A Study of the Attraction Factors
of Japanese Pop-Culture by Young People in Taiwan

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Abstract. "Beauty is the only way to be competitive!" In recent years, due to the energetic efforts that has plunge into the design industry from countries all around the world, the design field in Taiwan is highly valued; through the use of various kinds of designing methods, it is expected that this positive effort of "design" can increase vitality, competition and cultural standard of the Taiwanese life. Therefore, "design" must not only stress the importance of the high quality technology to improve the competitiveness in the design industry, but more important, how to focus on the viewpoint of the industry and the commercial market. Only in this way we can build a true strategy and create strong design energy from the heart. The emotional design of the Japanese goods, compare from consumer goods from all around the world, has always been distinct; furthermore, the same market response also emerged in the Taiwan commercial market. How do the Japanese goods provoke the emotional intention for consumer to purchase? How does it touch our perception neural? How can we truly seize the perceived value of the consumer? Therefore, through the bestseller condition analysis of the Japanese goods, and taking it forward to understand the preference factors of the Taiwan commercial market. Using EGM interviewing sixteen high personal involvements, then employing Quantification theory I to calculate the charm functional of the Japanese goods in Taiwan. The attempt is to seek to reason why Japanese goods became popular in Taiwan. The use of EGM can capture the particular features of the conditions that arouse the two aspects of the purchase intentions: the "top down" abstract value judgment and the "bottom up" concrete condition of the consumer goods, organizing the factors and conditions of the preference and expectations in the Taiwan commercial market. Ultimately to create similar products that extracted the fundamental spirits of the Japanese goods, meanwhile, blending in with the environmental conditions of the Taiwan commercial market; therefore, via the methods of product design to create goods that can conform to the emotional need of the Taiwanese consumer. By this way, we can pursue the success of emotional Taiwanese goods that can deeply touch the heart of the consumers and stimulate the consumption of the product; encouraging consumer to purchase this heart contented good and opening a new business opportunity to companies.

This research via the concept of charm engineer, employing the high involvement oral interview data of EGM, furthermore, using KJ Method to convergence categories, understand facts, and complying data. Below are six general aspects which help us know the main charm factors and condition of how Japanese goods attract the Taiwanese consumers: 1. Marketing. 2. Trend: Fashion trend. 3. Profession. 4. Convenience. 5. Comfortable. 6. Abundant.

Therefore, the comprehensive research combined EGM, statistics of Quantification theory I , and charm functional to analyze if user can attain comfort from all aspects or whether if the design is humanized to provide convenience when manipulating; afterwards, based on the theory of consumer cognitive psychology and the six basic conditions of commodities: origin, background, material, technology, craftsman, and quality to sum up this research. Hence, "The most profound emotional value for Taiwanese consumers" concludes to the four conclusions: 1.Feel of Ease and Supreme Quality; 2.Innovation within the Traditional Field and the Spirit of the Craftsman; 3. Leading Technology and Innovation; 4. Social Care

Keywords: Japanese Goods , Evaluation Grid Method , KANSEI Engineering.

1   Introduction

The research is about how "Japanese products" seize the "heart" of "Taiwanese" consumers. Focus is placed on how Taiwanese consumers recognize Japanese products in general and value them. The research therefore selected interviewees who are potential shoppers with stronger purchase powers, and who are classified as "knowledge-oriented" customers. The interviewees are limited to users highly involved in Japanese products in the Next Generation. For the needs of the interview, the, the, the samples were required to be tangible "products". There was no restriction about where the products were bought or what kind they were. There was no restriction about the ratio of male and female interviewees either. It was expected by harvesting information extensively and allowing interviewees to talk freely, a critical charm formula can be developed and "heart" values of Japanese products can be identified.

2   The Study

Design is not merely place emphasis on the competence to maintain high quality, or enhancing competitiveness, it is also related to the view points of industries and commercial market. This is the only way to strategize powerful "heart" design capacity.

