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Compare in-store atmospheres of McDonald's

in China and Sweden from a cultural symbolic perspective

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Abstract

Title:	Comparing in-store atmospheres of McDonald's in China and Sweden from a cultural symbolic perspective
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Authors:	Ning Zhang and Wang Xi
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Keywords:	McDonald's, cross cultural study, symbolic attributes, In-store atmosphere, qualitative study
Thesis purpose:	The purpose of this study is using McDonald's in China and Sweden as a case to find out how fast food restaurant retailers combine adaptation and standardization with symbolic attributes of store atmospherics under different cultural background, and find out possible reasons.
Methodology:	The study used McDonald's in a case format to study in-store atmospheres. Further, the research has an investigating and explanatory qualitative approach, collecting the empirical data through observation with photos.
Theoretical perspective:	Existing theories within in-store atmospheres, store atmosphere image, symbolic attributes, national culture (familism, individualism, feminism, masculinity etc.) were used as a foundation for validating empirical data as well as providing reasonable explanations of phenomenon.
Empirical data:	The empirical data are collected by observation conducted in McDonald's in China and Sweden about elements of in-store atmospheres. Finally

data collected in 5 stores from Sweden and 5 from China were used.

Conclusion: McDonald's applies different strategies to the design of in-store atmosphere in China and Sweden. In a large degree symbolic attributes are adapted to the local cultural values and tastes to meet the local preferences. Standardization were used in a small amount for the safe choice and financial economy in both countries. Different strategies are also used for different categories of store atmospherics.

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The road of research is not always flat, but we experienced happiness and a content feeling during the research since we actually learned some things both academic knowledge and life experiences from this study.

Lastly, we want to give our thanks to Lund University, who gave us precious opportunities to study in this beautiful country.

Thank you very much!

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Lund, 2008
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1 Introduction

This chapter aims at presenting the area of our study and simultaneously gives the readers ideas about why the topic is chosen and how this study will contribute to the presently available research. In the end of this chapter our research questions and purpose will be presented.

1.1 Background

Retailing is a very visible form of economic activity, which exerts a major influence upon the lives of consumers (McGoldrick 2002). Retailers defined as firms "engaged primarily in retailing" (James, Walker and Etzel, 1981, p.5 cited in Peterson 2002), direct their marketing effort toward the final consumer for the purpose of selling goods or services (Lewison, 1997, p. 850, Levy and Weitz, 1996, p.419 cited in Peterson 2002). They play an important role in the world economy and people's everyday life.

Nowadays a lot of U.S. firms seek to expand their presence in global markets, and the franchise opportunities for them are dominated by food and restaurant services such as fast food outlets (Keillor and Fields, 1996). It is also the same for fast food retailers in other countries as fast and convenience are important attractions for consumers in the busy globe. Fast food restaurants are defined as franchised restaurants chain offering both dining and take-out facilities with no "table" service such as McDonald's, Burger King and KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken). Fast food is selected as the product offering due to its pervasiveness in markets around the world, as well as its association with convenience (Keillor and Fields, 1996).

When companies move on to more culturally and geographically distant markets, standardization and localization are two common marketing strategies for them to consider (Liu 2006). This is also the same for fast food restaurants. The product element of the marketing mix is often cited as the most standardized element, but within the product element there are various attributes that are more or less likely to be standardized (Usunier and Lee, 2005). As mentioned by Usumier and Lee (2005), three layers of product attributes can be identified: physical attributes, service attributes, and symbolic attributes. Symbolic attributes are very important for product element, because as nowadays, more and more consumers buy a product not only for its function, but also for the meanings that it represents. Symbolic attributes often comprise the interpretive element of the physical attributes such as color and size, and it affects the choice between adaptation and standardization in a fairly ambiguous manner (Usunier and Lee, 2002). Furthermore, symbolic meanings affect store image creation through store atmosphere design.

The same as other retailers, fast food restaurants need positive store image to attract more consumers. Many of the examples of successful store image creation depend

upon physical, but non-price aspects of the store. Thus, it is reasonable to view the customer as rationally evaluating the store on a multi-attribute utility function (Doyle and Fenwick, cited in McGoldrick 2002). Different from merchandise oriented retailers, services are seen to have a number of unique characteristics including intangibility, and inseparability of production and consumption (de Chernatoy and Segal-Horn, cited in Jones et al. 2002). As defined by Kotler (1973) (cited in McGoldrick 2002, p459), atmospherics is the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyers that enhance their purchase probability. They are very important for creating a positive store image and reinforcing the total consumption experience for consumers of service oriented retailers, as they not only buy, but also enjoy the product in store. As a result it is very important to study the symbolic attributes of atmospherics of service oriented retailers. Fast food restaurants exhibit features of both service providers and groceries selling food of their own brands. Though marketing of their own product and service attributes of their atmospherics is important, they also have their unique focus on symbolic attributes of atmospherics for store image creation. Moreover, for fast food restaurants, though fast and convenience are long believed to be their characters (Keillor and Fields, 1996), the store ambient may transfer different symbolic meanings to their consumers in different countries. Different fast food restaurants choose different store atmosphere factors such as exterior and interior décor, symbols and colors in different countries to create their own store image; some of them are similar, while some of them differ greatly.

1.2 Problem discussion

Though different elements of atmospherics have been discussed to different extent in marketing research, there is a surprising lack of empirical research or theoretically based frameworks addressing the role of physical surroundings in consumption settings (Bitner 1992). Turley and Milliman (2000) pointed out many specific research gaps of atmospherics from marketing perspective. For example, the research pertaining to exterior building characteristics such as color and signage is extremely limited at present. Though music has been widely studied in general interior, many of other variables have not received the attention they probably deserve. There are a number of researches about elements that are more relevant to merchandise oriented retailers, for example, studies about store layout like shelf space decisions. More researches about atmospherics are needed for service industry, especially on a symbolic level. Moreover, as most studied are done by consumer researchers, there is a lack of studies from a management perspective, for example, corporate internationalization strategies.

It has been argued that the convenience orientation represents a segmentation criterion which transcends national and cultural boundaries (Luqmani et al. 1994), which highly supports standardization strategy for fast food restaurants. However, previous research has mentioned that an atmosphere that produces a certain response in an

individual or group of people at a given point in time may produce an entirely different response in another individual or group (Bitner 1992). Values differ under various cultural contexts (Liu 2006), so the same ambient may convey different symbolic meanings in different countries. Though similarities and differences between eastern and western culture have long been discussed in the academic world, our understanding of the effect of a consumer's cultural and subcultural influences on the perception of, and expectation for, a marketing environment is relatively undeveloped at this time (Turley and Milliman, 2000). As a result cross-cultural studies about symbolic attributes of atmospherics need more attention; this is also a gap need to be filled in the researches about fast food restaurant industry.

Practically, for retailers store design has become one of the most visible elements of retail positioning strategy. Throughout the last two decades, there has been enormous investment by retailers and shopping centre developers in new store designs and refurbishments (McGoldrick 2002). Bitner (1990) pointed out that atmospheric planning can make the difference between a business success or failure. In the era of globalization, a lot of fast food retailers want to expand globally as the world becomes more and more fast-paced. Big international fast food retailers like McDonald's and KFC from the US have been making this effort for years, but they still face some challenges in the process. Moreover, although the days have long been passed since major retailers made casual decisions about design issues, many medium and smaller retailers still make arbitrary decisions about the environments they create (Turley and Milliman, 2000). Managers continually plan, build, and change an organization's physical surroundings in an attempt to control its influence on patrons, without really knowing the impact of a specific design or atmospheric change on its users (Bitner 1992). They need to become more formalized in their decision making about store environment. Therefore it is of practical importance to study standardization and adaptation of symbolic attributes of store atmosphere according to different meanings it may convey under different cultural background. It can help avoid financial waste for international fast food retailers.

1.3 Research questions

To gain a better understanding of this, McDonald's has been chosen to be our case company. One main reason of the choice is that McDonald's is well known for its highly standardized globalization strategy, it would be interesting to study whether or not it adapts the intangible elements of atmospherics to convey different symbolic meanings in different countries. It is also interesting to study as an American company, how McDonald's transfer its American style to different cultural background through symbolic attributes of store atmospherics in Europe and Asia. Moreover, as McDonald's has 31377 restaurants in 118 countries now (McDonald's Annual Report 2007), it is the largest fast food chain in the world, and it is also well-known in other industries. Today's success of McDonald's is partly contributed by its effort on its in-store marketing in the world. As a result studying it can give

significant implications to other fast food restaurants and other types of retailers as well.

In our study, we choose different cultural context in China and Sweden. The two countries differ from each other in many aspects. Over the past two decades, the Chinese economy has grown more than three times as fast as that of the USA (Hammond, cited in Marilyn et al. 2004). The economic growth is affecting the competitive capabilities of all multinational companies. Western businesspeople have returned from China realize the fantastic opportunity for investment (Marilyn et al., 2004). Sweden is a very much developed and mature country. With a total population of about nine million people distributed over a long geographical area, the potential for competitive problems due to high concentration among food retailers exists throughout Sweden (Bucklin 1986). Moreover, China represents a unique eastern culture from values to eating habits which may cause problems for western fast food retailers, as western food is not very familiar to Chinese consumers. Differently living in a western country, Swedish consumers are more familiar with American fast food, and their values differ greatly from Chinese values in Hofstede cultural dimensions (geert-hofstede.com 2007). The different economic situation and culture may lead to different preference of store atmospherics between consumers in the two countries from a symbolic meanings perspective.

Because of all of the reasons above, our research questions are generated as follows:
· What are the symbolic attributes of atmospherics that McDonald's use in China and Sweden?
· What are the standardization and adaptation of them that McDonald's do in the two countries?
· What are the similarities and differences?
· What implications can McDonald's give to other international fast food restaurants and other types of retailers?

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this study is using McDonald's in China and Sweden as a case to find out how fast food restaurant retailers combine adaptation and standardization with symbolic attributes of store atmospherics under different cultural background. Academically, our aim is to contribute to the knowledge of internationalization strategies of atmospherics from a cultural symbolic perspective in the service industry.

We believe by studying symbolic attributes of ambient of fast food restaurant under different cultural background, we can make contributions to both fast food restaurant and other types of retailers, as similar tangible attributes may carry similar symbolic meanings, for example, the same color may carry the same meaning for different retailers in the same country.

1.5 Disposition

Chapter 2

The theory section of this study will give a brief review of relevant theories, which will help generate hypothesis of our study, and guide our observation. The theories give an academic foundation of our study, which will contribute to fulfilling the aim of the study.

Chapter 3

In this chapter we will present discussions of our scientific philosophy and chosen methodology. Our data collection method will be presented, and advantages and disadvantages of our methodology will be discussed. Reliability and validity of our study design will be presented in the end.

Chapter 4

This chapter will present the primary data of the study. It will follow a format showing data of each of the McDonald's in Sweden and China separately. A concluding table of both the two countries will be presented in the end. Pictures taken in McDonald's in both of the countries can be found in Appendix II and Appendix III.

Chapter 5

This chapter begins with the empirical data comparison between the two countries. The analysis will be based upon the comparison and secondary data we collected and this will be connected to the theoretical background where we made our hypothesis in order to fulfil the aim of this study.

Chapter 6

This chapter will conclude the analyzed empirical data where the aim is to clearly answer the research problem. This section will also highlight this study's implication to the field of research. In the end limitations and future research recommendations will be presented.

2 Theory

The theory section of this study will give a brief review of relevant theories, which will help generate hypothesis of our study, and guide our observation. The theories give an academic foundation of our study, which will contribute to fulfilling the aim of the study.

2.1 Internationalization Strategy (Standardization vs. Adaptation)

In the study of international business, the framework proposed by Salmon and Tordjman (1989) identified two approaches to the internationalization of retail operations: the global strategy (Standardization) and multinational strategy (Adaptation). Studies have always discussed whether a company should apply an international strategy that is adapted to different national markets or standardized across national markets.

2.1.1 Standardization

Until now, there is no common definition of what standardization is (Ryans et al 2003 cited in Viswanathan and Dickson 2006). This strategy assumes that target customers are homogenous. Levitt (1983) argued that markets are gradually homogenizing due to the forces of internationalization. He believed that "*what is needed is a confident global imagination that sees the world as a single marketplace entity.*" Consumer demand tends to be in the form of high quality and low costs because of the impact of technologies in transportation and communication. Ohmae (1987) focus on the homogenous of "triad" markets. " *'the Triadians, or OECDites'—that is, the residents of Japan, America and the European Community, whose academic backgrounds, income levels, lifestyles, aspirations and use of leisure time are sufficiently similar to force companies to treat them as a relatively homogenous market."* He also pointed out that companies cannot be cheated by the so-called "heterogeneous" cultures, economies, and political systems in different countries. They must actively look for the opportunities to "rationalize their worldwide operations and treat the world as a single global market" (Zou et al 1997). Cost minimization is one of the main motives for standardization, and it is due to the homogeneous approach to the development of research, purchasing and marketing activities, from which it derives economies of scale and it is simple to introduce new products and services. The second important motive of standardization is that the retailers can convey a global image of a uniform retailing format. For instance, in different countries one company could have the same production lines, price level, distribution system, communication and store design and décor. These standard unique elements of the store, together with a homogeneous communication strategy, create a distinct and clearly positioned perceived retail image (Dianoux et al, 2006). Besides significant cost savings and uniform global image, from standardization, companies can gain benefits of consistency with customers, improved distribution and organizing. Jain (1989, cited in Zou et al 1997) proposed a useful framework for standardization. In this framework, five different factors which could affect standardization were developed: target market factors,

market position factors, product nature factors, environmental factors and organizational factors. This beginning framework gave the practitioners a guide to analyze the standardization strategy in their business.

In recent years, the standardization approach is questioned by many researchers, who believe that the world markets will still be different even in the forces of internationalization. Boddewyn (1986, cited in Zou et al 1997) argued that standardization was not a necessity to do in the international markets. In some markets or countries that obviously culturally similar or geography close, for instance the European Union, differences in consumer needs were still different. In markets where apparently customer needs were similar, there were still differences in the consumer decision making criteria (Fournis 1962, cited in Zou et al 1997).   In some perspectives, standardization approach emphasizes too much on the standardization of production. Companies which make their focus on the product (service) cost savings may fail to consider the need and preferences of customers in different countries and the competitions of their rivals, and in the end become vulnerable to competitive attacks in individual foreign markets (Cavusgil 1994, cited in Zou et al 1997). The risk of standardization is pursuing relatively high. Because marketing standardization is affected by both internal and external factors. A company may fail in international markets when it fails to satisfy either of factors. Internally, the company may move too fast towards global standardization, which can lead to the loss of key assets, the disruption of established operations and managerial skills (Douglas and Wind 1987, cited in Zou et al 1997). Companies' standardization strategy is relevant to the firms' different levels of international involvement, thus the degree of standardization should be consistent with the companies' international experience. Externally, there are too many differences between countries and too many constraints between markets, for instance, marketing infrastructure differences, environmental regulations, local content requirements, product safety standards, and other government regulations. Thus, the feasibility of the standardization strategy may be very low when these instances vary across markets. De Mooij and Hofstede (2002) in their study claimed that converging technology and disappearing income differences in different countries did not lead to homogeneous consumer behaviour which was also driven by another main factor—culture.

