tick (√) your selection of answer

1. What is your age range?
   ☐ (1) 20 - 24 years old　　☐ (2) 25 – 29 years old
   ☐ (3) 30 – 34 years old　　☐ (4) 35 – 40 years old

2. What is your gender?
   ☐ (1) Male　　☐ (2) Female

3. What is your monthly average income in the Chinese Yuan?
   ☐ (1) Less than 2,000 Yuan　　☐ (2) 2,001 – 4,000 Yuan
   ☐ (3) 4,001 – 6,000 Yuan　　☐ (4) 6,001 – 8,000 Yuan
   ☐ (5) 8,0001 – 10,000 Yuan　　☐ (6)More than 10,0000 Yuan

Part 3 Instruction – Please tick (√) your selection of answer

1. Please rate your opinion about the brand Heytea below (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree)

Items	5	4	3	2	1
1) I think Heytea is a **cool** brand.					
2) I think Heytea is a brand with **inspirational designs**.					
3) I think Heytea’s drinks are **delicious**.					
4) I think Heytea presents **premium and luxury** products.					
5) When I think of **New-style tea**, Heytea is the brands that comes to mind **first**.					

Part 4 Instruction – Please tick (√) your selection of answer

Dove is an American personal care brand owned by Unilever originating in the United States. Heytea and Dove launched a co-branding campaign in May 2020, including a peach flavor tea drink and peach-scented shower gel. The poster for this campaign is shown below.

1. Please rate your opinion about the brand Dove, and the co-branding between Heytea and Dove below (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree)

Items	5	4	3	2	1
1) I feel Dove represents **Natural beauty.**					
2) I feel Dove represents the **Sense of Confidence**.					
3) I feel Dove represents **Simpleness and Genuineness**.					
4) I feel Dove represents **Reliability**.					
5) I feel the co-branding of Heytea and Dove is positive.					

2. Please rate your opinion about the co-branding of Heytea and Dove below (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree)

Items	5	4	3	2	1
1) I would like to purchase the co-branded products from Heytea and Dove in the future.					
2) I will introduce this co-branded product to my friends.					
3) I will repost information about this co-branding on social media.					
4) I would take photos and share them on social media if I purchased these co-branded products.					

Part 5 Instruction – Please tick (√) your selection of answer

Kiehl's is an American cosmetic brand specializing in skin, hair, and body care products. Heytea and Kiehl's launched a co-branding campaign in December 2019, including a series of Avocado flavor drinks and toasts and environmental-friendly offline activities. The poster for this campaign is shown below.

1. Please rate your opinion about the brand Kiehl's, and the co-branding between Heytea and Kiehl's below (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree)

Items	5	4	3	2	1
1) I feel Kiehl's represents **Natural**.					
2) I feel Kiehl's represents **Lively**.					
3) I feel Kiehl's represents **Authenticity**.					
4) I feel Kiehl's represents **Responsible and environmental-friendly**.					
5) I feel the co-branding of Heytea and Kiehl's is positive.					

2. Heytea and Kiehl's launched a co-branding campaign in December 2019, including a series of Avocado flavor drinks and toasts and environmental-friendly offline activities. The poster for this campaign is shown below.

Items	5	4	3	2	1
1) I would like to purchase the co-branded products from Heytea and Dove in the future.					
2) I will introduce this co-branded product to my friends.					
3) I will repost information about this co-branding on social media.					
4) I would take photos and share them on social media if I purchased these co-branded products.					

Part 6 Instruction – Please tick (√) your selection of answer

Fenty Beauty is a cosmetic brand launched on September 8, 2017, by Rihanna. Heytea and Fenty Beauty launched a co-branding campaign in May 2019, including a peach flavor tea drink and color cosmetic products. The poster for this campaign is shown below.

1. Please rate your opinion about the brand Fenty Beauty and the co-branding between Heytea and Fenty Beauty below (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree)

Items	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1) I feel Fenty Beauty represents **Diversity**.					
2) I feel Fenty Beauty represents **Fun**.					
3) I feel Fenty Beauty represents “**Dare to do something new or different**”.					
4) I feel the co-branding of Heytea and Fenty Beauty is positive.					

2. Please rate your opinion about the co-branding of Heytea and Fenty Beauty below (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree)

Items	5	4	3	2	1
1) I would like to purchase the co-branded products from Heytea and Dove in the future.					
2) I will introduce this co-branded product to my friends.					
3) I will repost information about this co-branding on social media.					
4) I would take photos and share them on social media if I purchased these co-branded products.					

-- End of the survey. Thank you for your time –

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE (CHINESE VERSION)

研究问卷

关于中国千禧一代消费者和喜茶联名活动的消费者行为的研究

这项研究是泰国朱拉隆功大学传播艺术学院战略传播硕士课程的学生专业项目的一部分。这份调查旨在研究喜茶联名活动中中国千禧一代消费者的行为。本问卷调查是自愿填写的，并采用完全匿名的形式，您的个人信息和答案将会被严格保密。所收集的数据将被分析并仅用作学术教育目的。

第一部分 填写说明：请在你的选项上打勾(√)

1. 你知道新式茶饮品牌喜茶吗？
   ☐ 知道 ☐不知道 (问卷结束)

2. 在过去六个月，你购买喜茶的次数是？
   ☐ (1) 少于 1 次 (问卷结束) ☐ (2) 1 - 5 次
   ☐ (3) 6 – 10 次 ☐ (4) 11 – 15 次
   ☐ (5) 16 – 20 次 ☐ (6) 超过 20 次