Norman stated in his 2005 thesis "Emotional Design" that consumer are not merely using products, their emotions are profoundly engaged in the activities. As designs receive more and more attention, and the level of demand is higher, it is time for emotional consumption. Consumers do not rely on functional demands only but for their emotional needs as well. Japanese products, i.e. designs carrying unique aesthetic and cultural features, are good examples. As eye-catching and attention demanding as these products are at consumer market, good designs represent quality assurance and

satisfaction. Producing a useful "product" is not enough. All details concerning user experience need to be taken into consideration. This is about designing a "product" that creates certain atmosphere, fulfills customer expectation, and provides happiness at different times. Only such designs deserve the dynamics to impress users.

Why are Japanese products so attractive? Why are they so desirable? Why can they produce such sensations? How did their designers perceive values in the mind of customers? What magic is cast on these products? Why do customers feel satisfied and happy through the products in different times? This research attempts to find out the charms of Japanese products and analyze their advantages.

In-depth interviews with highly involved users about their favored elements of their favored Japanese products can provide clues as to popular elements, reasons for popularity, preferred design styles, customer desire, and trends, and these clues can serve as reference to Taiwan's consumer market. Targeting at users highly involved in Japanese products, the research employs more precise and detailed in-depth interviews. It is hoped that from the interviews and subsequent analysis can be inspirational. The design elements that make Japanese product so popular are be integrated into creating new products in Taiwan's consumer market. In the end, it is expected that when products of similar nature are designed, the elements can be applied in fusion with Taiwan's environmental features to create products that fulfill the emotional needs of local consumers and provide happiness. When these designed products are launched, they can be recognized, and desired. Consumers are more willing to purchase these impressive products carrying commercial opportunities.

The research analyzes the reasons for the popularity of Japanese products, and identifies the preferences in Taiwan's consumer market. By applying Evaluation Grid Method, EGM, the research intends to find out why Japanese products are so favored in Taiwan. EGM helps visualize the temptation of these products, so as to provide a clearer understanding of the "metaphysical abstract values and concrete conditions" of each product. By understanding why and how Japanese products attract Taiwanese consumers, the study points out their preferences and expectation. With EGM methodology, the research expects to identify the why Japanese products are attractive to Taiwanese consumers "philosophy-wise" and "function-wise". With the idea of "function prioritizing over philosophy", the intangible "heart" factors of Japanese products in Taiwan are analyzed; abstract charm factors and charm formula were developed into concrete criteria for future application. With the idea of "philosophy prioritizing over function", the research serves as a reference for designers when they are creating new ideas, for importers when they are choosing what to import, for consumers when they are choosing what to purchase.

This research expects to gain an extensive appreciation of the values in the mind of users highly involved with Japanese products. Some restrictions, for instance limited time, financial support and human resources, form challenges to the research. It is expected that future studies may advance the research on the foundation laid by this one. Challenges include:

1. With limited financial and human resources, the researcher only interviewed 16 users highly involved in Japanese products while adopting EGM approach. Other 35 highly involved users take questionnaires. Despite a coherent and reliable conclusion was drawn from quanified calculation, this analysis is based on too small a pool. It is suggested that researchers in the future expand the pool and conduct empirical analysis, which will give their researches more credibility and cogency.
2. The "product" used during in-depth interviews with highly involved users are actual product samples (but some of them could not be easily carried or maintain, for example, an exhibition was held in Odaiba Japan to celebrate the 30th anniversary of GUNDAM, a robot. The exhibition could not be brought to the interview so videos and photos were presented to interviewees instead.) Without presenting the products, interviewees may have to rely on their imaginations. With products, there were still some problems because the environmental atmosphere was not completely created for interviewees to perceive. It is suggested that researchers and interviewees return to the site for the atmosphere and the research will be more accurate.

The main purpose of this research is to identify how "Japanese products" seize the "heart" of "Taiwanese" consumers by using EGM, Quantification Theory Type I and theories about emotion engineering. It is expected that more and more researches will be advanced in the future and be based on the charm formula developed in this study.