2.1.2   Adaptation

Adaptation strategy is being used by many SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) today. This strategy can base on the situation of different countries to adjust the concept of company and market strategy in the interior of countries and then to seek competitive advantages. When using adaptation strategy, companies cannot save lots of cost from use one model of shops, however, with the amount of store increasing, the economies of scale could be realized, which needs an adaptive market strategy, including the adaptation of product category, price, promotion, service level, model design and distribution. "Think global, act local" is adopted by more and more companies, because the degree of product and promotion adaptation is largely

influenced by company characteristics, product/industry characteristics and foreign market characteristics (Cavusgil 1993, cited in Zou et al 1997). Griffin et al (2000) once compared shopping values in the USA and Russia, habitation factor significantly affects pleasure values but not utilitarian factors. Keillor (2004) found that significant differences exist in the service quality and its impact on the behavioural intentions in the context of international service industry in different countries. Viswanathan and Dickson (2006) built a three-factor (homogeneity of customer response to the marketing mix, transferability of competitive advantage, and similarity in the degree of economic freedom) model could be used to identify the impact of different variables in the standardization and adaptation. The concept of psychic distance and organizational performance in international retailing was introduced by Evans and Movondo (2002 cited in White and Absher 2007). Their study found that psychic distance negatively affected organizational performance in distant markets, but not in close markets. To solve the psychic distance issue, many companies will choose acquisition to expand their local market, which could help companies acquire local culture knowledge and the integration of company culture.

2.1.3 Culture and firm strategy

The relationship between culture and consumer behavior has been documented in a number of studies (Webster 1994). Keillor and Fields (1996) identified culture influenced consumer behavior, which in turn affected marketing activities targeted at these consumers. If marketing activities are to be successful across cultures, the identification of culturally specific and culturally relevant needs is of paramount importance (Maheswaran 1994). The notion of "cultural propriety" (Sherry 1987, cited in Keillor and Fields, 1996), which focuses on the effect of the local culture on marketing activities, is of particular importance in marketing products, such as fast food, where the consumption process is overt and visible. Furthermore, the act of consumption is one which is closely related to cultural and ethnic identification (Otnes and McGrath, cited in Keillor and Fields, 1996). Keillor and Fields (1996) also identified previous studies that demonstrated the impact of ethnic identity on various aspects of consumer behaviors using a wide range of objective measures. These include: race (Gardyn and Fetto 2003), gender aspect (Beetles and Crane 2005) as well as religion (Hirschman 1981). Now we can make our hypothesis 1:

HP1: Due to the ethnic identification in Sweden and China, McDonald's adapts its symbolic attributes of its atmospherics.

When marketing products internationally, it is important to take into account of the differences between eastern and western culture. As the Chinese market is of tremendous opportunities for foreign marketers (Keillor and Fields, 1996), studies have shown interest of understanding Chinese value. The same concept has been found being perceived differently between Chinese and American culture. For example, a comfortable life means a prosperous life to Americans, as indicated by Rokeach (cited in Liu 2006), but a peaceful life to the Chinese. The influence of

collectivism on family decision making has been well reported in the literature especially in Asia. For instance, a Chinese individual must take into account members of the family when making a purchase decision, in contrast with the Western husband's or wife's interactive decision-making process regarding important household expenditures (Usunier and Lee, 2002). The single most essential concept to characterize Chinese culture is undoubtedly familism (Ballah, Yang, cited in Usunier and Lee, 2002, p90). Confucius defined five fundamental human relations, three of which relate to family relations. All five of them had roughly equal weight in terms of importance. However, in any event a Chinese individual's relationship with family members is a permanent important one (Usunier and Lee, 2002). Differently, Sweden is a typical individualism country, where people's actions and thoughts are not influenced by the regulations of family, thus, they are not willing to sacrifice themselves to the family (Hong 2000). Therefore,we make our next hypothesis:

HP2: Comparing to Sweden, as China is much more familism, we can see symbols of that in McDonald's atmospherics.

While the ideal situation for marketers involved in non-domestic markets is to engage in standardized global marketing, the ability to successfully market across national boundaries will always require some degree of local adaptation (Particelli, cited in Keillor and Fields, 1996). This is particularly true when the product type in question is closely related to cultural and ethnic identity such as food (Reilly and Wallendorf, 1987). Reilly and Wallendorf (1987) found significant differences in food consumption attributable to: regional proximity, minority status, national identity, ethnic origin, and income. People prefer locally identified food products for a number of reasons (Brown and Mussell, cited in Keillor and Fields, 1996)

Previous research (Bitner 1992) has shown the atmosphere in which a product is offered is of fundamental importance to the consumer's overall evaluation of that product. Furthermore, it has been found that a convenience orientation is a viable global segmentation strategy (Luqmani et al. 1994). The emphasis on convenience of fast food restaurants seems to be in direct contradiction to the strategies currently being employed in the global marketplace by prominent fast food chains such as McDonald's. In Sweden, McDonald's takes up more than 70% of market share of fast food business (Rossenblum 1999). It has been popular with some firms to market their fast food offering and atmosphere as an opportunity to engage in an American cultural experience. Unfortunately, at least in some foreign markets, this type of approach would not be appropriate, since some countries view these cultural influence as an invasion and destroy to their national culture. In Sweden, the invasion of American cultural products has been seen as a threat to Swedish culture, and images of a cultural flood from America characterized by commercialism has been invoked to demonstrate Sweden's need to defend itself against this attack on the national culture (Blanck 2004). Also, in a study about Hong Kong, it has been found that traditional elements are important in the atmosphere in which the product offering is conveyed. It is

indicated that some of the negative perceptions commonly associated with fast food in the U.S, most notably its lack of variety and a general unhealthy quality (Boss and Schuster, 1995), were not shown to be concerns among Hong Kong consumers. However, it does appear that U.S. firms might be well advised to take steps to reduce the perceived "American-ness" of their business. It is suggested that the need to provide a traditional atmosphere is important to Hong Kong consumers, which means reducing or eliminating aspects which are directly connected to America in consumers' minds. One means for achieving this is to ensure that the visual aspects of the product environment are built around culture-specific colors, pictures, and artwork (Usunier and Lee, 2005). Here we can make hypothesis 3:

HP3: In both China and Sweden, symbol of country-of-origin of the U.S. and American culture is not emphasized.

2.2 Symbolic Attributes

2.2.1 Symbolic attributes and internationalization strategy

In the book "Culture across marketing", Usunier and Lee (2005) points out that the most standardized element in the marketing mix is product element, which has three layers of various attributes that could affect the level of standardization, which are the physical attributes (size, weight, color, etc), service attributes (maintenance, after-sales service, spare parts availability, etc) and symbolic attributes (interpretive element of physical attributes). The standardization of physical attributes could contribute to the cost benefits since economies of scale happens in the manufacturing stage. Service attributes are difficult to standardize, since local customer's preference to large extent influences the service attributes.

Among three types of attributes, symbolic attributes have the closest link with culture. These attributes simultaneously have their actual value for the product and also the symbolic meaning conveyed by the product. For instance, color is one of physical attributes of product, but when it comes to symbolic attribute; it generates a meaning in consumer's mind. Symbolic attributes affect the choice between adaptation and standardization very ambiguously. It is complicated when consumers show a preference for national goods based on nationalism, and also show a liking for foreign goods based on their exotic culture. Therefore, when companies adapt or standardize symbolic attributes in their products, they should consider the question whether the image of imported products, company, nationality or brand name are favorable or not by local consumers. For international retailers, the store is an important part of the stimulus environment contributing to the consumers' construction of the shopping situation (Bettman et al. 1998), and also the process of trying to influence the consumer in the store takes place at the time of the purchase (Rossiter and Percy 1997 cited in Nordfalt 2005). Thus, gaining the knowledge of meanings of symbolic attributes in different countries is very important for the store décor designers.

Usunier and Lee (2005) gave some recommendations for helping the designer of product attributes convey appropriate symbolic meanings: Firstly, when marketers conduct research about product or service standardization before the final launch, to choose symbols that have a universal or near-universal value is relatively safe; Secondly, since there are great differences in the interpretations and associations of symbols, the standardization of product and packaging must be systematically preceded by product and packaging tests carried out in each national market, using local informants.

2.2.2 Colors as Symbolic attribute and culture

Colors as an element of symbolic attributes are important when deciding atmospherics of fast food restaurants. Yildirim et al.'s (2007) study showed that if the differences in the colors of the walls commercial environments were taken into account in interior design, it could positively affect customers' store choice and use of a store's environment and product purchase. Scholars also studied the effects of differences in age groups on customers' perceptions of store atmospheric attributes for perceptual quality items.

Usunier and Lee (2005) indicates the link between symbols and culture, which comprises several successive steps. The starting point is *conceptual*: colors, for example, are wavelengths of light reflected by objects; a set of waves of different frequencies produces a color spectrum.

Hidden behind each symbol is one or more *material support*. Red, for example, is the color of blood: it can evoke and suggest meanings that differ widely depending on the culture. Every culture has an image of blood, which feeds part of the symbolic content of the color red. Using of red as the dominant color on a product or its packaging must therefore be very carefully considered beforehand.

Perception is the next level. It results from a culture-based adaptive process. It has been shown that sensitivity to visual illusions varies according to culture, particularly as a result of the effects of syncretism. Suggestive visual associations result from our daily environment.

After perception, an *association* has been established between a certain color and a suggested meaning. Initially there can be a highly tangible link: for example, the color brown may be tainted by a negative sense in the connotation of waste, since it may be concretely associated with excrement. It differs for the same color in different cultural context.

There is social overspill throughout society and even to packaging and marketing communication in general. The symbol shares the characteristics of a language. It conveys rich and diversified meanings, full of nuances, and its messages are often implicit. It conjures up a set of evocations, suggestions and interpretations that are

almost subconscious yet still very real in the minds of consumers. Indeed, this set of *interpretations* is to large extent specific to each national culture. Ethnocentrism is instinctive in all symbolic thought. It is therefore quite inevitable, especially when it is present in the consumer's culture. In the case of ethnic products, it may be of some use to marketers, in order to maintain genuineness. However, inappropriate or poor use of backgrounds that diffuse symbolic images that are not adapted to the local consumer presents a danger for international marketers. Inappropriate use of symbolic meanings may be based on the best possible intentions on the part of the marketer but may result in the worst consequences for users. As a result here we can generate our hypothesis 4:

HP4: Different internationalization strategies of colors of atmospheric variables are used in atmospherics by McDonald's in China and Sweden due to the symbolic meanings they convey in the two countries.

Symbolic attributes for fast food restaurant atmospherics are very important. As fast food is considered to be a convenience item rather than a special treat (Keillor and Fields, 1996), such a perception on the part of consumers would not lend itself to a marketing approach which attempted to convey a unique, cultural appeal for fast food. As a result paying attention to store image that atmospherics create can be a good way for market differentiation. In fast food restaurants, symbolic meanings are specifically being communicated to consumers by atmospherics, as a result, it is important for us to give a definition of it.

2.3 Atmospherics attributes

Kotler (1973) (cited in McGoldrick, 2002, p459) was the first to use and define the term "atmospherics" as the intentional control and structuring of environmental cues. There are also other researchers later contribute to this area. As defined by McGoldrick (2002), interior and exterior décor, symbols and colors and certain emotions generated from them such as sleepy/active, unpleasant/pleasant, stylish and basic, are variables that consist store atmosphere image. We believe that colors and symbols can be seen from store exterior and interior décor. Therefore they are the dependent and independent variables that we use in our study. This is also why we do not study other symbolic attributes like shape and size. They may not have the same level of influence of store image. The specific definition about atmospherics used in our study is a modified version of Berman and Evans (1995) (cited in Turley and Milliman, 2000) approach to categorizing atmospheric factors. Exterior variables include the storefront, marquee, entrances, display windows, building architecture, the surrounding area, and parking. If these variables are not managed well, the rest of the atmosphere may not matter. These elements must be pleasing and induce approach behaviors for a retail store or service to be successful (Turley and Milliman, 2000). General interior includes flooring/carpeting, lighting, scent, sounds, temperature, cleanliness, fixtures, wall coverings and cash register placement. Store layout consists

of floor space allocation, product groupings, traffic flow, department locations, and allocations within departments. Interior displays include product displays, racks and cases, posters, signs, cards and wall decorations. Human variables are crowding, customer characteristics, employee characteristics, and employee uniforms. From the store atmosphere image perspective, it is more related to some variables in exterior, general interior, interior displays, and uniform in human variables. This scale is used to pick the elements that we include in our study, we will discuss more about it in the methodology part. Here we can make our hypothesis 5:

HP5: To different extent that atmospherics variables convey symbolic meanings to create store image, different internationalization strategies are used in different type of atmospherics.

3 Methodology

In this chapter we will present discussions of our scientific philosophy and chosen methodology. Our data collection method will be presented, and advantages and disadvantages of our methodology will be discussed. Reliability and validity of our study design will be presented in the end.

3.1 Overall approach

Our study is an investigating research, focusing on gaining a deeper understanding of how an international retail company adapts its in-store marketing strategy of symbolic attributes of atmospherics to countries with different cultures. To expand the investigation an explanatory comparison of culture of different countries was conducted, which offered an indication of what factors might affect symbolic attributes of atmospherics elements for companies that newly or ready to expand their business across the border.

3.2 Research Approach

The philosophy issues of research design are very useful when the research begin to be designed and conducted, because it can help researchers to clarify research designs and to recognize which design is appropriate. The philosophical issues include two parts: ontology and epistemology. The ontology assumes about the nature of reality, epistemology is a general set of assumptions about the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002).

3.2.1 Epistemology and ontology

The epistemology of our study is empiricism. Because we believe that legitimate human knowledge arises from what is provided to the mind by the senses or by introspective awareness through experience (McCarty, 2007). In other words, the outcome of our study should be built on the basis of our sense experience. For instance, we firstly find the interesting empirical phenomena through observation (different décor color-tone and symbols in McDonald's between China and Sweden) and then gain corresponding knowledge through studying these phenomena. Thus, our opinions are similar to empiricism for which the knowledge could be gained through the inductive inference from direct experience.