第二部分 填写说明：请在你的选项上打勾(√)

1. 你的年龄范围是？
   ☐ (1) 20 - 24 岁 ☐ (2) 25 – 29 岁
   ☐ (3) 30 – 34 岁 ☐ (4) 35 – 40 岁

2. 你的性别是？
   ☐ (1) 男性 ☐ (2) 女性

3. 你的每月平均收入范围是？

☐ (1) 少于 2,000 元　　☐ (2) 2,001 – 4,000 元
☐ (3) 4,001 – 6,000 元　　☐ (4) 6,001 – 8,000 元
☐ (5) 8,0001 – 10,000 元　　☐ (6)超过 10,0000 元

第三部分 填写说明：请在你的选项上打勾(√)

1. 请选择你对喜茶这个品牌的看法 (1 = 完全不同意, 2 = 不同意, 3 = 不赞同也不反对, 4 = 同意, 5 = 完全同意)

项目	5	4	3	2	1
1) 我觉得喜茶是一个很**酷**的品牌。					
2) 我觉得喜茶是一个具有**灵感十足的设计**的品牌。					
3) 我觉得喜茶的饮品**味道很好**。					
4) 我觉得喜茶提供的是**高品质、高档**的产品。					
5) 当我想到**新式茶饮**，喜茶是我**第一个想到**的品牌					

第四部分 填写说明：请在你的选项上打勾(√)

多芬（Dove）是联合利华旗下的个人护理品牌，起源于美国。喜茶和多芬在 2020 年 5 月进行了品牌联名，发布了芝芝桃桃联名饮品和桃子味联名沐浴露。该活动的海报如下所示：

1. 请选择你对多芬这个品牌以及多芬和喜茶的此次联名的看法 (1 = 完全不同意,

2 = 不同意, 3 = 不赞同也不反对, 4 = 同意, 5 = 完全同意)

项目	5	4	3	2	1
1) 我觉得多芬代表着**自然的美**。					
2) 我觉得多芬代表着**自信**。					
3) 我觉得多芬代表着**简单而真实**。					
4) 我觉得多芬代表着**可信赖的**。					
5) 我觉得喜茶和多芬的联名挺好的。					

2. 请选择你对多芬和喜茶的此次联名的看法 (1 = 完全不同意, 2 = 不同意, 3 = 不赞同也不反对, 4 = 同意, 5 = 完全同意)

项目	5	4	3	2	1
1) 将来我会购买喜茶和多芬的联名产品。					
2) 我会将这次联名的产品介绍给朋友。					
3) 我愿意在社交媒体上转发这次联名活动。					
4) 如果我购买了这些联名产品，我会拍照并在社交媒体上分享。					

第五部分 填写说明：请在你的选项上打勾(√)

科颜氏（Kiehl's）是一个美国护肤品品牌，专门生产皮肤，头发和身体护理产品。喜茶和科颜氏于 2019 年 12 月发起了联名活动，其中包括一系列牛油果风味饮品和面包，以及线下环保主题活动。 该活动的海报如下所示：

1. 请选择你对科颜氏这个品牌以及喜茶和科颜氏此次联名的看法 (1 = 完全不同意, 2 = 不同意, 3 = 不赞同也不反对, 4 = 同意, 5 = 完全同意)

项目	5	4	3	2	1
1) 我觉得科颜氏代表着**自然**。					
2) 我觉得科颜氏代表着**活力**。					
3) 我觉得科颜氏代表着**真实、不做作**。					
4) 我觉得科颜氏代表着**环保、负责任**。					
5) 我觉得喜茶和科颜氏的联名挺好的					

2. 请选择你对科颜氏和喜茶的此次联名的看法 (1 = 完全不同意, 2 = 不同意, 3 = 不赞同也不反对, 4 = 同意, 5 = 完全同意)

项目	5	4	3	2	1
1) 将来我会购买喜茶和多芬的联名产品。					
2) 我会将这次联名的产品介绍给朋友。					
3) 我愿意在社交媒体上转发这次联名活动。					
4) 如果我购买了这些联名产品，我会拍照并在社交媒体上分享。					

第六部分 填写说明：请在你的选项上打勾(√)

Fenty Beauty 是由蕾哈娜（Rihanna）于 2017 年 9 月 8 日推出的化妆品品牌。喜茶和 Fenty Beauty 于 2019 年 5 月发起了联名活动，发布了包括芝芝桃桃联名饮品和联名彩妆产品。 该活动的海报如下所示：

1. 请选择你对 Fenty Beauty 这个品牌的看法 (1 = 完全不同意, 2 = 不同意, 3 = 不赞同也不反对, 4 = 同意, 5 = 完全同意)

项目	5	4	3	2	1
1) 我觉得 Fenty Beauty 代表着多样性。					
2) 我举得 Fenty Beauty 代表着好玩有趣。					
3) 我觉得 Fenty Beauty 代表着"敢于尝试新鲜或不同的东西"。					
4) 我觉得喜茶和 Fenty Beauty 的联名挺好的。					

2. 请选择你对 Fenty Beauty 和喜茶这次联名的看法 (1 = 完全不同意, 2 = 不同意, 3 = 不赞同也不反对, 4 = 同意, 5 = 完全同意)

项目	5	4	3	2	1
1) 将来我会购买喜茶和多芬的联名产品。					
2) 我会将这次联名的产品介绍给朋友。					
3) 我愿意在社交媒体上转发这次联名活动。					
4) 如果我购买了这些联名产品，我会拍照并在社交媒体上分享。					

--问卷结束，感谢你的参与--

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