1. The first phase: literature review and question clarification: Based on literature review, the research clarifies the relations between "heart", "Japanese products" and fashions in Taiwan and Japan; defines the relations between philosophies, functions and cultures; indicates the engineering theories referred to in the research. The engineering theories include "Miryoku Engineering" for understanding recognition and values of consumers, consumer involvement theory, EGM, Quantification Theory Type I, KJ method (affinity diagram). After these information constructed a structure for the research, and a list of in-depth interviewees was confirmed, the research entered the second phase, i.e. evaluation.
2. The second phase: establish hierarchy of values in the mind of consumers: After the phase of clarification, 16 interviewees who are also users highly involved in "Japanese products" are selected for focus group. Based on the original evaluation items from the 32 samples, questions about post-metaphysics (concrete images) and metaphysics (abstract concepts) were asked. Answers were calculated based on EGM, and the points were integrated into key items. KJ method (affinity diagram) was used for classification, and finally Quantification Theory Type I programs were used to develop a charm formula of Japanese products in Taiwan.
3. The third phase: analysis and evaluation based on theories and data: Analysis based on EGM, metaphysical and post-metaphysical factors and Quantification Theory Type I was conducted. Along with the theoretical findings from literature review and engineering theories, research data, a conclusion about the "heart" factors of Japanese product was reached.
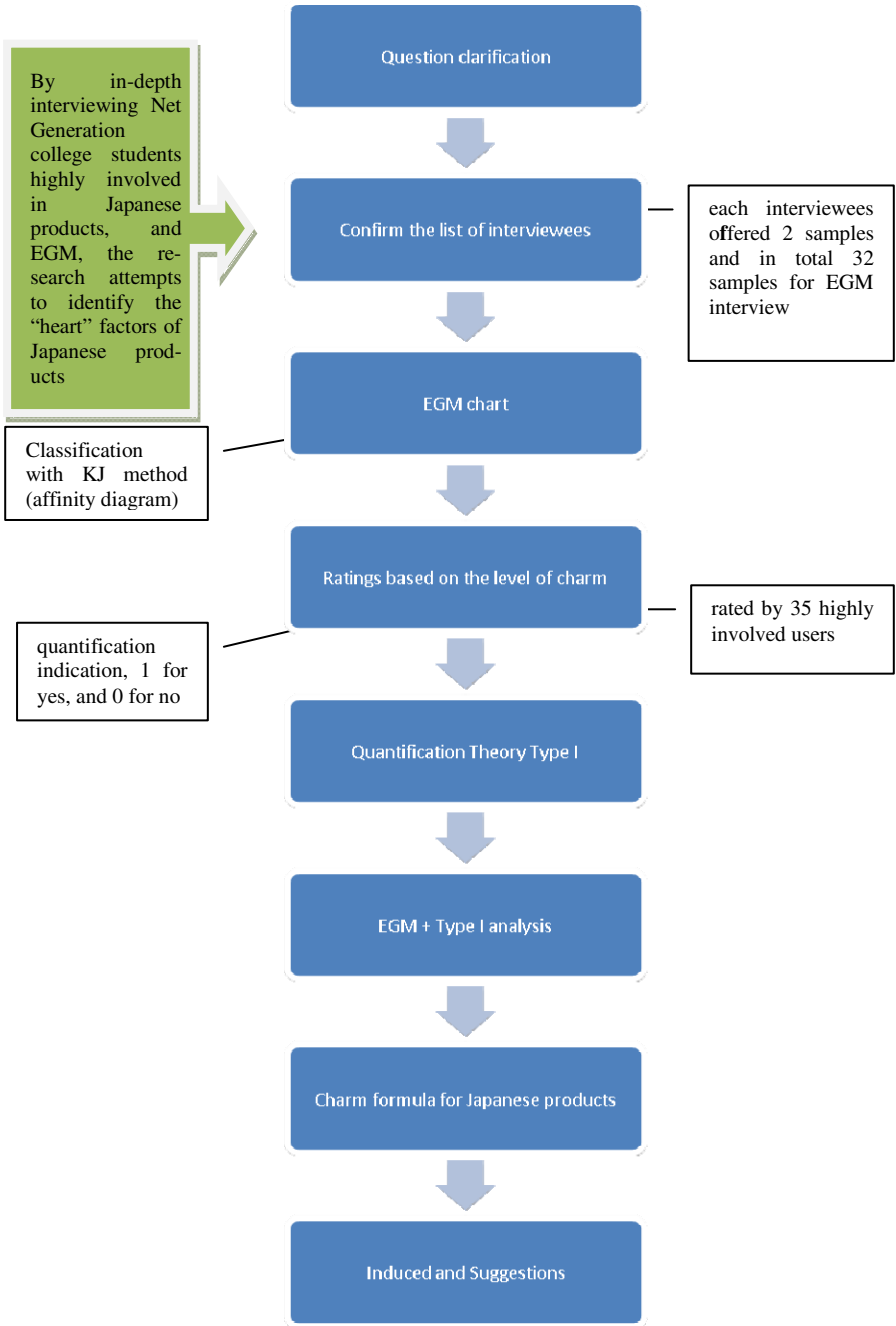
By in-depth interviewing Net Generation college students highly involved in Japanese products, and EGM, the research attempts to identify the "heart" factors of Japanese products