The ontological assumption used in our study is that reality seems to us is subjectively created in our daily life. We believe that the reality is something that is subjective and socially constructed and is seen as a personal construct that is heavily influenced by the culture we live in, by the norms, values and structures of the society that is derived from and by individual cognition, which is close to one ontological position—constructionism, social actors can continually accomplish the social phenomena and their meanings, which imply that social phenomena are not only

created through social interaction, but also in a constant state of change (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Thus, the ontology of our study is constructionism.

In the deductive approach, researchers have to use existing knowledge to deduce a hypothesis to that must then be subjected to empirical scrutiny (Bryman and Bell, 2003). The aim of this approach is to test the theory. However, in the inductive approach, theory is the outcome of the research. Researchers should firstly collect the data, and then draw the generalizable inferences out of the existing observations and findings. For our study, firstly, we should observe what are the similarities and differences of symbolic attributes of store atmospherics among McDonald's restaurants in Sweden and China, and secondly we compare the findings and explain the reason. However, when doing this, we use existing theory to guide our observation, and then, we hope to generate some new findings and implications. Therefore, our study will adopt an approach that is a combination of induction and deduction.

3.2.2 Quantitative or Qualitative Methods

According to Bryman and Bell (2003), the quantitative research entailed a deductive approach in which the accent is placed on the testing of theories and related to positivist epistemological orientation and embodies a view of social reality as an external, objective reality. But regarding to our empiricism and constructionism, the qualitative approach is more appropriate for our study. The reason is that qualitative approach predominantly emphasizes an inductive approach and embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation (Bryman and Bell 2003). Moreover, our aim is to gain a closer understanding of how fast food restaurant retailers can combine adaptation and standardization on in store atomospherics under different cultural background. This could be achieved by qualitative approach which helps us seek a deep understanding of the entire research through subjective information and observations.

3.3   Research Design

In order to investigate how the American retailer company adapts its in-store management in Sweden and in China, both of which have different background from America, the case study design is used in our research. Case study is detailed investigation of individuals, groups, institutions or other social units. It entails the intensive analysis and a single case, whose complexity and particular nature are concerned during the research (Bryman and Bell, 2003). According to Yin (1994), the case study method could be used: when the type of research question is typically to ask questions like "how" or "why"; when investigator has a little possibility to control the behavioural events; when the general circumstances of the phenomenon to be studied is a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context. For our study, we are interested in exploring how the American fast food retailing company makes standardization and adaptation in the in-store management in Sweden and China. Certainly, the management of a company cannot be controlled or changed by us. Due

to the characteristic of this study, case study research design was used as the most appropriate tool. When conducting this case study, we attempted to analyze the variables relevant to the subject under study. We select McDonald's as the case company. We aim to generate an intensive analysis of a single case—McDonald's, in relation to which we then engage in a theoretical analysis.

3.4 Primary Data

Bryman and Bell (2003) mentioned ethnographic information gathering, observing, focus group interviewing and documenting as possible means for gathering information for first hand data. From this perspective, we decide that our primary data consists mainly of observations in McDonald's restaurants, and we use camera to take photos as an aid to the data collection process and also as evidences in the discussion part of our study.

3.4.1 Observations

3.4.1.1 Choice of observation

The reason for the choice of observation is that it can provide first hand data on the realities of current practice. This method can help to provide direct information about what atmospherics McDonald's uses under different cultural background, that is, in China and Sweden specifically in this study, and also illustrate the similarities and differences. Members of this study team, who are from School of Economics and Management, Lund University and major in marketing, act as observers in Sweden, and our friends who have been guided by us act as observers in China.

Photographs and films are a form of documentation and can assume the status of evidence (Banks 2001, cited in Riley 2003). Photographic techniques are commonly used in the observation research of botany and medical study and wider hospital settings for clinical purposes, such as before and after plastic surgery (VanderKam and Achauer 1997 cited in Riley 2003). It is seldom used in the business research, however, we found that it is feasible and reliable in our study. Comparing to previous studies that used photographic methods, our study has the same characteristic that the observed targets are all in the static status: the gingival color (Denissen et al 2007), tree canopy structure (Tellez et al 2005) and store physical environment, all of which will stay the same for a certain long time, and most importantly are easy to observe in most forms of observation methods. Just as doctor in the America could diagnose the patience in France via the photos of symptom, this method enables us to correctly analyze the differences existed in the store atmospherics, even we don't have to be in the McDonald's due to the distance issue: photos tell us all, as long as the content that should be taken is correctly recorded in the camera.

3.4.1.2 Role of the observer

In the McDonald's restaurants, our role as observers is complete observers, who listen and observe without being taken into account. It is suitable for this study because the objects that we observe – store atmospherics, can easily be done with only being a normal customer. We play a detached role as observers, and it can help promote objectivity in the nature of the collected data (Altrichter et al., cited in Turnock et al., 2001). Previous literature argues that complete observation could be done through cameras or other technical devices (Bryman and Bell, 2003), but it could raise several serious moral and ethical issues. Our study uses camera as an aid because it is easy to compare different store atmospherics like colors in China and Sweden with photos taken in store. We ask for the personnel's permission to take photos in store, so it does not cause moral or ethical issues.

3.4.1.3 Structured or unstructured observation

Observation is also categorized in terms of the degree of structure used in the observation. Two main approaches in the literature are defined as structured and unstructured observation. Structured observation adopts a systematic approach to observation using an observational schedule to record information on certain aspects of observed behavior (Denscombe, cited in Turnock et al., 2001), for example, answering a checklist of questions about observed behavior. Our observation falls into this type. The objects that we observe, mainly in store atmospherics, are either structured in existing literature or planned in advance by us. We observe most of them in pilot study, and make changes afterwards.

The category of objects that we observe is from former literature, where we mentioned in the theory part as store atmospherics modified version of Berman and Evans (1995) (cited in Turley and Milliman, 2000). Specifically, exterior (store front, marquee, entrances, display windows, building architecture, parking and surrounding area), general interior (flooring/carpeting, lighting, scent, sounds, temperature, cleanliness, fixtures, ceiling, wall coverings and cash register placement), store layout (floor space allocation, product groupings, traffic flow, department locations, and allocations within departments), interior displays (product displays, racks and cases, posters, signs, cards and wall decorations), and human variables (crowding, customer characteristics, employee characteristics, and employee uniforms).

3.4.2 Sample

11 McDonald's in Sweden and 5 in China were observed. The McDonald's in Sweden are in five cities in Skåne, they are, Lund, Malmö, Landskrona, Helsinborg, and Kristianstad. All of the McDonald's should be newly built ones with the newest concept that McDonald's introduces to the global market, which makes comparison between different McDonald's in Sweden and China possible. The cities are chosen because of their variation in economic position of the country, consumer charactors, and city features. Lund is a very big university town in Sweden, while Malmö is the

third largest city in Sweden which is more commercial. Kristianstad and Landskrona are in a not very active area of Sweden, and Helsingborg is neither big nor small, which is important in sea transport. The McDonald's in China that we have chosen to observe are in Beijing, Tianjin and Laiwu. Beijing is the capital of China, which is very commercial and of great political and financial importance in China. Tianjin is also a big city, not as commercial, but has an importance in sea transport as well. Chinese government sets different status to different cities according to large population and financial or political importance. A is the highest. Beijing and Tianjin are A level cities. Laiwu is a C level city in China, which is small and in a less important economic position. When we are choosing McDonald's, we are also aware of the differences between McDonald's restaurants on the street in city centers, and those in shopping malls, because we observe some elements about atmospherics, which can be very different between the two store types.

3.4.3   Pilot study

Before we begin our pilot study, we firstly make the checklist of our observation items. We need to make sure about what variables are valuable for us to observe and what are not. We chose the variables to see what are the similarities and differences between McDonald's in Sweden and China. We believe the variables can show information about symbolic attributes of store atmospherics, which directly related to the aim of our study.

Some variables were excluded from our checklist. There are several reasons. Firstly, some variables do not exist in the McDonald's restaurant, such as display windows, racks and cases, cards. Secondly, some variables are used to reinforce the quality of service but not to convey symbolic meanings, such as, cleanliness, product displays, cash register placement, crowding, floor space allocation, traffic flow and employee characteristics. Cleanliness is one of the most fundamental elements of quality serve for any retailers. Product displays, product groupings and cash register placement in McDonald's are used to offer the convenience to employees so that they could give the fastest service to customers. Floor space allocation, traffic flow and crowding are the means that retailers evoke the impulse buying of customers. Employee characteristics represent service attitudes of retailer. All of these elements can enhance the service quality or service functions of retailers, but have little relevance with symbolic meanings. It is the same reason that we exclude the scent, lighting and temperature, all of which are aimed to create a comfortable environment for customer which induce purchasing, but have no relevance to transferring symbolic meaning. Thirdly, some variables, such as building architecture, parking, surrounding area, department locations, allocations within departments and customer characteristics are very much related to the specific store location, which cannot be fully decided by McDonald's. For instance, the McDonald's in the city center of Lund is built within the existing buildings. It is a part of the whole building, and it does not have parking. However, for McDonald's in Delphi, which is also in Lund, the restaurant is an independent construction with a large parking of its own. The characteristics of

customers depend on the store location as well. Business people tend to visit McDonald's which is built in the business area, and students are the main customers if it is built near schools. Almost every restaurant has its own architecture style, parking space and customer characteristics. These make it very difficult for us to find the commonness.

Therefore, after excluding the variables that are not appropriate for our study, the variables in the checklist of our pilot study are:
Exterior: store front, marquee, entrances.
General interior: flooring/carpeting, sounds, fixtures, ceiling and wall coverings.
Interior displays: posters, signs and wall decorations.
Human variables: employee uniform

In our pilot study, we decided to observe two McDonald's in Sweden, and compare them to two McDonald's in China. For McDonald's in Sweden, the two restaurants we observed were respectively located in city center of Lund, and Delphi, a little far away from the center of Lund. The tool for recording the observation result was a digital camera.

For McDonald's in China, our friends are our "eyes" to observe. The McDonald's they observe are respectively located in Tianjin and Laiwu. What they do is to take the pictures for the in-store atmosphere elements that we need to evaluate and then send those photos to us via email. Since most of our observed targets are in static status, very obvious and also do not need to be extremely precise, the slight color difference between the image and the actual one result from the physical attributes, such as film processing technology, lens, of different cameras could be ignored. Thus, it is easy to describe what objects are for them and how to take photos. It is also easy for us to observe via the photos. Before they begin to observe, we have "educated" them to make sure that they know what elements they should take in their cameras. We give every observer the same checklist of in store elements which they should take. All the elements are the same with what we have observed in Sweden.

The detailed guiding method is as below:
We sent representative observers a document with the pictures we took in Lund. All the elements in the checklist were highlighted with red circles in the pictures. In every picture we also labeled the names of elements in the pictures. This could help them eliminate the ambiguity of perception to some words, such as fixtures, which meaned the chairs, dining tables and lamps and so on in our study. We also wrote some instructions to guide them how to take photos to cover the elements as correct as possible. Generally, when they shot the main areas such as exterior, interiors and etc., they should shoot in the whole view first, and then took detailed photos for every element, especially those elements different from the ones in our photo. The aim of this was to help us identify the whole style of the restaurant and find the different items that might be ignored by representative observers. Specifically, when they shot

exterior variables, the entrance and the logo of big golden arches should be paid more attention; when they shot in the interior variables, the color of the cashier counter, the painting, in-store post, the décor color, flooring, different types of lamps and kid game zone were the most important items that they should emphasize; when they shot human variables, the uniform and the cap should be the focuses.

After we received those photos, we compared the differences between those elements of McDonald's in Sweden and China. We found out that some variables could not be used in our further study. For instance, marquee and signs were rarely used in every McDonald's; background music was chosen by employee's music preference which was disclosed by the staff of McDonald's; the design of posters was very much decided by the event or the product in the latest promotion, which cannot present the symbolic meaning in different countries. However, we found that after pilot study, one variable had been already excluded from our checklist was relevant to our study of symbolic meaning. It was space allocation. After comparison, we found out that in the McDonald's in China, the game zone and dining area for children commonly took up a considerable proportion; however, in Sweden, we seldom saw any dining area particular for kids, the game zone for kids was also small. This was an interesting difference in the space allocation variable. We decided to take it back to our checklist. Therefore, we finally decided to use the following variables in our study.

Exterior: store front, entrances.
General interior: flooring/carpeting, fixtures, ceiling and wall coverings.
Store Layout: floor space allocation.
Interior displays: wall decorations.
Human variables: employee uniform

For clearer understanding of the variables in our checklist, the definitions (Colborne 1996) of variables in this study are given as follows: (also see Appendix I: the illustration photo)

Exterior:
Store front: of, relating to, or being that side of a store facing a street. Here we focus on the whole architecture style, including the color of the building, and the statue of Ronald McDonald and brand logo on the building.
Store entrance: something, such as a door or gate, through which it is possible to enter a place. In our study, we focus on the logo and brand name above or near the gate and the background color of the gate area.

General interior:
Floor/carpeting: the surface of a room on which one stand. We focus on the color of the floor tile.
Fixtures: the furniture that fixed in the place. Here we mean tables, chairs and lamps.

Ceiling: A ceiling is an overhead interior surface that bounds the upper limit of a room.

Wall coverings: the interior wall surface

Store Layout:

Floor space allocation: the arrangement of floor space for different merchandise. Here we focus on the allocation of kid game zone (Happy Family Zone in China) in the dining area.

Interior displays:

Wall decorations: décor accessories for the wall: paintings, wallpaper, partition walls.

Human variables:

Employee uniform: a set of standard clothing worn by members of an organization whilst participating in that organization's activity. Here means the working clothes of McDonald's staff.

The pilot study was used to test the design of the full-scale research. This pilot study helped us find that there were some commonnesses of McDonald's within the country, for instance, two McDonald's in Sweden both used dark color as their main décor color. And at the same time there were some similarities and differences in McDonald's between Sweden and China. These findings in the pilot study illustrated that our study about symbolic attributes in the McDonald's were feasible and reliable.

The variables stated above are independent variables, the dependent variables that we are going to observe are colors and symbols, which have been defined by McGoldrick (2002) as store atmosphere image. We use the content of the wall pictures, the symbols of exterior and interior, floor allocations to examine HP1, HP2 and HP3, which means that we observe if there are any symbols that McDonald's may use to convey certain meanings in China and Sweden, or try to emphasize or reduce country-of-origin effect. Colors of the independent variables are observed to test HP4 and HP5.

3.4.4 Timing

Though literature mentions that timing for observation is very important and it may lead to different results (Turnock et al., 2001), for our study, it is not as important. The reason is that the variables that we have chosen are not changing according to different time in a day, or in a short period of time like a week. So we are relatively flexible about timing.

3.5 Secondary Data

Secondary data is information not gathered directly by the authors, and for different purpose and research questions other researchers collected some data in previous

research. There are some risks of using secondary data, for example, they may not be entirely true, and bias may be caused by the limitations of previous research. Bryman and Bell (2003) point out that the original meaning might have changed for using secondary data.

The secondary data used for our study is mainly articles from academic journals and academic literature and books. The articles are found through the Electronic Library Information Navigator (ELIN) and we also make sure that they are scholar articles. The literature chosen is mainly course and recommended literature from the education at the School of Economics and Management, Lund University. We also use other academic literature which is relevant to our study.

We also used the website of McDonald's to gather information about the company, and their global strategy. As it has different websites for each country, we can find information about McDonald's in China and Sweden, For instance, McDonald's Financial Report 2007. We also find information and pictures about local McDonald's on local website. For instance, the newly decorated McDonald's restaurants in Europe, where the yellow and white plastic chairs have been replaced by the comfortable designer chair. Moreover, some of the discussions from well known marketing websites in China are also taken into consideration. We are aware of the risk this may cause, but we try our best to make sure the sources that we use are trust worthy.

Another source for our secondary information is from our visits to McDonald's restaurants, for example, materials that they provide. We consider these information as reliable as they are provided directly by the company.

3.6   Validity

In this study, a great part of empirical data was collected by us. Thus, the sources of information we used in this study were reliable. We went to 11 McDonald's restaurants in Sweden. All the variables to be investigated were clearly observed and then collected in the form of photos, which eliminated the possibility of memory confusion. Five restaurants in China were also observed and seen by us in the form of photos. Although we could not be in China at the time of research, the photos taken by our friends also included all the variables. The restaurants we chose had different locations: in the shopping mall, in the town center and out of town center. The size of restaurants were different either, the customer capability varied from one to another. All of these helped us find more representative and common characters of McDonald's within one country and thus eliminate the possibility of comparing the specialty to the commonness. Therefore, the information was true and accurate, which increased the internal validity and reliance of this study and decreased the studying bias.

The ecological validity is concerned with the question of whether social scientific findings are applicable to people's everyday, natural social settings (Bryman and Bell 2003). In other words, ecological validity considers relevant degree of research with people's daily life. One focus of our research is about the culture issue on the adaptation of symbolic attributes of store atmospherics, which is very relevant to people's values, feelings and daily life. And since our observation targets are store atmospheric physical elements, which will not be changed because of our observations. Therefore, from the ecological perspective, our study is valid.

Commonly for the case study research design, the findings of a single case cannot be applied more generally to other cases. In other words, the external validity of case study design is considerably low compared with other designs. However, in our case, we use McDonald's as a case to explore the factors that affect the decision of transferring symbolic meanings through store atmospherics in different countries. Cultural influences are one of our main considerations. The presentation of standardization and adaptation of atmospherics taking into account symbolic attributes from different cultural background will be valuable for other retailers who have already had or will have business in those countries. Therefore, from this case we believe that our study can achieve a degree of theoretical generalizability.

3.7 Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the question of whether or not the result of research is repeatable (Bryman and Bell 2003). The difficulty of replicating a qualitative study is always a central argument. For other researchers who could replicate our research correctly, we try to show great transparency to show our data collection process as clear as possible. However, due to the characters of qualitative research, the observation variables may not be totally replicate. Different researchers may have different perspectives towards the same empirical data. For instance, the perception to color may vary from person to person. What we think about the décor color may not be the same with what the others think, since the observation method is concerned with subjective judgment. However, we found out that the information that we thesis members obtained through observations were very similar, which gave us confidence that other researchers might have the same understanding with us.

3.8 Research Limitations

Since our study is focusing on the comparison of atmospherics in China and in Sweden, it is better for us to be in China to gain the relevant information. However, due to money and time issue, we cannot be there to collect the data by ourselves. Instead, we have to ask help from our friends to do the data collection work. Although we have educated and explained to them what elements in the McDonald's restaurants they should be aware of and ask them to use the easiest and most accurate way to

record these elements— taking photos, the possibility that they may ignore some important things that may contribute to our study still exists.

Though China and Sweden are unique in Eastern and Scandinavian culture, the result of our study may still suffer from cultural blindness according to the differences in other regions and countries. However, the findings of the study may be applicable to countries with cultural and market similarities.

Another limitation is that the restaurants we chose in China are mostly on the basis of the accessibility for us or our friends. For instance, all of our friends who can help us live in the northern part of China, such as Beijing, Tianjin, thus, we cannot cover a larger region such as Guangxi province, Shanxi province. But in our opinion, this will not cause much limitation in our research, since from the relevant news about McDonald's and existing data we can see that McDonald's have similar arrangement for its store atmospherics in China. Therefore, this limitation will not affect our research results much.

4   Empirical data

This chapter will present the primary data of the study. It will follow a format showing data of each of the McDonald's in Sweden and China separately. A concluding table of both the two countries will be presented in the end. Pictures taken in McDonald's in both of the countries can be found in Appendix II and Appendix III.

After visiting McDonald's in Sweden and China, we have collected the primary data for our study. In this chapter we are going to present the data separately from the two countries. We also separate the children's section from the general dining area for everyone because of the possible symbolic meaning differences between adults and children. Since we only study McDonald's restaurants which are newly decorated or built in both countries, the old design of McDonald's will be eliminated during our observation. The standard of our judgment whether the McDonald's is newly decorated or not is mainly based on: firstly, the knowledge of local situation, for instance, five McDonald's restaurants in China are all newly built within 2 years, which is the fact that we know; secondly, the secondary source, for instance, there are some relevant business news which reported about the newly decoration strategy of McDonald's. And because some furnishings, such as, chairs, lamps, are parts of standardization of McDonald's. The pictures and description of new design concept in the report can help us identify the "new" McDonald's. Thus, we can guarantee that all the McDonald's presented in our empirical data section have the new décor concept.

4.1   McDonald's in Sweden

We have been to eleven McDonald's in Lund, Malmö, Landskrona, Helsingborg and Kristianstad. Two of the McDonald's in Lund and three in Malmö was found having the newly introduced concept, while the other one in Lund, two in Malmö, one in Helsingborg, Landskrona and Kristianstad did not match our standard. As a result we will present the five newly decorated or built McDonald's as our empirical data collected in Sweden.

Pictures of atmospherics variables taken in McDonald's in Sweden see Appendix II.

4.1.1   McDonald's in Malmö city center
This McDonald's located in the center of Malmö, in a relatively crowded area, and it shared the same white building with others.

Exterior elements:
For store front variable, we found that this McDonald's as mentioned above, did not have an isolated building, so it had the same color as the building – white.
For entrance variable, this McDonald's has a yellow M, a white brand name McDonald's, and a very slender red band under it above the door.

General interior:

The floor used the same type of tile in the store, and it was very light yellow.

The tables and chairs used 4 types of combinations. They were all white tables with brown chairs, no matter what shapes and styles they were.

The lamps of this restaurant were all white with a little bit feelings of yellow, but they could still be regarded as white.

The walls were white, some of them were covered with brown area, and some of them were all covered with red background with patterns on it.

The ceiling of the restaurant was white.

Interior displays:

For wall decoration variable, the restaurant had several pictures. One of them was mainly a big head of a western woman, looking aside, with red fire looked area beside her. Another picture was an Asian woman smiling with another half of a western woman's face, also smiling. The other picture was three smiling faces, the clearest and biggest one was an African girl.

For other decorations, the restaurant used brown color.

Store Layout:

Floor space allocation:

No game facilities for children.

Human variables:

Employee Uniform:

The uniform of staff was white shirt with brown squares, black trousers, no cap.

4.1.2   McDonald's in Malmö triangle

This McDonald's located in a shopping center on the ground floor, with entrances both outside facing the street and inside the mall. It is also located a relatively crowded area of Malmö.

Exterior elements:

For store front variable, we found that as this McDonald's was a part of the whole shopping mall, it also shared the same color with the color of the building of the shopping mall, which was light yellow.

For entrance variable, this McDonald's had a yellow M, a white brand name McDonald's, and a silver background above the door.

General interior:

The floor used was divided into two areas. One used wood colored floor which was like brown, and the other part used the very light yellow tile.

The tables and chairs used were 5 types of combinations. Two of them were black tables with black chairs, one was black tables with brown chairs, and the other one was black tables with red chairs.

The lamps of this restaurant were some small red ones, and a large area with a large white square.

The walls were light brown and white. Light brown occupied a large area.

The ceiling used in this restaurant had different layers. One is red, one is silver, and one is white.

Interior displays:

For wall decoration variable, this McDonald's also had several pictures. One of them was a western woman lying on a couch with a headphone, looked like she was enjoying music. Another picture was a western man lying on his car in the nature, very relaxing. The other picture was a western boy on the river, in the nature environment.

For other decorations, the restaurant used silver color.

Store Layout:

Floor space allocation:

The game facilities are in the corner of the restaurant. The zone could be closed with the door.

Human variables:

Employee Uniform:

The uniform of staff was white shirt with brown squares, black trousers, no cap.

4.1.3 McDonald's in north Malmö

This was a McDonald's near a highway, which had its own building and architecture. It had a drive through service, an open dining area and an area for children to play outside. It was an old restaurant which was redecorated.

Exterior elements:

For store front variable, we found that this McDonald's had dark brown as its roof, light brown and brown yellow as its wall color outside.

For entrance variable, this McDonald's had nothing special. On the brown roof, there was a yellow M logo, a white brand name McDonald's, and slender red band under it.

General interior:

The floor used the very light yellow tile.

The tables and chairs used were 4 types of combinations. One of them was wooden colored tables with white and dark brown chairs. Another one was white and wooden colored tables with green, white and brown chairs. Another type was wooden table with brown and green chairs. The other one was white table with white and brown chairs.

The lamps of this restaurant were all green and big ones, round and square.

The walls were wooden color and green. White was only a very small area.

The ceiling used in this restaurant had two colors, brown and white. Brown was the main color.

Interior displays:
For wall decoration variable, this McDonald's had only one picture. It had a white background and with three big green fruit on it.
For other decorations, the restaurant had wooden color, but it also had white color as a background with different color of big dots on it.

Store Layout:
Floor space allocation:
The game facilities are both inside and outside the restaurant. For inside the restaurant, the zone could be closed with the door.

Human variables:
Employee Uniform:
The uniform of staff was white shirt with brown squares, black trousers, no cap.

4.1.4 McDonald's in Lund center
This McDonald's was in the center of Lund, which was a relatively busy area. It shared the same building with other companies, and it had two floors.

Exterior elements:
For store front variable, this McDonald's was similar to the one in Malmö center. As part of the building, it had the same color with the color of the brick building, which was red.
For entrance variable, this McDonald's had a yellow M, a white brand name McDonald's, and a silver background above the door.

General interior:
The floor used different tiles from others that we had observed. All the areas of restaurant used light brown colored tiles.
The tables and chairs used were 4 types of combinations. Two of them were brown tables with brown chairs, and the other two were brown tables with both brown and white chairs.
The lamps of this restaurant were big white round ones with brown props from the floor.
The walls were all light brown with horizontal and vertical brown lines.
The ceiling used in this restaurant was white.

Interior displays:
For wall decoration variable, this McDonald's also had more than ten pictures, or we would say paintings. All of them were in the same style with wide dark brown frames. The style was calm, stable, and classical painting, which was very different from the

other McDonald's that we had observed. The content of the paintings, for example, had a middle-aged black man wearing a white shirt and black suit pants, walking on a beach. Another one had a white house near a street with a tree behind it, and it had no people in the painting.

For other decorations, the restaurant used dark brown as well.

Store Layout:

Floor space allocation:

The game facilities were in the corner of second floor. The zone could be closed with the door.

Human variables:

Employee Uniform:

The uniform of staff was white shirt with brown squares, black trousers, no cap.

4.1.5 McDonald's in Lund Delphi

This McDonald's located in the north of Lund near a high way. It was newly built, and had its own building and architecture. It had a drive through service, an open dining area and an area for children to play outside.

Exterior elements:

For store front variable, we found that this McDonald's had white roof with a brown arc area. It used small brown bricks as its wall outside.

For entrance variable, on the brown arc area above the door, there was the yellow logo M, but no white brand name McDonald's on the building.

General interior:

The floor used the same type of tile in the store, and it was very light yellow.

The tables and chairs used were 5 types of combinations. Two of them were brown tables with brown chairs, another two was white tables with brown and dark red chairs, and the other one was white tables with dark red chairs.

The lamps of this restaurant were all big white round ones.

Some of the walls were dark brown with half red coverings with patterns on it, and others were light yellow small bricks. Some small areas were all red.

The ceiling of the restaurant was white.

Interior displays:

For wall decoration variable, the restaurant had only one picture. It was the same as the one in Malmö center, mainly a big head of a western woman wearing a red coat, looking aside, with red fire looked area beside her.

For other decorations, the restaurant used brown color.

Store Layout:

Floor space allocation:

The game facilities were both inside and outside the restaurant. For inside the restaurant, the zone could be closed with the door.

Human variables:
Employee Uniform:
The uniform of staff was white shirt with brown squares, black trousers, no cap.

4.1.6   Conclusion of McDonald's in Sweden
To make our data clearer, we conclude our data collected in Sweden with a table as follows:

Table 1   Symbolic attributes about atmospherics of McDonald's in Sweden

		Malmö center	Malmö triangle	North Malmö	Lund center	Lund Delphi
Exterior	Store front	Building color, white	Building color, yellow	brown	Building color, red	brown
	Entrance	Tiny area of red	Silver band	Brown, tiny area of red	Silver band	brown
General interior	Floor	Light yellow	Light yellow and wooden color	Light yellow	Light brown	Light yellow
	Tables and chairs	Brown, white	Black, brown and red	White, brown, green and wooden color	White, brown	White, brown and dark red
	Lamps	white	red	white	white	white
	Wall coverings	White, brown, red	Light brown, white	Wooden colored, green	Light brown	Brown, red, light yellow
	Ceilings	white	White, red, silver	Brown, white	white	white
Interior displays	Wall decorations	Women all over the world	Western men and women, nature, pleasure	fruit	Figure and still life paintings	Western woman
	Other decorations	brown	Brown, silver	Wooden colored	brown	brown
Store Layout	Floor space alloction	none	Game zone	Game zone	Game zone	Game zone

Human Variables	Employee Uniform	Black, White with brown squares	Black, White with brown squares	Black, White with brown squares	Black, White with brown squares	Black, White with brown squares

4.2 McDonald's in China

Our representative observers went to five McDonald's restaurants in China. Among them, one was in Tianjin, one was in Laiwu and the other three were in Beijing. All of them were newly built within one year. Thus, they were all validity to be our empirical data in this study.