Question clarification

Confirm the list of interviewees

each interviewees offered 2 samples and in total 32 samples for EGM interview

EGM chart

Classification with KJ method (affinity diagram)

Ratings based on the level of charm

rated by 35 highly involved users

quantification indication, 1 for yes, and 0 for no

Quantification Theory Type I

EGM + Type I analysis

Charm formula for Japanese products

Induced and Suggestions

Fig. 1. Methodology and Flow Chart

The dissertation surveys the "sensual", "aesthetic", "fashion perceptive" and "emotional" responses to Japanese products of highly involved consumers. Their tangible descriptions are analyzed with EGM, to verify the charm factors of Japanese products to Taiwanese products. At a later stage, the analysis is evaluated and assessed. From user experiences, the "heart" value is derived, and that is the focus of in-depth interviews. The scope of trendy products in the research are based on the definition of fashion as "patterns and styles accepted and embraced by the general public at the time being that are communicative and spreading".

After the questions are clarified, the methodology and framework of the research is built. Among college students, 16 interviewees were selected. Samples provided by these interviewees were analyzed to identify the intangible "heart" factors, for the next phase of spiral in-depth interviews.

The 32 sets of charm factor data collected from 16 interviewees were induced and summarized with KJ method (affinity diagram) and given different ratings according to their charm level to complete an EGM chart. With Quantification Theory Type I, the data was analyzed and used to develop a charm formula for "Japanese products in Taiwan". The formula can be used to assess and rate Japanese products in the future. Based on all quantified data and literature review, conclusions were drawn and suggestions were put forward.

The EGM analysis adopted in the research contributes to clarifying the concrete factors and advantages of "items" and identifying the value and charm. The methodology is often used on researches about Miryoku (Charm) Engineering. "Tangible samples" are used during in-depth interviews and capture key information. Real products and pictures were presented at interviews and visualize the thoughts of interviewees. This approach has be developed and used for over 70 years (Denain, 1989). Scholars and researchers believe that in-depth interviews are more credible than focus group. Several successful cases prove that EGM is an effective and credible research methodology to capture values of products and the perception of consumers. As a critical research methodology for Miryoku (Charm) Engineering, EGM was originated from psychology. It was used to apprehend concepts from individuals, to summarize them into lists, to dig out the profound cognition and perception of consumers, to present the mindset of target consumers more completely and affluently, and to share survey results with other researchers.