4.2.1 McDonald's in Tianjin

This McDonald's restaurant located in the newly popular uptown Meijiang Lane in Tianjin, an A-level city near Beijing. It took 25 minutes to city center by car. There was a throughway beside the McDonald's. The restaurant was now mainly serving for the residents surrounding or within this uptown.

Store front: This restaurant had an isolated building. The whole two-floor building was just for McDonald's. It also offered drive-through service since it was built beside the throughway. The drive-through service part of the building used red, which could be easily recognized from the whole building. The Chinese version of McDonald's logos and the English version were side by side inlaid in the rectangular frame within the top of the building. All the characters were white and noticeable. The background color inside the frame used red.

Entrance: The abundantly using of red in the silver white building was easily catching the eye of passers. The bricks around two entrance doors were very distinctively different from other bricks, which were silver and small, of this building: large, rectangle and very McDonald's traditional red. A yellow streamline stripe was hanging above the red big rectangular bricks. There were ornamental yellow door eaves above every entrance door. The big golden arches, the symbolic letter of McDonald's, were fixed beside the door eave. A model of Uncle McDonald's was sitting and waving his right hand on the bench beside the main entrance.

General interior:
The floor tiles of the restaurant were used in one unified type of tiles: light yellow square tiles. Light yellow was also the general color tone used for the wall color design. The surrounding walls of Happy Family Zone used dark brown.
The ceiling of the building was white, no matter which floor and which area.
Since all the McDonald's restaurants used the inlaid lamps, which did not have color, thus we did not study this type of lamps. Two types of lamps were used in this McDonalds. One was dining lamp with an inverse-bowl shape. This series of the lamp

used dark red. The other one was the widely used lamp in newly decorated McDonald's, round white lamp.

All the tables here only had one color, white, but the chairs presented two colors: small amount of brown chairs in the dining area, others were white. The chairs in the Happy Family Zone were also dark brown.

Interior display:

For wall decoration variables: There were two large pictures in this restaurant. One was in the dining zone, the other one was in the children's section. The picture in the dining zone was about a young Caucasian man sitting on the roof of the car and overlooking; around the cars were yellow flowers with green stem and leaves. The background of this picture consisted of different levels of green strips and some white strips, mainly green. The blue car took up a large proportion of picture. Thus, yellow, green and blue were the main colors used in this picture. There were also some English words in the picture: personality, engaging, responsibility, intuitive. Responsibility was the largest font and then intuitive; the smallest ones were personality and engaging. The other wallpaper was put in the children's section: there were four kids chasing in a line. The four kids were all Asian look, more like eastern Asian, and all dressed in a very western fashionable way. The background of this picture was pure white. Some random pink, yellow, green thin circles were drawn on it. The picture was interspersed with some red balloons with a golden M.

Some of the partition pillars, crossbeam on the second floor were dark brown.

Store Layout

Floor space allocation:

There was a Happy Family Zone on the second floor. Some game facilities were around the zone.

Human variables:

Employee Uniform:

The uniform of staff was black cap, black trousers and brown T-shirt with blue and white stripes

4.2.2   McDonald's in Laiwu

This McDonald's restaurant was located in the shopping square of Laiwu, a C-level city in eastern China.

The exterior design of McDonald's here was almost identical to the McDonald's in Tianjin. From the store front to the entrance variables, even the position of the model of Ronald McDonald was the same with the one in Tianjin.

General interior:

The color of floor tile was light yellow. White was mainly used for the whole interior design. The ceiling of the building was also white, no matter which floor and which area. Red was much used in the wall of children's section.

3 types of lamps were used in this McDonalds. Among them, 2 types were identical to the lamps of McDonald's in Tianjin: white round lamp, red bowl lamp. There was one lamp that Tianjin did not have which looked like to be made of a transparent glass material. There was no color for this lamp.

All the tables here only had one color, white, but the chairs presented four colors: small amount of dark brown chairs were placed in the dining area of the first floor and dining area near children's section on the second floor. Some chairs in the happy kid zone were yellow and some were white. Red chairs did not take much quantity. Except these chairs which took up a relatively small amount, all other ones were white.

Interior display:

For wall decoration variables: There were four large pictures in this restaurant. The picture in the dining zone was about an old Caucasian woman sitting on green grass and listening to the music. The background of this picture was white. The color stripe design in Tianjin McDonald's was also used, the difference was that the colorful strips were painting beside the picture not in the picture. The colors of strips were orange, rose red, yellow and white. The other picture was placed in the side wall of stairs: in the center of the picture were many fresh tomatoes. The background of this picture was pure white. There was another fruit theme pictures used in the dining area. One big red apple almost took up all the picture. The colors of stripes beside the pictures were also yellow, red and orange. The last picture was used in the wall of children's section. It was the same one with the one in Tianjin McDonald's.

Dark brown was used in some partition walls, which were just a few in this McDonald's.

Store Layout:

Floor space allocation:

There was a Happy Family Zone on the second floor. Some game facilities were around the zone.

Human variables:

Employee Uniform:

The uniform of staff was black cap, black trousers and dark blue T-shirt.

4.2.3 The McDonald's in Wangjing International Business Center (Beijing)

This McDonald's located in the northeastern of Beijing, in the building of Wangjing business center.

Exterior:

Store front: This restaurant was not an isolated building, but used two floors of the building. The main area of the architecture was light yellow. However, some area of the wall was painted in red for the need of McDonald's. The logo of McDonald's and its Chinese version were placed in the middle of the building. All the characters were white; the M was yellow and the background used red.

Store entrance: McDonald's logos, both Chinese and English, were placed above the entrance door, which was consisted of glass and metal frame. The logo was painted in white. There was a yellow M beside the entrance door.

General interior: Unlike the previous two, the image of Ronald McDonald was placed inside the McDonald's entrance. Many colors were applied in this restaurant. The floor color of whole McDonald's was light yellow. In the first floor, the wall and ceiling were white. In the second floor, the ceiling used three colors: dark pink, orange and white. The walls had even more colors: orange, white, light yellow and pure yellow. The lamps here had two colors, dark red and white.

There were only white tables in the restaurant. The colors of chairs were varied: orange, red and white.

Interior display: There were three pictures in the restaurant. One was on the side wall of stairs. In this picture, a young Caucasian man was standing and looking straight. The colors in the picture were mainly green, yellow and white. There was only one grey strip in the picture. Another picture was about a Caucasian dad happily playing with his kid. The background color was white. There were some color stripes in the pictures: light blue, orange and red. The last picture was the drawing of Ronald McDonald. The background color was yellow.

One red wall was used to divide the Happy Family Zone from the dining area.

Store Layout:
Floor space allocation:
There was a Happy Family Zone on the second floor. Some game facilities were around the zone.

Human variables:
Employee Uniform:
The uniform of staff was black cap, black trousers and brown T-shirt with blue and white stripes.

4.2.4   McDonald's in International Exhibition Center (Beijing)
This restaurant was in Shunyi District which was outside the main area of city center of Beijing.

Exterior:
Store front: this restaurant was a part of the exhibition center. The main color was used as same as the building's color: dark grey. The logos of McDonald's characters

were white. The M was still yellow as usual. The yellow crossband was used under the logos. There was no Ronald McDonald's outside.

Store entrance: Both main entrance door and side door used red as their background color. The white character logo and yellow M were placed above the door.

General interior:
The image of Ronald McDonald was place inside the entrance. All the ceiling of the restaurant was white. The floor tiles were light yellow as other McDonald's. The lamps here only had one white color, although the shapes were different. There were three main colors for the walls: green, light yellow and white. Tables were all white. The chairs and sofa had several colors: dark brown, white, red and light yellow. White was the main color of the chairs.

Interior display: there were two pictures in this restaurant. As the pictures were very large, we could see them as wallpaper. The background color of both pictures was green. One was green as green apple, the other one mixed a little bit yellow. The first picture was about three young Caucasian people, two women and one man, smiling and walking in the grass field. There were some English words in the pictures: smile, nature. The other picture was drawn with a kiwi and a grapefruit. Different levels of green were used in this picture, the darkest green part was mixed with black.
Dark brown was also used in a very small part.

Store Layout:
Floor space allocation:
There was no Happy Family Zone in this McDonald's.

Human variables:
Employee Uniform:
The uniform of staff was black cap, black trousers and brown T-shirt with blue and white stripes

4.2.5   McDonald's in Beijing Capital Airport
This McDonald's was relatively special, compared to previous restaurants. It was located inside the airport.

Exterior:
Store front: Since this McDonald's was built inside the airport, the color of architecture was white which was unified with the inside design of whole airport.

Store entrance: There was no entrance door for this McDonald's. Customers could go to the counter to order directly from the passage of the airport. The logos of McDonald's, both Chinese and English, were placed on the top of the entrance wall. The background of the logo frame was red; the characters were white as usual. There

was a yellow crossband under the logo. The big yellow M was hanging on the white wall beside the entrance.

General interior: The color tone of the whole restaurant was brown. The floor of the restaurant was dark brown. The colors of walls were mainly dark brown and light brown. The ceiling of the restaurant was white. All the tables were white. The chairs had 3 colors: white, wood yellow and dark brown. The lamps here only had one color: dark red.

Interior displays:

There was no wall decoration on the wall. There were one yellow and one white colored partition walls which were used to divide the dining area.

Store Layout:

Floor space allocation:

The Happy Family Zone here did not have dining area for kids and was placed outside the restaurant. But there were many game facilities.

Human variables:

Employee Uniform:

The uniform of staff was black cap, black trousers and brown T-shirt with blue and white stripes

4.2.6 Conclusion of McDonald's in China

The table below clearly presents the color symbolic attributes about in-store atmospherics of McDonald's in China.

Table 2   Symbolic attributes about atmospherics of McDonald's in China

		Tianjin	Laiwu	Wangjing Business Center	International Exhibition Center	Beijing Airport
Exterior	Store front	White	White	Building color: Light yellow	Building color:dark grey	Building color: white
	Entrance	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
General interior	Floor	Light yellow	Light yellow	Light yellow	Light yellow	Dark brown
	Tables and chairs	White, dark brown,	White, yellow, dark brown, red	White, red, orange	White, brown, red,	White, dark brown
	Lamps	White, red	Red, white	White, red	white	red
	Wall coverings	White, brown	White, red	wooden yellow,	Light yellow,	Light and dark Brown

					white	white
	Ceilings	White	White	White, dark pink,orange	white	white
Interior displays	Wall decorations	Fruit, Western young man and Asian kids	Western old woman, kids	Western man and kid	Fruit, western young man Smile, nature	none
	Other decorations	brown	Dark brown	red	brown	White, yellow.
Store Layout	Floor space alloction	Happy Family Zone	Happy Family Zone	Happy Family Zone	none	Happy Family Zone
Human Variables	Employee Uniform	Black Brown with blue and white stripes	Black, dark blue	Black Brown with blue and white stripes	Black Brown with blue and white stripes	Black Brown with blue and white stripes

5 Analysis

This chapter begins with the empirical data comparison between the two countries. The analysis will be based upon the comparison and secondary data we collected and this will be connected to the theoretical background where we made our hypothesis in order to fulfil the aim of this study.

5.1 Comparison of McDonald's in Sweden and China

The aim of our data collection is to compare the symbolic attributes of in-store atmospherics of McDonald's in China and Sweden. After the comparison, we found some valuable similarities and differences of this area in McDonald's in the two countries: (see Table 3)

Exterior:
Store front: for the isolated buildings, both of the McDonald's in Sweden used brown as their architecture color, but in China, white was used. For the restaurants built within the existing building, in Sweden it remained the original color of building, but in China, McDonald's commonly redecorate some area of building to fit the style of restaurant, red was largely used in the entrance area. McDonald's in Sweden never used the statue of Ronald McDonald outside the restaurant to attract customers, but China was the opposite case.

Entrance: In Sweden, the colors of McDonald's logo background varied in different McDonald's, silver, red and brown were commonly used. However, in China, red was the most common color for the logo's background.
Generally, in the exterior section, many differences were presented in the using of color in two countries.

General interior:
Floor: The color light yellow was the most homogeneous color used in the floor tiles of McDonald's for both countries.
Tables and chairs: Dark brown was more often seen for the tables in McDonald's in Sweden, but in China, every restaurant we observed used white as the color of table. The color of chairs varied, but brown was still more often used in McDonald's in Sweden.

Lamps: For the color of lamp, most stores in Sweden used white, only one used red lamps, while in China, except that every store used white lamps, most stores also used red lamps. Therefore we could say that white was the main color in both countries, but in China red was also more used for the color of lamps.

Wall coverings: In China, white was more often used in the wall, but red, green, brown, and light pink were also largely used in different restaurant. This was not the

case in Sweden. In Sweden, brown was the main color of walls; red, white, light yellow, green were used in the some walls of different restaurants.

White ceilings were very common in both countries.

In China, the images of Ronald McDonald were used in the restaurants. But in Sweden, none was found in any McDonald's. Though we did not plan to observe him, but it was also an interesting finding and highly related to symbols of McDonald's.

Interior displays:
Wall decorations: In Sweden, we saw more women in the pictures on the walls, but in China, the image of men, from student to father, were more used in the pictures. Moreover, Asian looking people were seldom used in the pictures in China. The images of fresh fruit and vegetables were also commonly seen in McDonald's in China, which was not the case in Sweden.
Other decorations: Brown decorations were used in both countries. In China, more colors were used.

Store Layout:
Floor space allocation: Both countries had specific area for children. The differences were in Sweden, the kids play zone was divided from the dining area. And it could be closed by the door. The area was relatively small. In China, McDonald's had a dining area for children's birthday and family party, named Happy Family Zone. The game facilities were around the zone. The zone was commonly next to the normal dining area, without door. This area was considerably big comparing to Sweden.

Human Variables:
Employee Uniform: In China, the dark brown and black were used in the employee uniform. In Sweden, white and black were used.

Table 3:   the comparison of symbolic attributes about atmospherics of McDonald's in Sweden and China.

			Sweden	China
Exterior	Store front	Isolated Building	Brown	White
		Built-in Building	Remained the original color of building No the statue of Ronald McDonald	Red is used in the entrance area. Some areas of building are painted to fit McDonald's. Have the statue of Ronald McDonald
	Entrance(The logo background color)		Red, silver, brown	Red is mainly used
General Interior	Floor		Light yellow is mainly used	Light yellow is mainly used
	Tables and chairs		Mostly dark brown and white. Red, green, wooden color are also used.	Mostly white and dark brown. Orange, yellow, and red are also used.
	Lamps		Red, white, one uses green	Red, white
	Wall coverings		Mostly brown. Red, white, light yellow, green are used in small proportion.	Mostly white. Red, green, brown, pink are also largely used in different restaurant.
	Ceilings		Mostly White. One also used some brown. One used red and silver beside white.	White, only one used colored ceiling.
Interior displays	Wall decorations		Women from all races are mostly used in the pictures.	The images of Caucasian men are commonly used. Fruit, kids are also used in the pictures.
	Other decorations		Brown is mainly used.	Color varied such as brown, red, white.
Store layout	Floor space allocation		No specific dinning zone for kids. Only small kids play zone	Happy Family Zone in the dinning area for family parties which includes game zone
Human variables	Employee uniform		Black trousers, white shirt with brown square	Black trousers and black shirt with white & blue strips.

5.2 Feminism vs. Masculinity

HP1: Due to the ethnic identification in Sweden and China, McDonald's adapts its symbolic attributes of its atmospherics.

Picture 1 McDonald's in Tianjin China

Picture 2 McDonald's in Malmo city center

For the wallpaper design of McDonald's, there are some significant differences between China and Sweden. In China, among all the wallpapers which have adult or teenager images, three of them use male image, only one uses female image and another one has both male and female images (see Picture 1). However, in Sweden, only one uses male image, other five wallpapers all use female images (see Picture 2).

In China, the male images used in wallpapers all present a responsible and provident feeling, for instance, a young man sits on the roof of car looking far, and a father plays with his kid. The word "responsible" is also printed in the wallpaper. The men in the pictures have the same characteristics: from physical characteristics: tall, well-built, muscular, broad shoulders, handsome, not thin or obese, in shape, healthy; from expressive characteristics: very confident, does not show weakness; from roles and social behavior: polite, gentle, responsible for family. These characteristics fit in to the typical masculinine image (see Picture 1).

However, in Sweden, all the women in the wallpapers show not only a traditional woman image such as pretty, femininity pose but also some characteristics that commonly men have in these images: very confident, no weakness, athletic look and firm. The images leave us a different impression from Chinese aspects to women (see Picture 2).

We think the pictures chosen in both countries are not coincident choices. The ethnic attitudes towards genders are involved in the choice decisions. Hofstede in the cultural dimension study concluded one dimension specifically for the distribution of gender roles in different countries, where China was regarded as a masculinity country, Sweden, on the contrary, scored high in feminism (geert-hofstede.com 2007).

5.2.1 China: a masculinity country

China has been a masculinity country for thousands years. Men are the leaders of this society. Thus, the thoughts of the whole society are in a very male dominant way. This can be seen from the Chinese characters and expressions. Chinese compound

expressions for gender such as "men and women", "husbands and wives", and for every expression, male words are always mentioned before the female words.

In Confucius' Lunyu, he commented about the women's status for many times. For instance, the government should rely on both talents of men and the abilities (housework) of women. Although the government has politically required and made the corresponding law for the equality of genders, many thoughts of Confucius are still rooted in today's Chinese society. In the TV advertisements, female images are always in the kitchen. This masculine dominant phenomenon is also reflected on the working place. According to Lan (2006), in China, women take up the proportion of 50%~ 60% in the service industry, where most of jobs are low technique, low payments and repeat physical jobs. The status of women in the work structure is much lower than men. Also the women's unemployment rate is higher than men's. In 2002, in the unemployment rate of five cities, Shanghai, Xian, Shenyang, Fuzhou and Wuhan, the average rate for women is 16.9%, for men is 12.2%.

Therefore, the deep rooted traditional aspect towards genders keeps on influencing today's Chinese. For McDonald's, the vast choices of male images in the interior design may derive from that Chinese are consciously or unconsciously believe in that male should dominate in the society.

5.2.2 Sweden: A feminism country
In 1969, Sweden officially endorsed and implemented a governmental policy of gender equality, which required fundamental changes in the lives of both women and men, the changes that involved the family, the workplace, the school, and other aspects of society. In Intons-Peterson (1988)'s views, Sweden's philosophy of independence for the individual undoubtedly fostered the implementation of the policy of gender equality. Swedes view independence as a hallmark of self-sufficient, adult maturity. It epitomizes responsibility for one's self and one's dependents, but the equality of Sweden does not mean that all the people are the same and therefore are equal, which is embodied in the Swedish word for equality, jämställdhet. It recognizes that people are different, but regardless their differences, are entitled to equal opportunities. Thus, these equal opportunities are emphasized on many aspects of the society. For instance, child care: Men have paternity leave. Taking care of babies is not just the work of women, now 69% of fathers take parental leave, whereas the average in the EU is only one in three fathers (Sweden.se 2008); education: women constitute roughly 60% of students in undergraduate university studies. Almost two-thirds of all degrees are awarded to women; government: women make up 47% of Parliament members in the Riksdag, 10 of the 22 government ministers (Sweden.se, 2008).

All the facts show that women in Sweden have more power than women in other countries. The movements of government for the gender equality have made Swedes have the conscious for the gender equality and respect for women to a large extent. Therefore, the images of women used in McDonald's Sweden are just one of those consequences. The equality perspective also influences Swedes the equality of races, which is a possible reason that in the McDonald's Sweden women from different races could be seen in the wallpapers.

Both actual and theoretical findings provide the support for the hypothesis 1, that McDonald's makes adaptations for the ethnic identification, here namely gender aspect, to the needs of both countries.

5.3 Familism vs. Individualism

HP2: Comparing to Sweden, as China is much more familism, we can see symbols of that in McDonald's atmospherics.

Picture 3 McDonald's in Wangjing   Picture 4 McDonald's in Lund Delphi

In China, all the McDonald's restaurants focus on the family value. The emphasis on creating a Chinese style family atmosphere is one feature of the localization process of McDonald's. To enhance the family atmosphere, McDonald's has deliberately arranged in most of restaurants a considerable space for the Happy Family Zone, which is a dining area specifically for children's birthday party or family gathering with their children (see Picture 3). However, in Sweden, we did not find such a special place for children and their family. Even the game zone is relatively smaller than the one in China (see Picture 4).

5.3.1   McDonald's in China: A familism perspective

Chinese believe in Confucianism, which is a philosophy of living that influences Chinese for more than two thousand years. It emphasizes on the family. The social organization principles and moral regulations of Confucianism were found on the center of family. In the society, every social organization should put family as their primary considerations. The honor or disgrace of a family is more important than the individual's; the goal of family is more important than the individual's goal. Individual should belong to family and count on the family and be loyal to the family, makes any effort to reach the requirements of family; when necessary one could scarify oneself to fulfill the wishes of family. The lifestyle that family is more important to the individual is obviously a representation of familism (Hong 2004). In China, it has become increasingly common for people of multiple generations in a family to have their weekend lunch or dinner at restaurants. Because many parents do not live with their married children that eating out is an important family event, such a meal embodies the harmony and solidarity of an extended family, which is the ideal of private life in Chinese culture (Yan, 1999). McDonald's localization strategy in China

emphasizes on the family and target children as their primary customer, since children play the most important role in the Chinese family. Chinese emphasize on the love between parents and children and the common interests of whole family. Almost every Chinese, from birth to independence for a long time, has to rely on the family, which makes them have special feelings to their family. In contemporary China, children are paid more attention than ever, because of the Chinese government's single-child policy. The demands of children are always met by one or all of their relatives. Children's status is the highest in many families(Yan 1999).

Therefore, the rooted Confucian familism in Chinese society decided the McDonald's positioning in Chinese market, but Sweden is another case, since Swedes emphasize on the development of individuals; the role of family is not as much important as Chinese.

5.3.2   McDonald's in Sweden: an individualism perspective

Sweden is a country where people advocate individualism. According to Hong (2004), in the individualism society, for people's self-perception, individual is the basic unit of this society which is independent from the society. People try their best to chase the self development and realize their own dream. From the behavior aspect, individualists do not depend on the groups such as family or other family relatives. They try to avoid open help, thus parents and children do not count on each other. Parents teach their children to be independent and emphasize on training their self-made ability and try to solve problems by themselves but not from others' help. Thus, comparing to the interest of in-group such as family, the self need and self-interests are more important. Their actions and thoughts will not be influenced by the regulations of family, thus, they are not willing to sacrifice themselves to the family. The feature of individualism is part of the reason that the high divorce rate in Sweden—around 50% of marriages are divorced in the end (Americans for devorce reform, 2002), since this cultural value makes people not willing to make compromise act for each other, which leads to the failure of marriage. Despite the high divorce rate, in Sweden, most couples just live together rather than marry each other. Another indicator of changes relevant to marriage and cohabitation is the number of children born by a not-married mother. Today in Sweden half of all children are born by them. The percent of first children born by a not-married mother is as high as 65 percent (Sussman and Roma, 1997). All evidence show that the old connection between martial status and childbirth has disappeared.

The family value is represented by the marriage (Sussman and Roma, 1997). In Sweden, family value is less and less important in Swedes' mind (Sussman and Roma, 1997). Therefore, for McDonald's, to allocate some space specifically for the family gathering in the dining area is a meaningless move in Sweden. That can explain why we see more symbolic meanings of family from floor space alocation in China, but less in Sweden. Therefore, the hypothesis 2 is strongly supported by these findings.

5.4 Sweden vs. China: Attitudes towards American culture

HP3: In both China and Sweden, symbol of country-of-origin of the U.S. and American culture is not emphasized.

Picture 5 McDonald's in Malmo City center

Picture 6 McDonald's in Wangjing Beijing

Picture 7 McDonald's in Tianjin

Picture 8 McDonald's in Wangjing Beijing

From the comparison, we found that in the newly decorated or built McDonald's from both countries, the large wallpapers with people images are widely used in the interior design. In Sweden, people from different races (see Picture 5), such as Asian, African, Caucasian, could be found in the wallpapers. But in China, a country that has a population of more than 1 billion people, it cannot be found any Chinese look adult or teenager images in the wallpaper of five McDonald's restaurants we studied. Even all the characters are English, not a single Chinese in any picture. All the pictures on the wall are very western people look. People in the picture wear jeans and t-shirts, from where we sense a type of modern foreign lifestyle (see Picture 6).

In McDonald's Sweden, we also found something very interesting: The symbol of McDonald: the clown Ronald McDonald is missing in every restaurant we have been to. We even cannot find the clown in the Swedish website of McDonald's or the Swedish website of its charity organization which is named after the clown: Ronald McDonald house charity. However, in China, the image of clown can be seen in every restaurant (see Picture 7 & 8). The classic statue of clown can be found to be sitting on the bench outside many McDonald's restaurants.

Our findings does not provide fully support for the hypothesis 3. In Sweden, the American symbol is weakened in McDonald's, which supports hypothesis 3. However, in McDonald's China, the image of western country of origin is reinforced. For most Chinese, the perceptions to different western countries are more or less homogeneous, America is often considered as the representative of western countries (Ding 2004).

Thus, the finding of McDonald's China is contradictive to hypothesis 3. We think the possible reasons for these contradictions of two countries are as below.

5.4.1 Swedes toward American Culture

A research in mid 1990s showed that 20% of Swedes respondents considered moving abroad chose America as their first choice (Blanck 2004). The United States indeed plays a significant role in Sweden. The Swedish author Ludvig Rasmusson has commented the Sweden's American orientation like a "a super tanker with a new destination on the radar… the entire country turned westwards (Blanck 2004)." Among different types of cultures, American popular culture influences Sweden in a powerful extent, such as Hollywood movies, hip hop music… However, the debates about American popular culture in Sweden never stopped. All of those debates expressed a fear that Sweden and Swedish culture ran the risk of being overrun by American popular culture. The strongest feelings have expressed cultural anti-Americanization, which has mainly focused on American cultural expressions, especially the importation of cultural products from the United States that bear the clear markings of American origin and accent. Such influences have often met resistance (Blanck 2004). Ronald McDonald, the icon of McDonald's, like other American ad icons, such as M&M's guys, have successfully ingrained himself into American culture (Brandweek, 1997). He is the second most recognized "person" in the world, just behind Santa Claus (Brownell 2004). However, In 1991, Ronald McDonald became the victim of such culture resistance. The Swedish government banned all the TV advertisements targeted at children under 12 years old; at the same time, restricted the use of cartoon characters in advertising (Mclibel, 1994). The clown gradually lost his colorful and funny image to attract children to McDonald's. Due to the low degree of exposure, the image of Ronald McDonald phased out from the in-store promotion. It seems that the ad ban makes the junk food away from children, but in a second thought, this is also an important counteract to the Americanization, that may help to avoid children in Sweden from being influenced by the American culture in the very early age. Also, the different skin color of women in the wallpapers also weakened the image of American culture, but expressed a more international feeling.

5.4.2 Chinese towards American culture

Li (2005) states in his Chinese culture research that Chinese culture never ostracizes the exotic culture. One thousand years ago, when Chinese culture was in the leading place of the world, Chinese actively learned from India for their religion. Chinese culture is born to be open minded. Things such as deracinating foreign culture or religions never happened in Chinese history.

Ding (2004) points out that in the past 100 years, China has undergone a cultural reorientation. This is motivated by a strong desire to the advanced technology and modern life experience. Great Britain was once the leader of the world, thus a Britain heat or called Britain Affection came up in China, including learning English language, translating the scientific literature of the UK, learning their military techniques and even imitating its constitutional monarchy, all of which were so called "Britainization." After the world war II, the United States assumed a much more dominant role, thus Chinese again changed to an American affection, including studying in America, importing investment from America, traveling there. This American affection of Chinese is stronger than ever after the reform and opening up

policy of Chinese government. Chinese have more opportunities to touch the American culture and products.

After 20 years of actualization of opening up policy, today, this American Affection still effect Chinese's purchasing preference. People tend to purchase foreign products, but not local products. Many academics have done some researches towards the American Affection of Chinese. McDonald's as the symbol of American culture, is used by many researchers in their studies. Eckhardt and Houston (2001) interviewed a Chinese from Shanghai about his attitude towards McDonald's. The man says:

   "It is Western, American culture, You know how the Shanghainese like everything from abroad. Like we used to have "Ronghua" Chicken (Local fast food brand), and we don't have it anymore. "Ronghua" feels like Shanghai, and the Shanghainese like Western stuff. Young people dating like these Western places."

Yan (1997) interviewed a mother in Beijing who took her daughter to McDonald's every week. The woman also expressed a preference to American culture:

"I want my daughter to learn more about American culture. She is taking an English typing class now..."

It is clear that eating in McDonald's, just like learning English typing skill, is a part of the mother's plan to expose her daughter to American culture (Yan 1997).