The verbal data derived from the concepts of Miryoku (Charm) Engineering and EGM were induced and classified with KJ method (affinity diagram). Information was converged to identify the charm of Japanese products to Taiwanese consumers. They include the following six aspects:

1. Marketing: eye-catching; marketing techniques
2. Fashion: trendy, in vogue
3. Craftmanship: experts, reliability
4. Convenience: handy, user-friendly, and functional
5. Comfort: good for the mind, body and soul
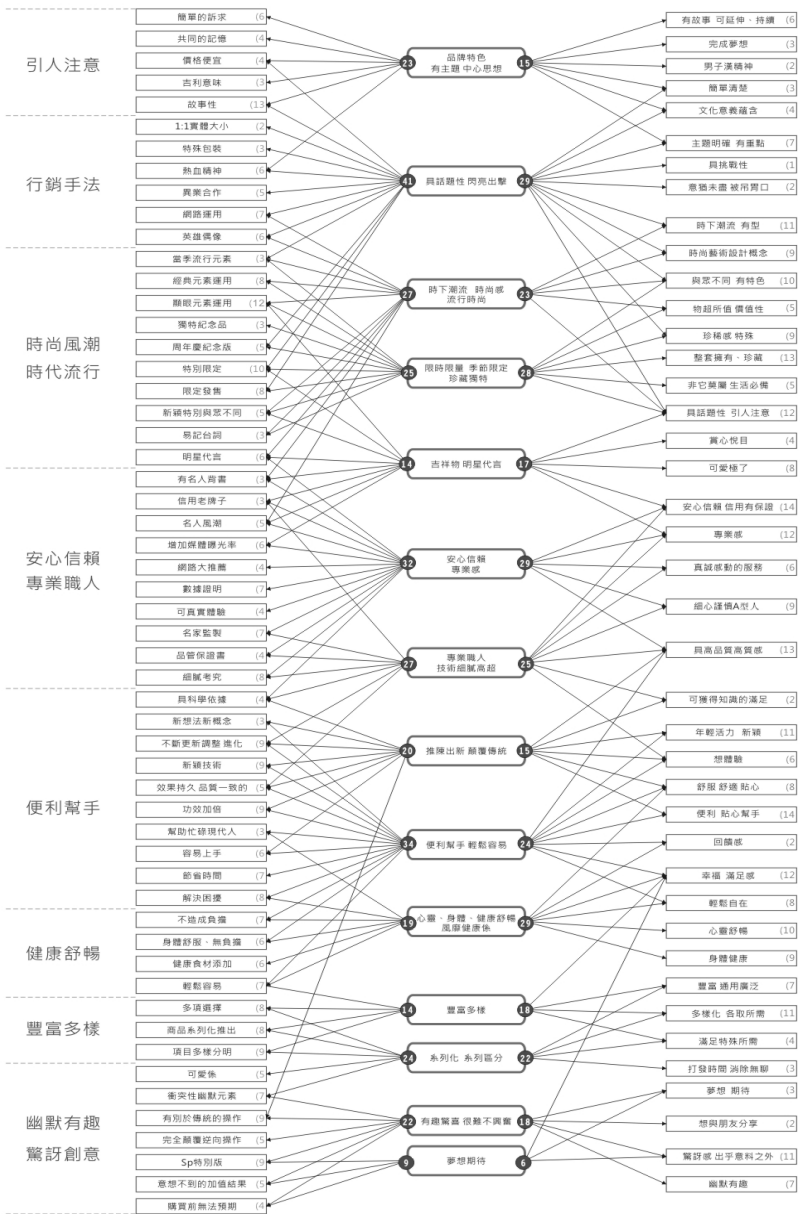6. Richness: diversified series of products

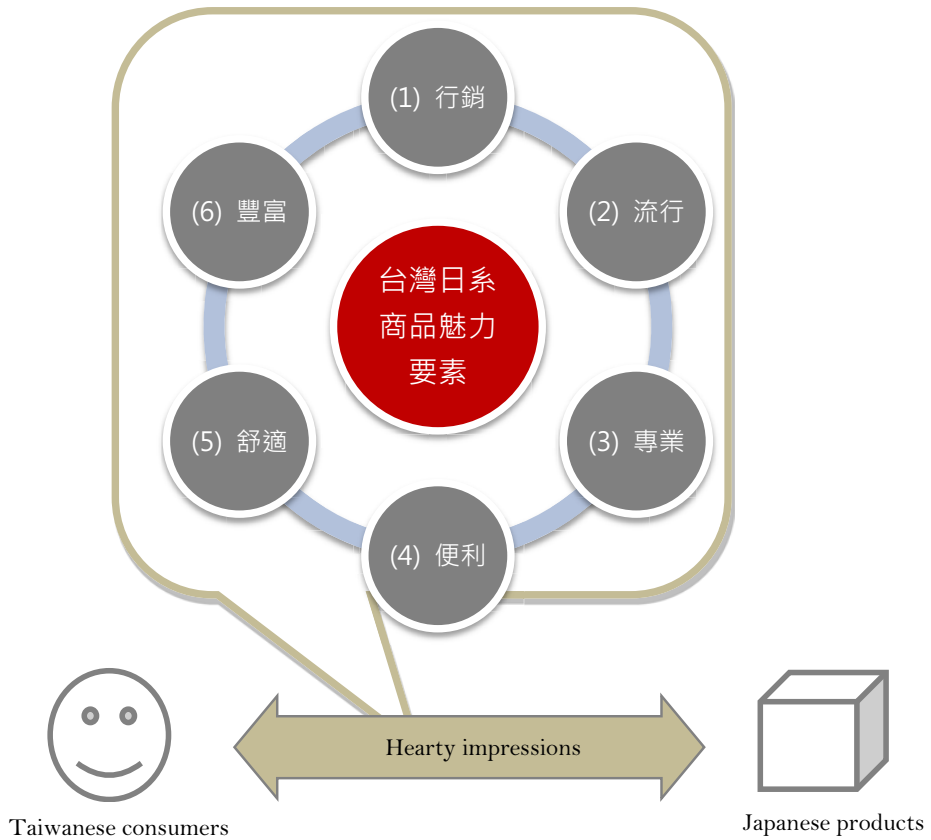**Fig. 2.** Scores from EGM evaluation

Fig. 3. Charm Factors of Japanese products in Taiwan

3   Conclusions

Based on the EGM analysis, data derived from Quantification Theory Type I, and information collected from charm formula, and "abstract" philosophical viewpoints and mindsets, in combination with logical and sensible arguments, this Kansei Engineering-oriented research concludes that "the values of Japanese products in Taiwan" are charming for these reasons: (1) feel of ease and supreme quality; (2) innovation within the traditional field and the spirit of the craftsman; (3) leading technology and innovation; (4) social care. These factors are exactly the values, emotions and concerns of consumers.

After this macroscopic research of "heart" values was completed, it is suggested that future research and narrow the scope and deepen discussions. The study offers three suggestions for future researches:

1. The research focused on understanding the cognition and values of consumers for Japanese products in Taiwan by harvesting extensive information from highly involved users and allowing them to talk freely about their "heart" values. This was not limited to one specific Japanese product or category. There was no restriction on the ratio of male and female interviewees. Identifying the "heart" factors of Japanese products in general that attract Taiwanese consumers, the research expects that in the future, more studies can be committed to certain specific Japanese product or subcategories, for example, animation fans, people attracted to Japanese cultures, or people interested in Japanese cuisines. A complete and specific target group for EGM will give subculture studies a clearer focus. In that case, a more profound discussion will lead to a more definite value factor and charm formula for the group.

2. Interviewers and researchers in charge of induction require professional training at a mature level and constant practices.   For one: During EGM in-depth interviews, it was observed that not all interviewees have design background, so they have little understanding for EGM, and were somewhat worried. It would be more comforting for researches to brief about EGM and offer instruction. For two: Laddering technique was employed during the interview to capture concepts, concrete post-metaphysical ideas and metaphysical perceptions. This requires repeated practice and exercise as well as a logical mind so that interviewees are less tired after two hours of discussion. This can help maintain the completeness of the information collected.

3. Modern industries and technologies are advanced very fast, so are trendy products from Japan. The same observation can be applied on the "minds" (heart) of consumers. The taste and preference of consumers change with time, new trend and new technologies. The research therefore claims that the consumer cognition for Japanese products in Taiwan, value factors, and charm formula need to adapt at product evaluations based on vogue, trend, presentation techniques at the time being so as to better respond to the values and expectations of consumers.

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