From both interviews, we can see that in China, McDonald's is perceived as representing the modernity feeling of American culture. The modernity is the true value behind the American affection that Chinese keep on chasing. Also, we find out that the image of Ronald McDonald can be seen in many McDonald's China. In China, more than 82% of children under 12 years old can recognize Ronald McDonald, in which more than one third know that he is from America and more than 50% rates him as one of their favourites, the highest among all the nations. This is probably the reason that his image is widely used in the restaurants (Yan 1997). Therefore, it is easy to understand why in McDonald's China, the interior design uses so many American culture symbol images, which are used to stand out the country of origin of McDonald's.

5.5   Standardization and Adaptation of color

5.5.1   standardization of color
As stated in our comparisons, we found out that most standardization of color that McDonald's did in Chinese and Swedish markets appeared in general interior. Though there were slight differences, they basically used light yellow tiles as floor, white and brown as colors of tables and chairs, and all the stores in China and Sweden had white as the color of their lamps and ceilings. So we could see that from the 5 elements that we picked up from the general interior category of store atmospherics, 4 were standardized. Differently, wall decorations, exterior, and interior decoration variables were adapted. Here we can see that our hypothesis 5 is supported.

We would like to give some possible reasons for this. Experience effects and economies of scales are two of the main reasons for choosing standardization strategy

as stated by Usunier and Lee (2005). These reasons can explain McDonald's choice of standardizing colors of most elements of general interiors.

When talking about conveying symbolic meanings to create a positive store image, colors of general interiors show less influence than other elements of atmospherics. This is because that they are more concerned about other functional influence that atmospherics have of store image like lighting for lamps, and comfortableness for chairs and tables (Rai University 2007). The color effect of them is more subconscious, floor, for example, if the color of it is not too obvious, most people will not pay attention to it (zhidao.baidu.com). They are more attracted by other atmospheric elements like wall decorations. As economies of scale can bring companies financial benefit, it is reasonable to pay more attention to adapt the color of elements like decorations, which convey symbolic meanings as they are highly relevant to different culture background. Therefore, it is reasonable that as long as colors of general interiors suit the whole style of the store, they can generate good store image. It is good to choose some colors that can easily combine with other colors, and easy for people to accept in the global level.

Now we will discuss about the colors McDonald's use the most for standardization in China and Sweden. All the McDonald's stores use white as the color, or one of the main colors of their ceilings, table and chairs, and lamps (see Picture 9 & 10). The possible reason is that our native physical environment shapes our perceptual universe (Usunier and Lee, 2005). One study that made comparisons between British and Chinese observers showed that there were no significant differences in the 11 color-emotion scales (Li et al. 2004). This could be regarded having the indication that some colors had similar perspectives between eastern and western culture. In previous research different experiments were done to test the influence of different color. The basic colors had fundamental psychological properties that were universal, regardless of the shade, tone or tint. Each of them had potentially positive or negative psychological effects depending on the color combinations chosen (Li et al. 2004). According to the anthropologists' research, the most original colors that human beings could call were black and white, people used black to call all the dark colors, and white for all the light ones (Zhou 2000). White goes very well with other colors, and it is very widely accepted. Empirical data showed that white is preferred in all the three Asian countries – Japan, Korea and China (Saito, cited in Tang et al. 2005). Another research done in eight countries in both eastern and western countries showed that the clustering of white and of black and brown was one of the most striking patterns in all the countries, and in each country, consumers associated each color in the cluster with similar meanings (Gao et al. 2007). This may explain why white and brown are used mostly for tables and chairs in McDonald's in both China and Sweden (see Picture 9 & 10).

Picture 9 McDonald's in Laiwu   Picture 10 McDonald's in Lund Delphi

5.5.2   Adaptation of color

From the table we can see that most adaptation of colors appears in the elements that we pick from exterior and interior displays, and for general interior, adaptation is used at wall coverings. Together with McDonald's standardization of most general interior variables, this finding provides support for hypothesis 5.

For exterior variables, they are particularly important since the exterior of a marketing facility must be considered acceptable before the interior of the building is ever experienced (Turley and Milliman, 2000). The storefront includes all aspects of the front/exterior of the store. As major vehicles for communicating image, storefront and entrance create differentiation among retail stores. This is especially true in areas in which a store struggles for visual identity among all the others that surround it (Rai University 2007). As a result it is very important to apply right colors of exteriors to create appropriate store image. For the colors of decorations of interior displays, and wall coverings of general interiors, they occupy a large amount of area of the wall, and have the function of attracting people's attention and generating specific feelings and having specific symbolic cultural background. Of all the elements of store design and visual merchandising, interior design has the greatest capacity to convey store image and create certain moods and emotions in buyers (Rai University 2007). As a result comparing to other general interiors like ceilings and floors, it need more adaptations.

From the comparison table we can see that for McDonald's stores in Sweden that locate in city centers in big buildings, they do not choose their colors other than the color of the building, as a result it cannot be regarded as McDonald's store atmospherics strategy, so we do not use these data for store front color. But for isolated stores in Sweden, McDonald's mostly use brown as their color of store front, while in China they are mostly white. Different from store front element, for entrance color element, in China, those stores in big buildings also have a large red area around their entrance. All the stores in China use red as the background color of its logo above their entrance no matter where they are (see Picture 11 & 12), while two of the stores in Sweden that are in the city center use silver as the background color of the logo, and the other two isolated ones use brown, which is also the color of its store front (see Picture 13 & 14). For other interior decorations, most stores in Sweden use brown, while in China different colors are used such as brown, red and white. For

wall covering element, most stores in Sweden use brown, while most in China use white.

Picture 11 McDonald's in Wangjing

Picture 12 McDonald's in Tianjin (isolated)

Picture 13 McDonald's in Lund center

Picture 14 McDonald's in Lund Delphi (isolated)

As a result we can make the conclusion that for McDonald's in Sweden, they use more brown in their store front, entrance background for stores that have their own buildings. They also show an emphasis of brown in their wall coverings and other interior decorations. On the contrary, in China, red is used more. Except exterior variables, red is also used for other interior decorations. For general interior variables, lamp color selection for example, in China all the stores of McDonald's has different types of red lamps other than white ones, on the contrary in Sweden most stores only have white lamps (see Picture 15 & 16).

Picture 15 Red lamps in China   Picture 16 White lamps in Sweden

Now we will see from existing literature about the possible reasons of McDonald's choice of using more red in Chinese stores from a symbolic perspective. Chinese people have a preference of red for a long time in politics, economics, culture, architecture, drama, language and people's everyday life (Zhou 2000). To Chinese people, red does not only have a function of color, but also contains plentiful cultural value. Red is a symbol of happiness and solemn traditionally. The reason why red contains so many connotations to large extent derives from the process of the formulation of Chinese history. From the ancient time, red has had a priority position in Chinese culture. From the very beginning, red was a symbol of the sun, light and warm, which was important for ancient people. In Zhou Dynasty, red was a color being envied. All the people that obeyed Zhou's rules of envying red were called Chinese people (Fan, cited in Zhou 2000). Red has been regarded as one of the five most fundamental colors in China. A large amount of Chinese palaces and temples use red as the color of their important component and part, so red is a symbol of authority, a good example is the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Gate. In the folk life, red is also very much associated with happiness and celebration. This is especially obvious for the celebration of Chinese New Year; red is used in almost every decoration of celebrating the new year. For wedding in China it is also very traditional to use red as the color of decoration and the wedding dress of the bride. In Peking Opera, the characters with a red face are regarded as good (Fu 2000). In the modern society, people do not envy a certain color to be noble, and they judge color using their own aesthetic appreciation. In China, red represents loyalty, trust worth, beauty, hygiene, and pleasingness (Zhao and Zhang, 2006). A research showed that Chinese observers tended to prefer the colors that were "clean", "fresh", and "modern" (Li et al. 2004). Another research also showed that red conveyed more additional meanings of "pleasant" other than "emotional" and "sharp" in China than in other countries (Gao et al. 2007), which indicated that they have a preference of red.

As a result, from all the aspects mentioned above, we can see that Chinese people have a preference of the symbolic meanings that red conveys, which supports our hypothesis 4. However, from what has been mentioned above, we found out that in Sweden more brown is used. We tried to use existing literature to explain the reason why McDonald's chose the strategy from a symbolic perspective, but there was no information showing that Swedes prefered brown for any symbolic meanings, as a

result hypothesis 4 here in Sweden was not supported. Now we would also like to give some possible reasons for this.

People from different cultural background may have different emphasis on different attributes of colors. Most recently, the emotional responses of people from three Asian regions were compared quantitatively and qualitatively by Xin et al. (cited in Tand et al. 2005) They found that lightness and chroma were more important than hue on color emotions. Conversely, for Swedes, it seems that hue is more important, and the total correlation over emotion variables and colors is also high for Swedes (Gao et al. 2007). So we can make the assumption that if the colors suit the whole style well, they can generate good emotion for Swedes.

However, from a symbolic perspective, brown also has some meanings. It represents stable and neutral, and it is also regarded as the color of the Earth. It exists widely in the nature, and represents the real and harmony side of the nature. Brown is also a color that can be used in therapy, because it can stimulate stable and balanced emotion, and reduce hesitate (zhidao.baidu.com). As a result we can say that brown is a neutral color that is safe to be used. This not only explains why brown is more emphasized in Sweden, but also can explain the reason why McDonald's uses brown as the color of the tables and chairs in China as well.

When evaluated generally, it can be said that there is a reverse relationship between age level and the perception of store atmospheric attributes. This situation can be explained as the resistance with which customers display to cultural change/innovation/modernity, according to their sociocultural backgrounds, as related to the generation gap, their experiences and their knowledge (Yildirim et al., 2007). As shown in previous studies, children and adults prefer different color styles. Children like colors that have high lightness, while older people like colors that are less light, and they are better to be neutral (zhidao.baidu.com). This can also be a possible reason that McDonald's use brown as the main color in the stores in Sweden, because they are targeting more on older people except children, as femilism to Swedes is not as important as to Chinese, which has been discussed above.

Therefore we can say that in China, McDonald's use more of red as adaptation strategy of their symbolic attributes of atmospherics, while in Sweden, where people's preference about colors are more on an individual level, McDonald's use safe and color that can help to segment the market – brown, which represents neutral and mature.

Although there are several rules that we found out that McDonald's used for standardization and adaptation of symbolic attributes for atmospherics in China and Sweden, we still found out that there were some exceptions.

One exception is that in some McDonald's restaurants in Sweden, red is also used as the color of wall coverings and some lamps (see Picture 17 & 18), though less than in China. That may derive from that red has some general meanings other than symbolic meanings. In the modern market economy environment, people mostly use their own aesthetic taste and physical and psychological feelings to judge colors (Tang et al. 2005). Red can give people the feelings of "sharp", "heavy", "strong" and "fast", so a lot of companies like to use red to call on people's attention, especially when a new

product is being introduced to the market (Tang et al. 2005). As the previous literature shows that no matter what object it is, red and orange are always the colors that can most attract people's attention. Red can also generate feelings of physical strength, warmth, energy and excitement (Zhou 2000), which can contribute to positive store atmosphere image. The function of red on this level is similar in China and Sweden.

Picture 17 Wall covering in Malmö center   Picture 18 Lamps in Malmö triangle

For human variables, the employee uniforms in the two countries are different, also in Laiwu, China it is different than the ones that we observed in Beijing and Tianjin. For the two different styles and colors that are used in Sweden and China, we cannot find the possible reasons by existing literature or researches, and this may highly depends on the supplier of the uniforms of the two countries, but one thing we can see from the uniforms is that they are not the old styles, and have some modern elements in it (see Picture 19 & 20).

Picture 19 McDonald's uniform in Sweden   Picture 20 McDonald's uniform in China

6 Concluding Discussion

This chapter will conclude the analyzed empirical data where the aim is to clearly answer the research problem. This section will also highlight this study's implication to the field of research. In the end limitations and future research recommendations will be presented.

6.1 Conclusion

The study has presented a clear comparison of atmospheric elements of McDonald's between China and Sweden. The comparison illuminated how McDonald's combines its adaptation and standardization with the symbolic attributes, namely color, image and icon, of atmospherics in both countries.

The standardization is much seen in the color of general interior design. The reason is that the same color may bring to people similar experience effects which enables the economies of scales for McDonald's. White, brown and black are commonly used in McDonald's in both countries. This is due to the meanings of these colors have universal meanings which are easily accepted by people in different countries.

The adaptation can be found in the use of colors as well. In both exterior and interior design, red is largely used in China, since red is a long time preferred color for Chinese. The symbolic meanings that red carried such as, happiness, loyal and clean are perceived as positive meanings by Chinese. Brown has a meaning of neutral and mature, which is the possible reason that McDonald's mostly use in Sweden where people do not have a national-wide preference color.

Other atmospheric elements are also adapted due to cultural differences of both countries. For the store layout, in China, McDonald's arrange a special dining area for family, Happy Family Zone, which does not exist in Sweden. This is related to the culture values of both countries. The Confucian philosophy is deeply rooted in the culture values of Chinese. It advocates the importance of family and children which are concerned as the center of people's life. Thus, the arrangement of Happy Family Zone caters for the dining behavior of Chinese, who often eat out with family members. Sweden, on the contrary, is an individualism country, where people emphasize on the individual development, which results in the low family consciousness. Thus, Happy Family Zone is missing in the layout design of McDonald's.

For the interior displays, the image of Ronald McDonald is also missing in the restaurant design of McDonald's. Although Sweden is a country much influenced by America, the resistance to the culture influences is often in progress, which resulted in the missing of Ronald McDonald, one of the most recognizable representatives of American culture. Chinese has an American affection due to the desire to the modernity. The western looks largely used in the wallpapers are due to this American affection of Chinese consumers, since people regard this western feeling as an expression of American culture, which attract people to visit. In China, a masculinity country, male images dominated images of McDonald's; on the contrary, confident female images dominated in McDonald's in Sweden where feminism prevailed.

To conclude, when McDonald's applies the internationalization strategies to the design of in-store atmosphere in China and Sweden, the cultural differences are taken

into considerations to a large extent. Symbolic attributes are standardized in a small amount for the safe choice and financial economy in both countries. In a large degree symbolic attributes are adapted to the local cultural values and tastes to meet the preference of local consumers.

6.2   Implication

For retailing firms who want to expand globally, some implications can be made from our case study about McDonald's. The standardization and adaptation strategy that Usunier and Lee (2005) presented about symbolic attributes can be taken into consideration when entering a new market for retailers, especially for fast food restaurants whose store image is similarly emphasizing on convenience. However, in our study, this is linked with store atmosphere image creation, and could be considered differently for different atmospherics variables. The specific implications are as follows:

1. Adaptation strategy is suggested to be used for the store atmospheric variables that have more functions of attracting people's attention, such as exterior and interior decors, which are more important of conveying symbolic meanings and creating positive store image. Floor space allocation in store layout can also be suggested to be adapted to local market on a symbolic level showing the different social needs and suiting local values.

2. Adapting store atmospherics taking into consideration of cultural differences on the national culture level is suggested. This means that when trying to create positive store atmosphere image in local markets, using knowledge of the colors or symbols which convey favorable meanings in the society may help. When entering a market like China, who shows an emphasis on familism and masculine culture, retailers can consider creating relevant symbols in the atmosphere design. Due to the fact that there is certain color preference of Chinese people from a symbolic perspective which root deeply in Chinese culture, it is reasonable to adapt some color that is traditional and suits their taste, red, for example. While when marketing in countries like Sweden, who shows an emphasis on individualism and feminism, symbols of that can be considered in atmospherics design.

3. International retailers can also consider adapting symbolic attributes due to their different segmentation strategy in different markets, as people from different age group may prefer different symbols and colors. For older target group, neutral and stable color and mature characteristics can be recommended for store atmospherics. While when children group is included, lighter and purer colors can be suggested, and cartoon like characters can also be considered to create a positive store atmosphere image to them.

4. The country-of-origin effect should be taken into consideration when designing colors and symbols of atmospherics in a certain country, which to large extent is related to store image. For example, as the modernity side of western life is favored in Chinese society, symbols of that can be suggested for western retailing atmospherics. On the contrary, if the country-of-origin effect is not clear, or may have a negative influence in the target market, it is better not to show colors or symbols that have the association in store atmospherics design. This is another place that needs adaptation.

5. Standardization strategy can be adopted to the store atmospheric variables that are more functional rather than convey symbolic meanings, which have limited influence of store image creation. This can help realize economies of scale. Certain colors that can generate positive feelings in the global level and can be widely accepted by people from different cultural background are reasonable to be the standardized color, for example, white, black and brown. Also when entering a country where color and symbol preferences are more on an individual level, it is also reasonable to use safe colors that everyone can easily accept, that can also be the same as the standardized color.

6.3   Research Limitation and Future Research

As we stated, symbolic attributes are embodied the interpretive elements of the physical attributes of the product or the service. The color, shape, size and some other elements are all consisted in the symbolic attributes. During the research, we also find out some similarities and differences in other elements of the atmospherics. For instance, the shape of lamps, tables and chairs of McDonald's is very standardized in both countries; the patterns of employee uniform are different: In China, it is the strip pattern, in Sweden, the small squares pattern is used, also uniform in Laiwu, China is different from the other ones we observe; in Sweden, the abstract drawings used by lines are commonly accompanied with the human image on the wallpaper, but in China, the concrete drawing such as flowers are used; These findings are also interesting and valuable for researching in the aspect of symbolic attributes. To give a more comprehensive understanding of symbolic attributes, shape related beliefs and behaviors could be an angle of study in the future.

Similarly, other store atmospheric elements except visual ones like temperature and odor, which are also important for retail store image, are also recommended to be researched in this area in the future.

Our study mainly presents how McDonald's use its international strategies for the in-store management in two countries and the possible reasons from the angle of culture which are primarily based on our hypothesis. For future researchers, a more thorough understanding of McDonald's in-store design may be obtained by getting the information directly from the relevant responsible persons such as the global designer group.

Our study mainly contributes the cultural knowledge of both countries to the in-store atmosphere management for international fast food chain. To fast food business, the local taste preference of food is also a key element to success. Unlike other countries, McDonald's is the second place behind KFC in China, where local taste preference plays a very important role. The future studies can give an in-depth research on the taste preferences of different countries, which can contribute to the product adaptation for the food retailers.

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Appendix I The Illustration Photo

Store front

Entrance

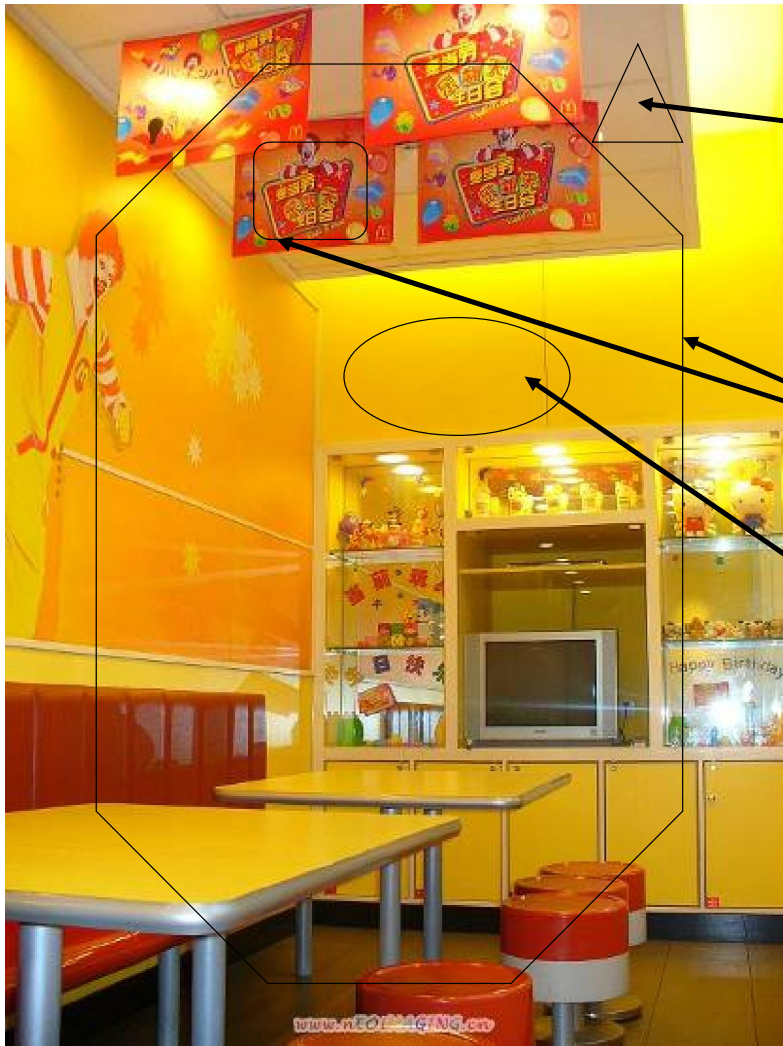Wallpaper (Wall decoration)

Partition wall (Wall Decoration)

Fixtures: Lamp

Human variable: Employee Uniform

Fixture: Table and Chair

Floor

Ceiling

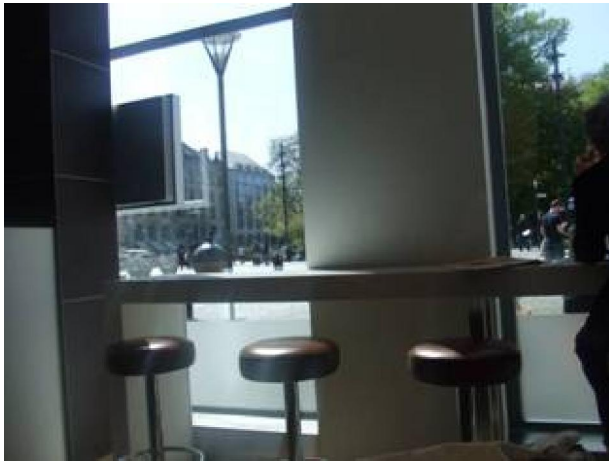Floor space allocation:
Happy Family Zone

Wall covering

McDonald's in Malmö center

Store front and entrance:

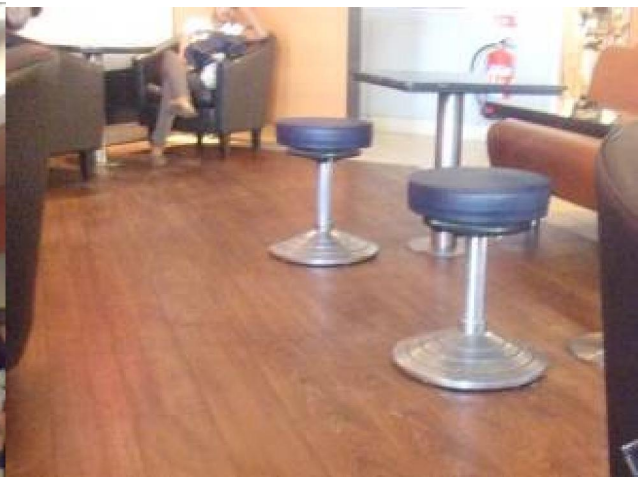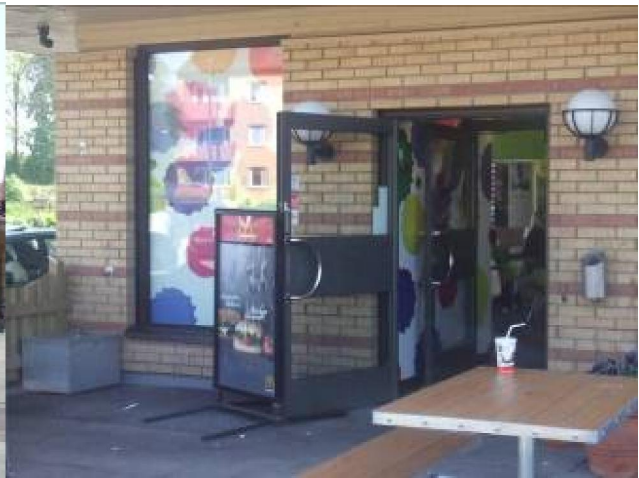Floor, Tables and chairs, Lamps, Wall coverings, Ceilings, Wall decorations and other decorations:

McDonald's in Malmö triangle

Store front and entrance:

Floor, Tables and chairs, Lamps, Wall coverings, Ceilings, Wall decorations and other decorations:
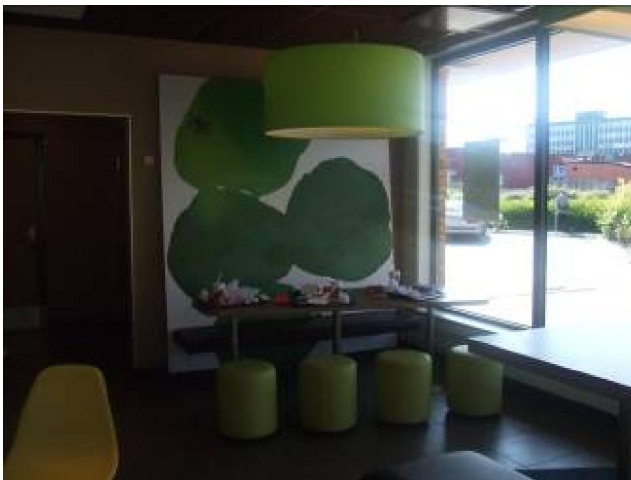
Kids play zone:

Malmö north:

Store front and entrance:

Floor, Tables and chairs, Lamps, Wall coverings, Ceilings, Wall decorations and other decorations:

Kids play zone:

Lund center:

Store front and entrance:

Floor, Tables and chairs, Lamps, Wall coverings, Ceilings, Wall decorations and other decorations:

Kids play zone:

Lund Delphi:
Store front and entrance:

Floor, Tables and chairs, Lamps, Wall coverings, Ceilings, Wall decorations and other decorations:

Kids play zone:

Appendix III pictures taken in McDonald's in China

McDonald's in Laiwu:
Store front and entrance:

Floor, Tables and chairs, Lamps, Wall coverings, Ceilings, Wall decorations, other decorations, and uniforms:

Happy Family Zone:

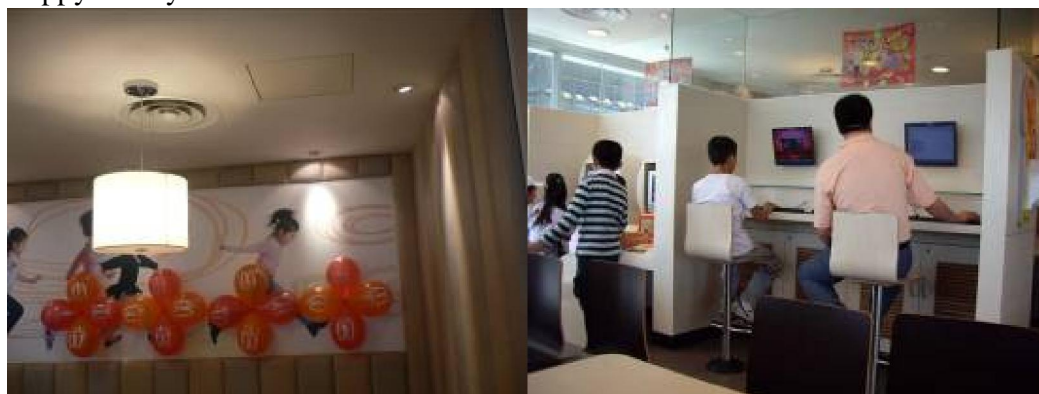**McDonald's in Tianjin:**
Store front and entrance:

Floor, Tables and chairs, Lamps, Wall coverings, Ceilings, Wall decorations, other decorations, and uniforms:

Happy Family Zone:

McDonald's in Beijing Wangjing:

Store front and entrance:

Floor, Tables and chairs, Lamps, Wall coverings, Ceilings, Wall decorations, other decorations, and uniforms:

Happy Family Zone:

McDonald's in Beijing International Exhibition Center

Store front and entrance:

Floor, Tables and chairs, Lamps, Wall coverings, Ceilings, Wall decorations, other decorations, and uniforms:
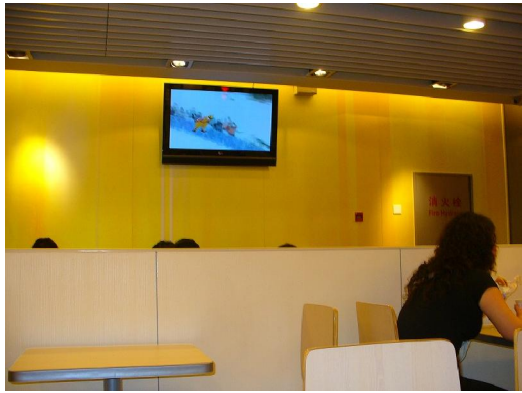
McDonald's in Beijing Capital Airport:

Store front and entrance:

Floor, Tables and chairs, Lamps, Wall coverings, Ceilings, Wall decorations, other decorations, and uniforms:

Happy Family Zone: