A WeChat-based e-commerce solution to sell Dutch brands in China

TUDelft　Nextport China

A WeChat-based e-commerce solution to sell Dutch brands in China

Master Graduation Thesis

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Preface

E Executive Summary

Oversea shopping is becoming increasingly popular among Chinese consumers. Nextport-China is a China-focused digital marketing agency in Amsterdam. The company is helping some Dutch brands to market in China. It wants to explore the possibility of selling Dutch products to Chinese consumers online.

There are 11 chapters in this report. The image on the next page shows the project process.

Chapter 1 is the introduction of the whole assignment. It contains the background of the project, the problems that need to be solved, the research question for the research phase, and methods used in the whole process.

Chapter 2 is the literature review about brand authenticity and Chinese consumers' outbound shopping behavior. It functions as a supplement to 4C's analyses in chapter 3 to 6.

Chapter 3 is about the company. It starts from the introduction to the company and follows by products and services that are closely related to this project. The current e-commerce business for the company and its potential clients are also discussed.

Chapter 4 is about the methods, process, and outcomes of consumer research. Both quantitative methods and qualitative methods are used in consumer research. The primary purpose is to build the persona of potential customers and find the key value of Dutch brands.

Chapter 5 is about the trends and potential in the Chinese consumer marketplace. The goal is to answer the question: what is going on in the industry that the company wants to enter.

Chapter 6 is competitor analysis. The gaps found in this chapter helps the company to develop unique positioning in the market.

Chapter 7 synthesizes the insights from the research phase. It sets a design direction, target users, and requirements for the design phase.

Chapter 8 is about the design concept based on the brief discussed in the last chapter. It includes the design process, concept structure, and three sprints of the consumer product. At the end of this chapter, an MVP and user test results are presented, which is the foundation of the final design.

Chapter 9 presents the final design, including the consumer product and the business packages.

Chapter 10 shows the implementation plan for the final design. The plan includes two parts: a vision in 5 years and a tactical roadmap to achieve this vision.

Chapter 11 reflects the whole project. It also discusses the limitations and gives suggestions for the next step.

Project Process

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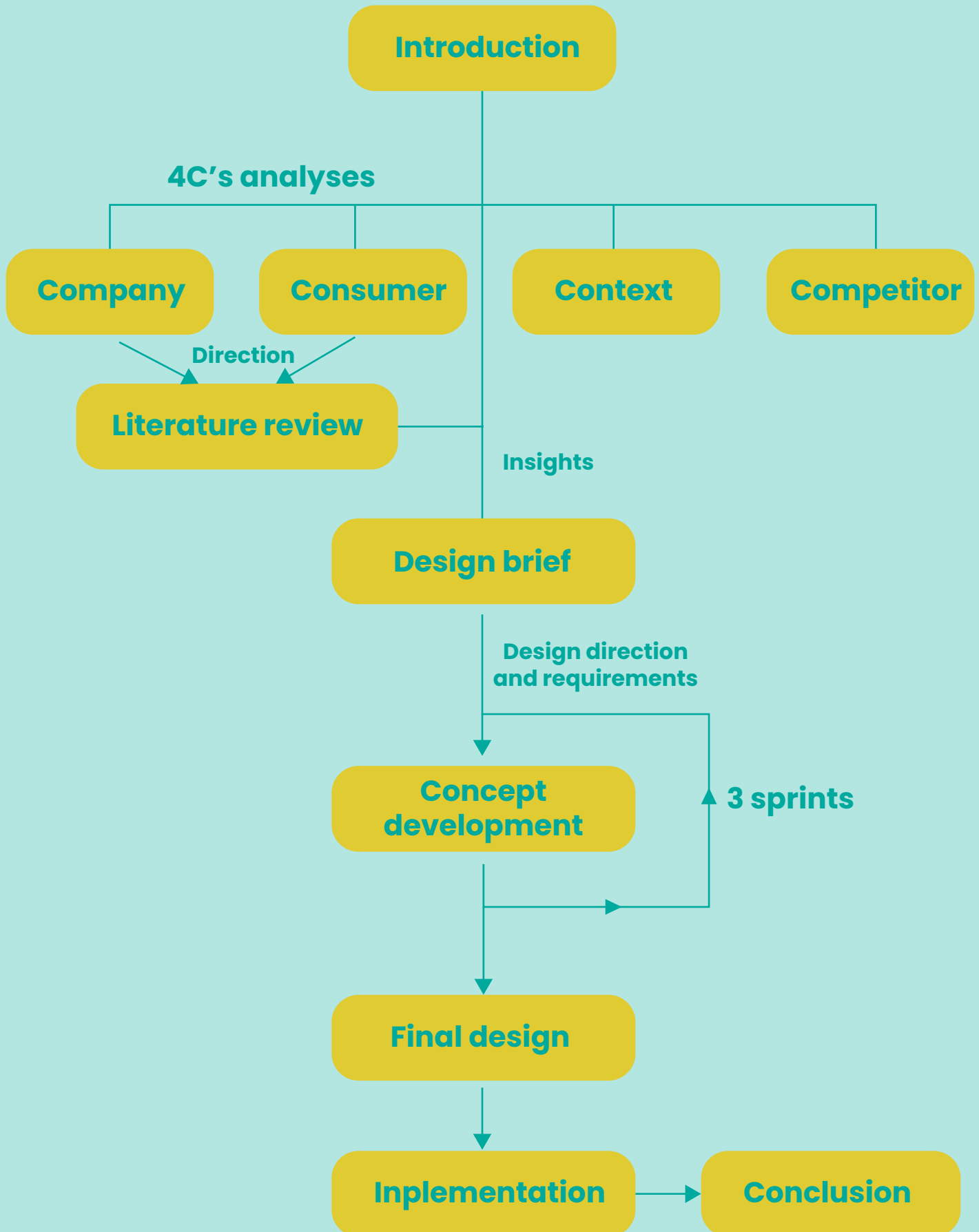
0 CONTENT

Preface

Executive summary

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Introduction

Oversea shopping is becoming increasingly popular among Chinese consumers. In 2018, the Chinese government launched several policies to support cross-border e-commerce and suppress Daigou[1] , which provides significant opportunities for international brands to enter the Chinese market legally.

NextportChina is a China-focused digital marketing agency based in Amsterdam who aims to introduce local brands to Chinese consumers via cross-border e-commerce. Recently they found an opportunity to facilitate the business: setting up WeChat mini-program stores for clients. WeChat mini-programs are mini apps in the WeChat ecosystem[2] which can run instantly on WeChat's interface. The company has already launched the first mini store for Dutch brand Antipoppe and plans to involve more brands in the future. Now NextportChina is using WeChat store templates provided by Azoya[3] . And next, they want to explore the pos-

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1 A form of cross-border smuggling in which an individual or a group outside China purchases commodities for customers in China.

2 A full explanation will be found in Chapter 5.1

3 An e-commerce solutions provider and retail operator based in China.

sibility of developing an independent WeChat e-commerce solution.

1.2 Problem definition

Currently, NextportChina highly depends on third-party companies like Azoya and V2Future to develop oversea e-commerce business on WeChat. Those companies charge high fees for providing mini program templates and store management service. However, they only provide ordinary store templates which are not very competitive in the social e-commerce boom. Also, the standard store templates could not fully make use of NextportChina's unique resources, such as its close relation with Benelux brands and its large user base on social media.

As a result, the goal for the 20-week project is to create an independent and innovative e-commerce solution based on the WeChat ecosystem for NextportChina, enabling the company to attract more clients, namely luxury/premium Benelux brands/retailers who target at Chinese consumers. To be specific, it might be a WeChat mini program with e-commerce function, and corresponding branding & marketing strategies. I will redesign the customer experience of cross-border shopping, trying to integrate the online and offline experience by employing other resources of NextportChina, such as the travel mini program "Next Port Holland".

1.3 Research questions

There are three major research questions for the project.

1. Persona of buyers

What is the persona of Chinese consumers who are likely to buy Dutch products?

There are some researches about Chinese cross-border shopping behavior, but few of them focuses on Dutch or Western Europe market. As a result, it remains unclear who are the buyers of Dutch brands or products and what are their preferences.

2. Key values of Dutch brands

What are the key values of Dutch brands for Chinese consumers?

There must be extra value for Chinese consumers to choose foreign brands when there are rich domestic substitutes. But the key values of Dutch brands are vague at the moment. It is a meaningful topic to investigate because it helps to select brands and develop marketing strategies in the design phase.

3. Authenticity

How to convey authenticity in cross-border online marketing to gain trust?

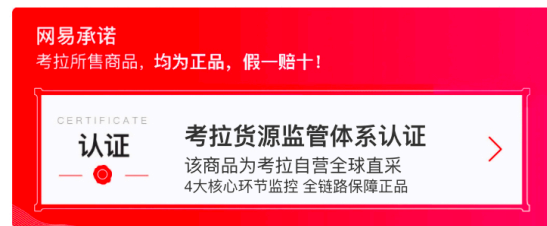Authenticity is probably the most frequent vocabulary on China's cross-border shopping platforms (Figure 1.x). For this project, it is an inevitable topic to research.

Tmall Global

JD Worldwide

Kaola.com

Red Mall

Figure 1.x The authentic guarantee statement of major cross-border shopping platforms in China. If there are fake products found out, the total penalties are 10 to 1 that the total price for fakes.

1.4 Methods

1. Literature study

As the project is an emerging practical business challenge, there is no previous experience that are directly related to this topic. As a result, the literature study was done while doing the quantitative and qualitative research. For example, after finishing the questionnaire, I reviewed paper about brand authenticity, and read paper about outbound shopping behavior while doing the company analysis. Most of the literature backgrounds will be shown in Chapter 2 and some will be demonstrated in Chapters about 4C's analyses.

2. 4C's analyses

4C here refers to company, consumer, context, and competitor. It is a common approach to do research in branding and marketing proj-

ects. It helps to position the product/brand in the market and develop its own identity. For this project, 4C's analyses provided a lot of useful knowledge and insights for later design.

3. Iterative design

The design phase follows a typical iterative design process, which are several loops from ideation to prototyping to testing. This will be further explained in Chapter 8.1.

4. Design Roadmapping

Design roadmapping is a strategic method for the company to form a long-term vision and a way to reach the vision. After the iterative design, a roadmap will be created to demonstrate how to realize the design and what are the further steps.

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2.1 Brand authenticity

■ What is brand authenticity

There is no universally agreed-upon definition for the term "authenticity" in marketing (Beverland, 2005). Commonly, it refers to genuineness, reality or truth of the object (Kennick, 1985). Some researchers also defined it in terms of sincerity, innocence and originality (Fine, 2003) and natural, honest, simple and unspun (Boyle, 2003).

The literature posits that there are three ways to understand authenticity:

1. Indexical authenticity
It is something intrinsic to the object which cannot involve alterations against history, quality or art (Postrel, 2003).

2. Existential authenticity
It is something given by consumers and creators (Holt, 1998), reflecting their pursuit of pleasure, homoney, or balance (Postrel, 2003).

3. Iconic authenticity
It refers to "authentic reproduction" (Burner, 1994) and assumes previous experience affect perceptions on authenticity (Grayson and Martinec, 2004).

Practioners in marketing usually conbine these tree understandings. For example, in Beverland's research on the authenticity of luxury wines (2003), brands convey authenticity using both ture information and rhetorical descriptions.

■ The importance of brand authenticity

Sephen (2003) identified that authenticity is central to postmodern marketing. Consumers want to use brands to create an authentic self and to reconnect to place, time, culture and others. But technological development and global commercialism has weakened their ability to distinguish between the real and the fake (Orvell, 2014). Postmodern consumers are unhappy with the commercial market with everything seems to be contrived (Napolia, Dickinsona, Beverland & Farrellyd, 2013). Searching for authenticity is a real consumer attempt to change the social order (Penaloza, 2000).

■ Authenticity in Chinese market

Authenticity is only meaningful in a cultural context (Rose and Wood, 2005). Most research about authenticity is under the background of modern western culture (Jacknis, 1990). But Chinese consumers perceive authenticity very differently because China's culture and industries produce copies and counterfeits (Bian and Veloutsou, 2017).

According to research about authenticity in

Chinese market (Liu, Yannopoulou, Bian and El-liott, 2014), Chinese consumers don't evaluate products using a binary relationship (authentic vs. inauthentic). There are two additional types of authenticity to evaluate market offerings, namely domesticated authenticity and mimicked authenticity.

1. Domesticated authenticity

Chinese consumers believe foreign brands with products produced in China or other countries that are different from the brand's country of origin are less authentic. They largely regard them as domesticated foreign brands instead of real foreign brands. Domesticated authenticity also implies lower perceived functional value, although brands claim the manufacturing locations wouldn't affect quality.

Different from western consumers who value uniqueness, Chinese consumers prefer to be the same as everyone else (Schmitt, 1997). Domesticated authenticity prevents them from obtaining the feeling of being the same as people who possess the same thing in more developed countries.

Domesticated authenticity has strong iconic cues because products look the same as those produced in original countries. However, it has weaker indexical cues because people believe the products are not as good as the authentic products functionally (Figure 2.1).

Domesticated authenticity

Figure 2.1 Assess domesticated authenticity from indexical and iconic perspectives.

2. Mimicked authenticity

Mimicked authenticity is represented by mimic goods (Vann, 2006). They are similar to original products both in appearance and function, but with a cheaper price. They typically have own brand names and logos. In China, they are called "Shanzhai".

Although "Shanzhai" products are considered inferior to authentic products, Chinese consumers still think they are sincere and honest. Because they don't intend to fool consumers and the price is lower than authentic products.

Mimicked Authenticity

Figure 2.2 Assess mimicked authenticity from indexical and iconic perspectives.

In addition, Chinese consumers draw a clear distinction between mimicked products and counterfeits. Counterfeits copy the brand names and sell in the same price with the intention to fool people. They have poor indexical and iconic cues.

Counterfeits

Figure 2.3 Assess counterfeits from indexical and iconic perspectives.

Figure 2.4 presents four forms of authenticity and their interrelationships. Country of production, knowledge-based know-how and brand name are three main factors when consumers judge the authenticity.
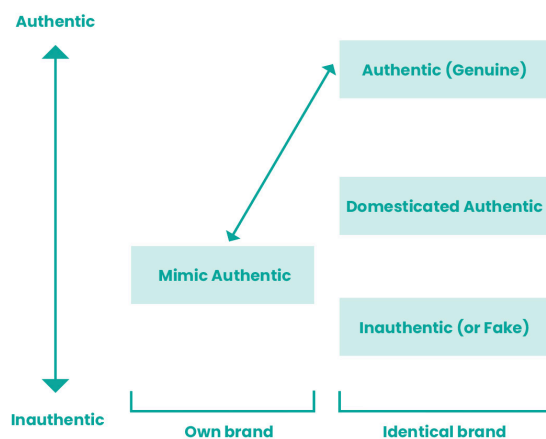
Figure 2.4 The interrelationships between four forms of Authenticity

2.2 Outbound shopping behavior

The persona of consumers for this project is not defined yet. But the company suggested a group to start with, which is Chinese tourists to the Netherlands. This group is the target for other projects of the company, and is relatively easier to reach. For this reason, I did literature research about Chinese tourists and thier shopping behavior.

■ Young Chinese travelers to Western Europe

China is an important outbound tourism market for many Western countries (Li, Harrill, Uysal, Burnett and Zhan, 2010). Many Chinese tourists consider Europe as a "dream destination" for international travel (ETC, 2011).

Recent studies suggest an emerging segment among Chinese outbound tourists which is independent young travelers (Bui, Wilkins and Lee, 2013). According to Tourism Review (2012), about 65% of Chinese outbound tourists are young or middle aged individuals between

25 and 44 years old and well educated. Lim (2009) described this group as "highly educated, largely urban-based, upwardly mobile professional adults". This trend is predicted as "the next big thing" by The Economist (2010, np). This group is not the only main Chinese tourism market, but it is worth special attention because people in the group perform very differently from older generations (Prayag, Disegna, Allen and Yan, 2015). For example, they are more adventurous and seek more autonomy during their travel (Sparks and Pan, 2009).

Research suggests that shopping is an important activity for this group (Visit Scotland 2012), but the language can be a barrier (Visit Britain 2012). However, for some subgroups in this segment, such as students or unemployed people who earn less than RMB 3,000 a month, shopping is not their interest (Prayag, Disegna, Allen and Yan, 2015), hence they are not the target of the project.

■ Motives for shopping

Outdoor shoppers are people who identify shopping as a motive for going abroad (Tansuhaj, Ong and McCullough, 1989). In recent years, there are more and more Chinese outdoor shoppers found in Western countries (Wang, Doss, Guo and Li, 2010). Three positive motives that affect their shopping propensity are discussed by Wang, et al, (2010):

1. Perceived expressiveness of using foreign products

In Chinese consumers' minds, the quality of foreign-made products is generally better than that of domestic products (Klein, Ettenson and Morris, 1998). The mind is not only shaped by objective reasons, but also by Chinese modern history before the start of "Reform and Opening". Consumers tend to consider foreign products with high price and high symbolic

value as something to convey or enhance their social status.

2. Perceived reliability of foreign retail service

Chinese consumers have high expectations for authentic western-made products. However, there are a lot of counterfeits in the domestic market. The service of newly established retailers is also unsatisfactory. As a result, Chinese consumers tend to choose reliable retail experience in developed countries.

3. Perceived enjoyment of shopping abroad

Shopping in developed countries, consumers are able to find a wide range of top brands, pleasant shopping environment, and excellent service which couldn't be found in China. It provides them with a lot of enjoyment.

■ What tourists buy in Europe

Different from the mainstream western tourists in Europe who prefer to buy handicrafts at small local shops, Chinese tourists are more into buying commodities in modern shopping malls, duty-free shops and boutiques in European countries (Zhu, Xu and Jiang, 2015). Researchers suggest to sort the things they bought in Europe into three categories:

1. Funtional goods
They are things used in daily life which contain practice value, and are not bought as gifts. This is the most popular category for Chinese tourists to buy in Europe. People buy them

generally becuase they are of higher quality and lower price than counterparts in domestic market.

2. Adornment goods
They are things used for decoration or adornment which contain symbolic value, such as jewelry, watches, and cosmetics. Chinese tourists buy them for their aesthetic value, price advantage and the symbolic value of the brands. In addition, these products can also carry the memory of the trip.

3. Social gifts
They are things bought as gifts to others. But buying gifts is not obligatory activity for tourists, so it is always considered as incidental act. Chinese consumers like to buy products that are easily recognized as coming from Europe for this category. Products in this category is not as popular as those in previous two categories.

■ Social media use in shopping

Chinese outbound consumers are very addicted to use social media before and during shopping (Clark, 2014). Many western brands target at Chinese tourists have already set up official Weibo and WeChat accounts, enabling Chinese consumers to access shopping information even before the trip.

Chinese shoppers also like to share information and experience with friends in real time via social media, and sometimes take orders on behalf of friends in China.

Company analysis is the first thing I did in the research phase. This chapter starts from the introduction to the company, and follows by products and services that are closely related to this project. The current e-commerce business for the company and its potential clients will also be discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Introduction

NextportChina B.V. is a start-up company based in Amsterdam. It was founded by Quinten Kemp and Thijs van der Toom in 2014. It is the first full service China-focused digital marketing agency in the Netherlands. The company holds a leading position in the Benelux and work with top brands across a wide range of industries.

There are both Dutch and Chinese professionals in the company with different expertise, including marketing, branding, design, etc. By working together, they develop creative digital solutions to help Dutch brands to connect with right Chinese target audience.

The clients of the company come from a wide variety of fields, including toursim, education, agriculture, and retail trade.

The main service of the company is shown in

Online Marketing   Branding & Design   Research & Consultant

E-commerce   Payment
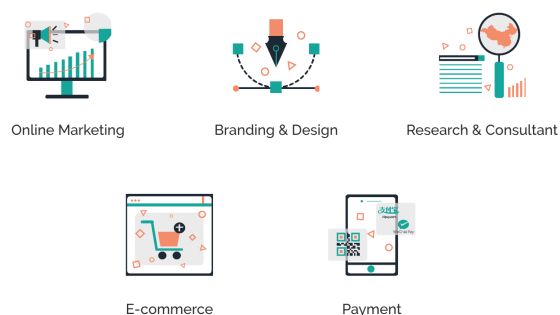
Figure 3.1 Main service of NextportChina

3.2 Products and services

Apart from the service to clients, the company also develped its own products and services targeting at Chinese market. They are the unique resources of NextportChina, and could play an important role in developing the company's e-commerce business.

■ **"Next Port Holland" WeChat Official Account**

WeChat[1] is one of the most popular mobile application in China with 1.08 billion users. WeChat Official Account (OA) is a service embedded in WeChat by which an organization could push articles in a daily basis to its subscribers.

NextportChina has a WeChat OA named "下一站荷兰" (Next Port Holland, NPH). It is created and operated by Chinese employees in the company. NPH already has more than 24 thousand subscribers in July of 2019 and the number is still increasing. The QR code of NPH is provided in Figure 3.2.

NPH publishes four articles every week with dif-

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1 More information about WeChat will be provided in Chapter 5.1

ferent themes and target audience:

Tuesday: Inspiration for weekend (周末灵感)
The article on Tuesday listed interesting events on weekend in the Netherlands. It mainly targets at Chinese youngsters living in the Netherlands.

Wednesday: Biaojie's experience[1] (表姐说)
The article on Wednesday is written from the perspective of a Chinese who has lived in the Netherlands for many years. It shares experience of living in this country, and also talks about Dutch culture and history. The target audience are both Chinese living in the Netherlands and travelers.

Thursday: Visiting restaurants (探店打卡)
The article on Thursday is about dining experience in resaurants. The team always searchs for good resturants in the Netherlands and tries to establish cooperation. It targets at both Chinese living here and travelers.

Friday: Have fun in Holland (玩转荷兰)
The article on Wednesday is target at Chinese tourists in the Netherlands. The topic is not limited to travel guide, but also about interesting cultural backgrounds of this country.

Because of the diverse topics, the subcribers are also belong to different groups, such as Chinese people studying and living in the Netherlands, tourists, students who want to apply for Dutch universities, etc.

1 Biaojie means cousin in Chinese. The NPH WeChat OA is initially established by a Chinese team member with the nickname "Big Cousin".

Figure 3.3 shows the regional distribution of subscribes based on the location data collected by WeChat backend.
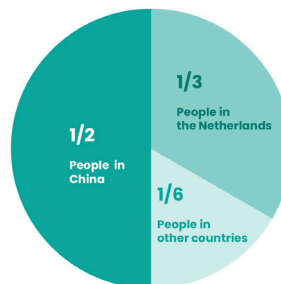
Figure 3.3 The regional distribution of subscribers.

NPH also has a Weibo[2] account with 40 thousand followers and a Zhihu[3] account with 1.7 thousand followers.

Among all these channels, the WeChat OA is the most powerful touchpoint for company to reach Chinese audience. It could be a great resource for the e-commerce business in the future.

■ "Next Port Holland" Travel WeChat mini-program

WeChat mini-program[4] is a "sub-application" within the WeChat ecosystem. It functions like a mobile application, but can be loaded in seconds without downloading it.

NextportChina built a travel mini-program (MP)also called "Next Port Holland" in 2018 with the purpose to attract more Chinese tourists. In NPH MP, people can find travel information

2 A popular Chinese social media platform similar to Twitter

3 A Chinese question-and-answer website like Quora

4 More information about WeChat mini-program will be provided in Chapter 5.1

like hotels, restaurants, attractions, shopping stores, and well-organized travel itineraries.
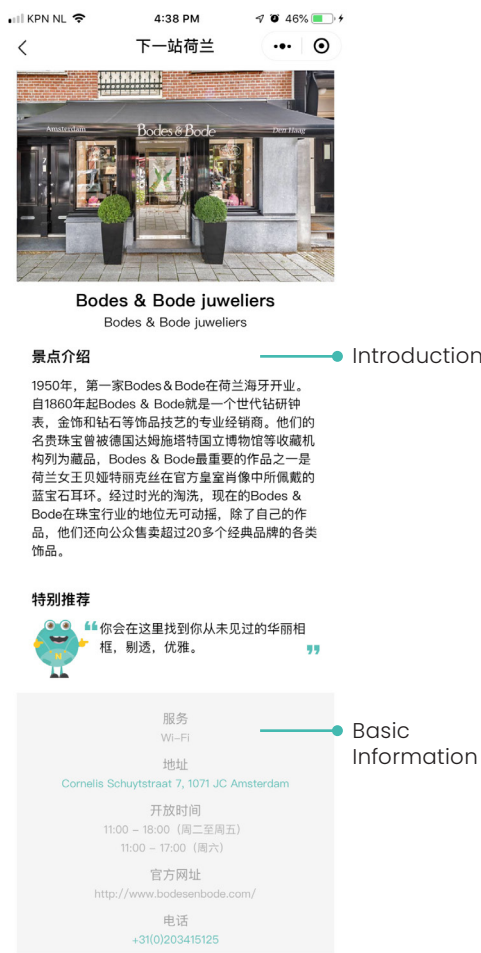
Figure 3.5 Profile of an offline store

inside the MP.

NPH is a good platform to collect Chinese tourists' preference. However, the team didn't communicate this need with outsourced de-

The MP code of NPH is provided in Figure 3.4. There are over 1,000 destinations all over the Netherlands in NPH MP, including offline stores in big cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht). Figure 3.5 shows a profile of one offline store. There are photos, brief introduction, basic information of that store, and an area for customers to read and leave reviews.

The team also partners with retailers like De Bijenkorf and Royal Delft. The profile of these stores will be put at the top of the list. Some stores also provide customers with coupons
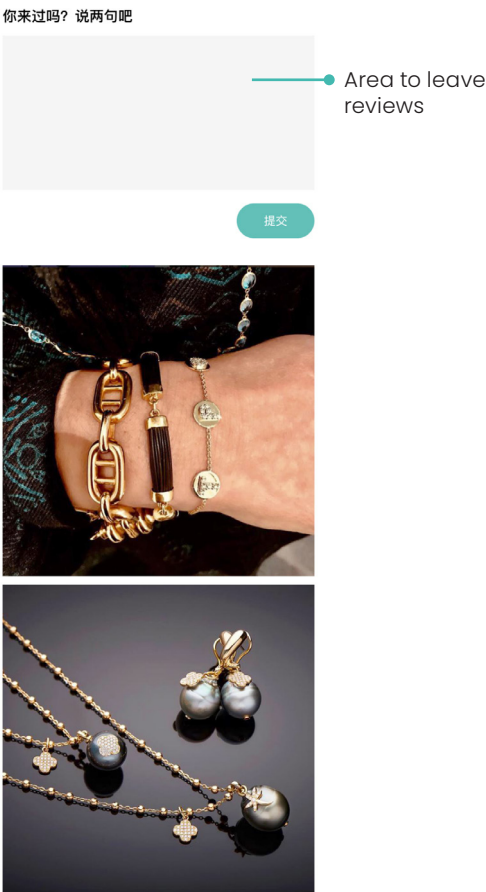
velopers in China. As a result, currently it is impossible for the team to get the traffic data for a specific destination profile.

Another problem is how to monetize the MP.

Currently, the revenue mainly comes from selling banners and top positions in the MP to clients. But the income cannot offset against the huge investment in program maintenance and new feature development. The team is searching for other ways to make money.

Creating travel itineraries is the team's new attempt. The itinerary provides tourists with a detailed day plan including attractions, travel tips, and restaurants. All itineraries are carefully investigated and personally tried by team members. Now the itinerary is fully free of charge, but later, the team hopes to sell them as packages containing attractions tickets and transportation.

3.3 E-commerce business

■ Current service

E-commerce is the new business for Nextport-China, and the whole thing is still at the exploratory stage. The current service provided by NextportChina includes:

1. Set up and operate WeChat OA
As mentioned in literature review, WeChat OA is an effective channel for brands to engage with Chinese consumers. NextportChina has helped many Dutch companies set up their own WeChat OA. There are marketing specialists in the team to operate these accounts. Figure 3.6 (a) shows the WeChat OA for current client Artipoppe.

2. Set up WeChat MP store
WeChat MP store is basically an online store in WeChat. Consumers could visit the store by clicking "Buy now" button in the OA (Figure 3.6) or search the name in WeChat. Artipoppe[1] MP

1 A Dutch baby carrier brand

(a)   (b)
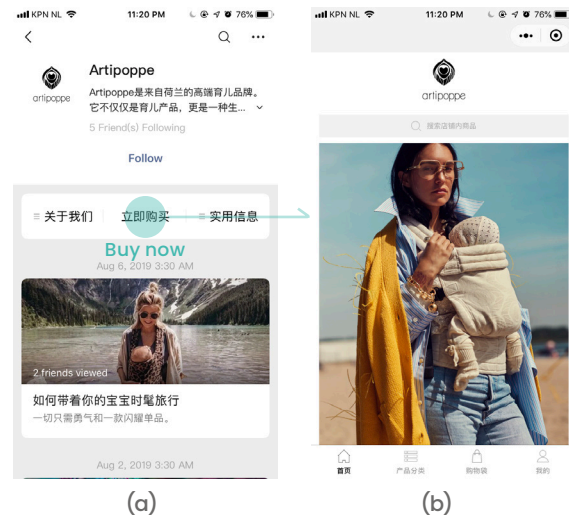
Figure 3.6 (a) The WeChat OA of Artipoppe; (b) The WeChat MP store of Artipoppe

store is the company's first attempt. It is based on a template provided by V2Future[2].

3. Advertisements and KOL[3] promotions
The company also helps clients to do marketing promotions. For Artipoppe, the team did WeChat Moments[4] advertisements (Figure 3.7) and KOL promotions on Instagram and Weibo. Currently, marketing promotion is the major way to lead traffic to the MP store. But it is very expensive, and sometimes not that effective in regard to sales conversion.

Figure 3.7 WeChat Moments advertisement for Artipoppe

2 A business consultancy company focusing on Chinese market. It is based in Amsterdam.

3 Key Opinion Leader, also known as an "influencer," is a person or organization who has expert product knowledge and influence in a respective field.

4 WeChat Moments is a forum in WeChat where users can share information with the users' choice of close friends.

■ The challenges

There are two major problems in the current e-commerce business:

1. How to set up the online store?
Except for WeChat MP store, there are also options like setting up official stores at major marketplaces in China, such as TMall Global and JD Worldwide[1]. But these platforms charge a large amount of deposit and service fee. In addition, there needs to be a registered sales agent in China. According to the interview with Lenny who operates an agent company for several foreign brands, setting up such a store requires at least €50,000 as start-up capital. It is too risky for NextportChina and its clients.

In contrast, using WeChat MP store template seems much cheaper. The V2Future template

only costs €500 per year. However, V2Future template is very rigid. It is inpossible to customize the interface in the CMS[2]. Adding any little change to the template requires programming work. As the company outsources all development work, it is actually inefficient and uneconomic to use V2Future template in the long run.

Another MP store template for cross-border e-commerce is provided by Azoya[3]. Azoya has two packages to cater for the varying degree of need. The lite version costs €220 per month while the standard version costs €350 per month. Azoya has a graphic user interface shown in Figure 3.8. The user can drag UI components in the left column to the interface, and adjust the parameters in the right column.

1 TMall (天猫) and JD(京东) are major online shopping platforms in China with cross-border business.

2 Content management system, a system for managing content and providing it in various formats.

3 An Chinese Internet company that helps international retailers enter China via cross-border e-commerce.
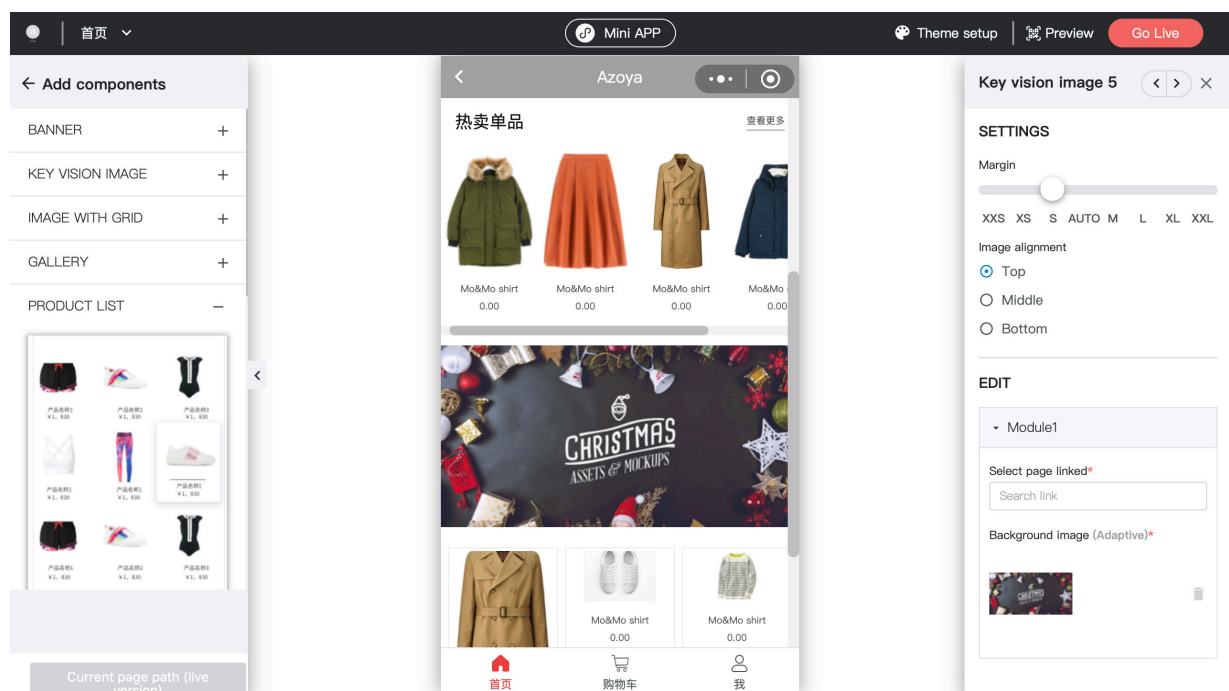

Figure 3.5 The Azoya CMS to customize the MP store.

However, the cost of Azoya solution still exceeds most clients' budget. It is rather difficult for NextportChina to earn money from the business.

As a result, the company wants to develop its own MP store template and provide it to clients within reasonable price. But it is still unknown how to do that because different clients may have different requirements for the store interface. And it is too costly for NextportChina to build a fancy customizable UI interface in CMS like what Azoya did.

2. How to get traffic to the MP store?
Online stores in TMall and JD can get a lot of traffic from the platform. However, WeChat MP store is in a closed WeChat ecosystem. Subscribers of WeChat OA can be easily guided to the MP store. But it is much more difficult to attract new users.

For Artipoppe, the team did some advertisements and KOL promotions. But not all clients have the budget to do the same. It is a challenge for the team to get traffic with low expense.

3.4 Clients for e-commerce

There are three types of target customers for e-commerce business:

1. **Premium (niche) brands** which are popular in home country, such as Atipoppe, Costes, Donsje, Love stories, Ellis Faas etc.

2. Online retailers selling international **luxury brands**.

3. Retailers/brands with **offline stores** in touristic areas, such as Shoebaloo, Patta, BALR, De Bijenkorf, etc.

However, according to the interview with Lenny (Chinese agent for Dutch brand "Property Of") and employees at NextportChina, it is very difficult to attract new customers (Dutch brands/retailers) into the China-focused e-commerce business. I have identified two major reasons in below.

1. Too much uncertainty
For most of brands in the scope, China is a brand new market with too much uncertainty. And at present, the company doesn't have successful examples to convince them that going to China is a good idea.

> **"I did my graduation with Dutch brand Property Of. After the graduation, I asked if they want to market in China. At first they didn't agree, because they didn't know Chinese market. They were not sure whether it would work or not."**
> –Lenny

> **"We are at an awkward position. For big names like Nutritia, they already have mature collaborations with other agents. For small brands, they never think about the Chinese market, it's like I'm asking you to buy a house tommorrow. It's a too big thing for them."**
> –An employee at NextportChina

2. Difficult to understand Chinese business rules
The e-commerce business rules in China are very different from those in western countries. But it is difficult for Dutch clients to understand and follow them. As a result, they are likely to refuse the provided solution and stick to things that don't fit in with the the new market.

3.5 Key take aways of company analysis

1. NextportChina is a digital marketing agency in the Netherlands. The team consists both Chinese and Dutch professionals in fields related to China-focused marketing.

2. "Next Port Holland" WeChat Official Account and travel mini-program are the most important channels for the company to reach Chinese customers. They are good resources to faciliate e-commerce business in the future.

3. Creating WeChat mini-program store is the main service provided by NextportChina in e-commerce. Currently, the company relies on mini-program templates from other parties. It is not a sustainable solution, and too expensive for many clients to afford. As a result, the company wants to develop its own mini-program store template.

4. At present, it is very difficult and costly for mini-program stores to get new customers. A economic new solution needs to be explored.

5. There are three kinds of target customers (clients) for e-commerce business. But it is quite difficult to convince these clients to market in China because most of them are not familiar with Chinese market. They can be either skeptical to start the new business, or reluctant to follow the business rules in the new market.

This chapter is about the methods, process, and outcomes of consumer research. I considered consumer analysis as the most important part in 4Cs because the company hasn't done it before. And there is no known literature about Chinese consumers behavior regarding buying Dutch products. Both quantitative methods and qualitative methods are used in consumer research. The main purpose is to build the persona of potential customers, and find the key value of Dutch brands.

4.1 The questionnaire

The goal of the company's e-commerce strategy is selling local brands to consumers in China. It is important to investigate their shopping behaviors and preferences regarding buying Dutch brands. However, it is difficult to find Chinese consumers who are addicted to buying Dutch brands as they are not that well-known in China. As a result, the first research mainly targets at Chinese consumers who buy overseas products online instead.

An online questionnaire was made to gather information in two aspects. The first ten question are about their overall cross-border shopping preferences, and the following questions shift the focus to Dutch brands.

The full questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.

Two pilot tests were done before handing out the questionnaire online with the purpose to enhance readability (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 One participant is doing the pilot test.

During one week, 196 valid responses were collected. Among them, 122 are from "Chinese consumers who buy overseas products online". Another filter criterion is that "they have never lived in the Netherlands for more than one month" with the purpose to eliminate selection bias[1]. In the end, there are 98 participants in the target group, accounting for more than 50% of all respondents.

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1 People who have lived in the Netherlands for more than one month are potential customers for this project. But due to the selection bias, they accounted for 12% of all respondents. This number should be much smaller if randomization is achieved when recruiting participants.

■ Demographic analysis

Gender

Among all 196 participants, the sex ratio is approximately 1:1. However, in the target group, the percentage of females (62.2%) is significantly higher than that of males (37.8%). It means overseas shopping is more widely accepted among females than males. But there is no evidence showing that female buyers also buy more frequently than male buyers.

Age

After leaving out people younger than 18[1], there are four age groups in total, which are 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, and above 45. Figure 4.2 shows the age distribution of participants in the target group and in total.

Age 18-25
63 in total

Target Group
37 (58.7%)

Age 26-35
66 in total

Target Group
43 (65.2%)

Age 36-45
18 in total

Target Group
12 (66.7%)

Age 46 and above
25 in total

Target Group
6 (24%)

Figure 4.2 Age disribution of participants in target group and in total

In the first three age groups, namely people aged from 18 to 45, more than half of them once bought overseas products. However, for people aged 46 and above, the proportion of target group drops sharply to 24%. It can be explained by several reasons.

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1 There are only 2 participants younger than 18, which is meaningless to include in.

People in the first three groups were mostly born from the mid-1970s to late 1990s. More or less, they are influenced by the Internet and the accompanying foreign culture. Therefore, they are more likely to be the early adopters of overseas products and lifestyle than older generations. Besides, for people aged 26 to 35, many have had the experience of raising young children in recent years. In China, due to the poor product safety controls, many families regard overseas maternal products (e.g. infant formula, diapers) as necessities.

Summary

From the demographic information, we could tell that consumers who are driving much of the overseas-product markets in China are mostly young people aged 18-45. In the future, we could focus on Generation Y[2] and Generation Z[3] who are more tech-savvy. Although females in the target group outnumber males, their purchasing power is equally strong.

■ Shopping Platforms/Channels

Figure 4.3 shows the five most popular overseas shopping platforms and channels among all options provided in the questionnaire (Question 5). There is no significant difference between the two genders. Tmall Global, Kaola.com, and JD Worldwide are representatives of major marketplaces selling various types of products. Daigou remains the mainstream way to buy overseas products, second only to Tmall Global. The official websites usually represents a niche market because it only sells products from one brand or several brands from the same corporation.

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2 Generation Y: Also known as millennials, born in the early 1980s to the mid 1990s.

3 Generation Z: The generation of people after Gen Y, born in the late 1990s and early 2000s.
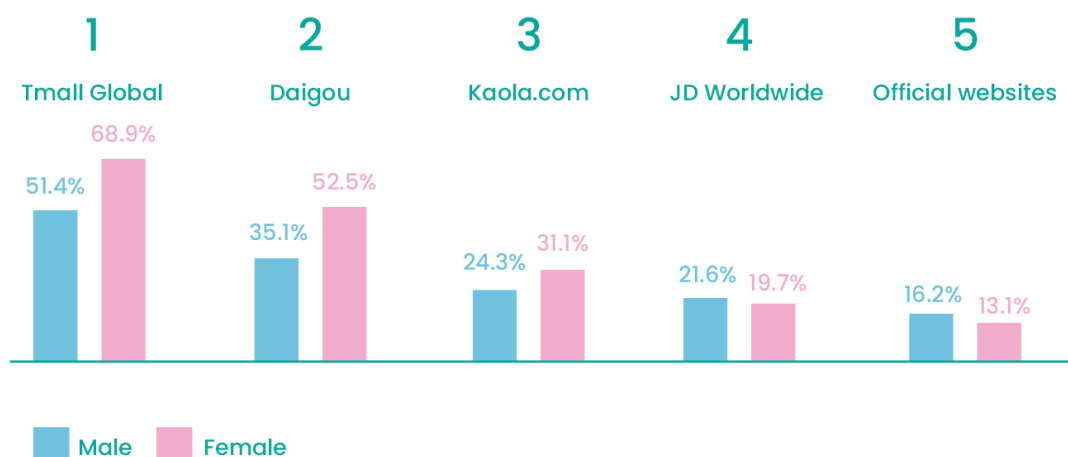
Figure 4.3 The top 5 major platforms/channels for Chinese consumers to buy overseas products.

To figure out why people choose to buy overseas products on these platforms, I did a crosstabs analysis between Question 5 (platforms/channels) and Question 6 (reasons to choose these platforms). The result is shown in Table 4.1.

X\Y	Genuine security	Wide range of products and brands	Cheap	High popularity	Recommended by familiar people	Many reviews	Detailed product description	Direct mail	Recommended by influencers	Others	In total
Tmall Globa	45(73.77%)	18(29.51%)	17(27.87%)	8(13.11%)	6(9.84%)	5(8.20%)	3(4.92%)	7(11.48%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	61
Kaola.com	21(75%)	9(32.14%)	10(35.71%)	4(14.29%)	2(7.14%)	2(7.14%)	1(3.57%)	2(7.14%)	0(0.00%)	1(3.57%)	28
Amazon	13(68.42%)	4(21.05%)	7(36.84%)	4(21.05%)	1(5.26%)	2(10.53%)	0(0.00%)	2(10.53%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	19
JD Worldwide	12(60%)	8(40%)	4(20%)	3(15%)	2(10%)	3(15%)	1(5%)	3(15%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	20
Haitao tax free APP	4(80%)	1(20%)	2(40%)	2(40%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	1(20%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	5
Little Red Book	4(50%)	3(37.5%)	2(25%)	1(12.5%)	1(12.5%)	1(12.5%)	0(0.00%)	2(25%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	8
Daigou	35(77.78%)	11(24.44%)	14(31.11%)	3(6.67%)	8(17.78%)	2(4.44%)	0(0.00%)	6(13.33%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	45
Brands' official webstore	12(85.71%)	3(21.43%)	5(35.71%)	2(14.29%)	2(14.29%)	1(7.14%)	0(0.00%)	1(7.14%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	14
Others	3(75%)	0(0.00%)	2(50%)	0(0.00%)	1(25%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	1(25%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	4

Table 4.1 Crosstab analysis between Question 5 (platforms/channels) and Question6 (reasons)

No matter where people buy overseas products, "Genuine Security"[1] is always the most important concern for them. In the target group, 67 out of 96 people (69.8%) regard "Genuine Security" as the reason to choose the shopping platforms. For people who buy things from brands' official websites and Daigou, the proportion is even higher (85.7% and 77.8%).

The other two important factors in choosing shopping platforms are "Cheap" and "Wide range of products and brands". People who chose these two factors each accounted for nearly 30% of the total

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1 Sellers promise that their products are not counterfeits. Also see chapter 1.3.

respondents in the target group. Although they seem like the advantages of horizontal marketplaces[1], people who choose Daigou and official websites also show equal interest in them.

Surprisingly, although many influencer advertisements appeared on TV and social media, no respondents thought that they chose a platform because it was recommended by influencers. It doesn't mean influencer campaigns have no effect. It does promote the reputation and attract new buyers, but rational reasons like "Genuine Security" and "Cheap" are more vital for consumers to develop loyalty to a platform.

Besides, neither of "Many reviews" nor "Detailed product description" is the main reason for people to choose an overseas shopping platform.

Although males and females don't have much difference in choosing platforms, the given reasons are not identical (Figure 4.4). Apart from the top three factors mentioned before ("Genuine Security", "Wide range of products and brands", and "Cheap"), males are also fond of platforms with "high popularity" (24.4%), while only 2.9% of females selected this factor. Females, on the contrary, pay more attention to the platform's authenticity guarantee than males.
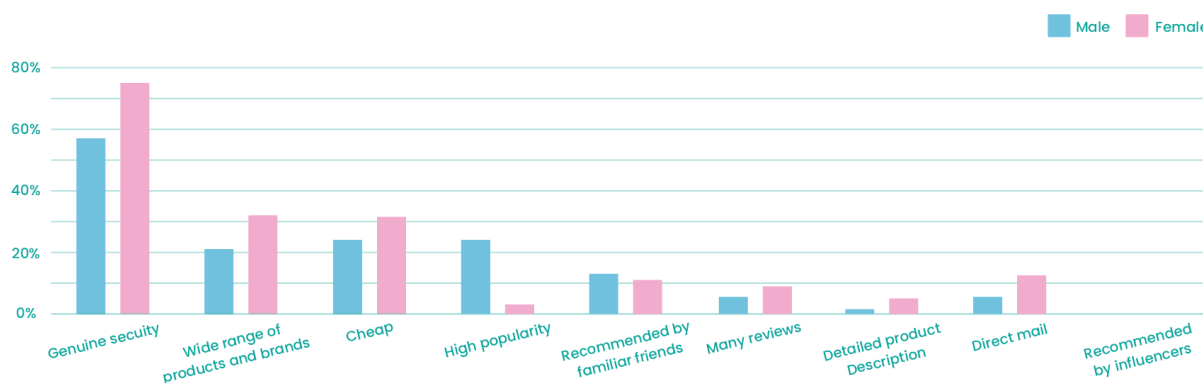
Figure 4.4 The reasons to choose shopping platforms given by male and female consuemrs

■ Where to get shopping information

"Zhongcao"[2] is a buzzword for Chinese youngsters. Literally, the word means planting grass, but the "grass" is actually products people want to own after they find some attractive information about it. There are many "Zhongcao" communities in China, such as *Red (小红书)*.

Question 7 is about where to find the information that "plants the grass". There are two types of information sources: offline sources and online sources. The result is shown in figure 4.5.

The most accepted way to get offline information is word-of-mouth. Half of the people in the target group tend to get information from people they know. Visiting the offline store is another popular way

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1 A marketplaces in which products meet the need of a wide range of buyers across different sectors.

2 种草, also see Chapter 5.2 - From the hard sell to the soft sell.
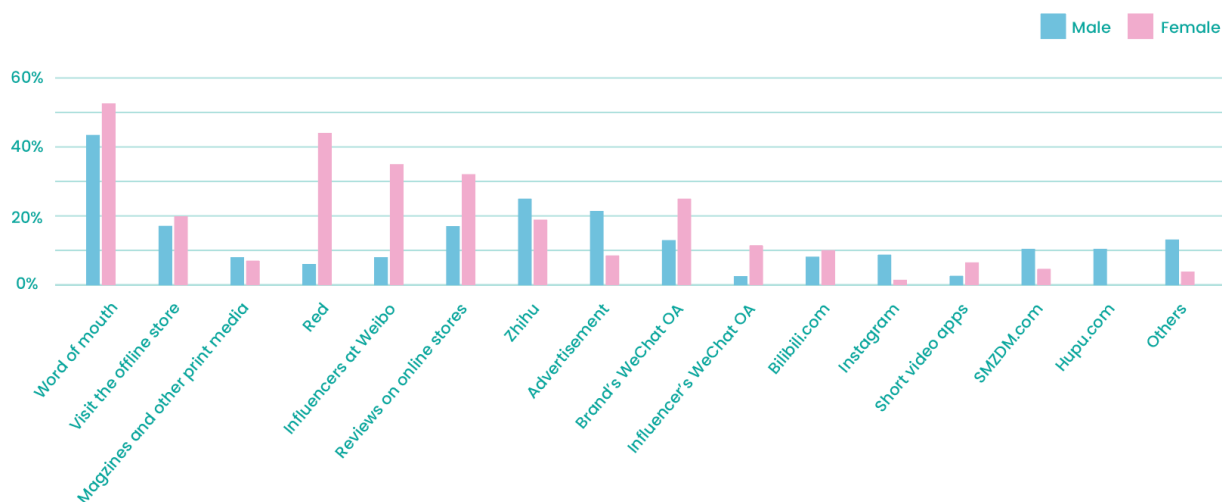
Figure 4.5 Where do male and females consumers get products/brands related information

to get information (18.8%). Printed media like magazines are having a hard time with the rise of online media platforms - only 7.3% of participants in the target group tend to get information from it.

Online information includes official information published by the brand, KOL promotional contents, media advertisements, etc. Getting information online is more widely accepted by participants in the target group: 81.2% of them choose at least one online platform. For people aged 28–35, this proportion is even higher (86.3%).

As mentioned before, the influencer campaign doesn't affect consumers' decisions when they choose shopping platforms. However, when people, especially females, try to find brands/products information before purchase, they rely on contents created by influencers. 44.3% of females in in the target group read posts on *Red*; 34.4% of them look influencers' posts on *Weibo*; 32.8% of them look at reviews on online stores.

The situation of males is different from that of females. *Zhihu* is the most popular online platform for males to get information from

(24.3%). The second and third places are media advertisements (21.6%) and reviews on online stores (16.1%). Reading influencers' Weibo posts only accounts for 8.1%. Comparing with females, males generally don't spend much time looking for information. They prefer things that come to them directly like advertisements, while females enjoy searching for information from multiple channels.

It is worth mentioning that, regarding articles published on WeChat official accounts, both males and females prefer to look at the brand's official account than influencer's official account. Nearly a quarter of females tend to get information from the brand's OA. However, for unrecognized brands and niche brands, it is difficult to get the first batch of followers. Then it is necessary to get awareness first by collaborating with influencers or advertising.

■ Online store information

In Question 4, we asked people to choose categories that they often buy when they do overseas shopping. The options are Beauty & Skincare, Maternal products, Clothing & Shoes & Bags, Nutrition, Food, Watches & Accessories, and Digital products & Home applianc-
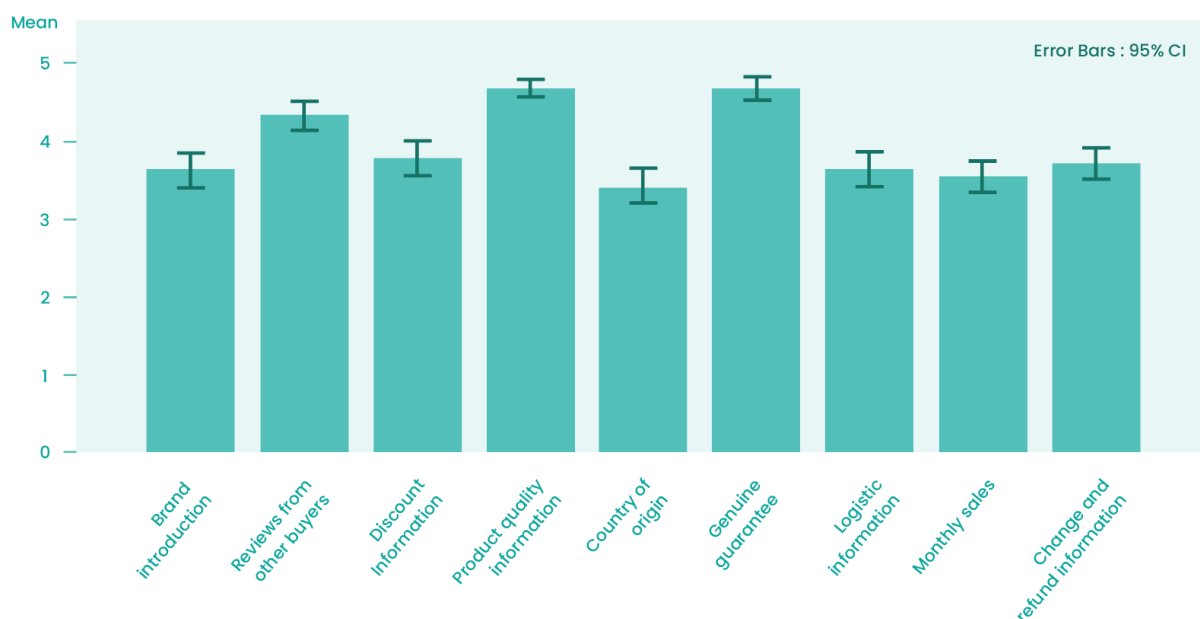
Figure 4.6 Attractiveness value of nine types of information and their 95% confidence intervals

es. These categories' names are commonly accepted by Chinese shopping platforms and buyers. In the following analysis, I will compare the behaviors of different category buyers.

In Question 8, nine types of common information on Chinese online stores are listed (see the x-axis in figure 4.6). Respondents are asked to rate each one according to its attractiveness.

According to the attractiveness value shown in figure 4.6, we can divide information types into three levels.

Level 1: "Product quality information" and "Genuine guarantee"

Similar to the responses for choosing shopping platforms, authenticity is still the most important thing to look at before making purchase decisions, especially for people who buy Beauty & Skincare products. "Product quality information" also gets a very high score and it can be explained by their intention to buy high-quality overseas products.

Level 2: "Reviews from other buyers"

The second level only contains "Reviews from other buyers". Different from most western online stores that only allow text review, many shopping platforms in China encourage reviews with images or even short videos (figure 4.7). Some social e-commerce platforms like *Red* also link posts to the product page. These reviews provide Chinese buyers with rich information. It is not surprising that Beauty & Skin-

Figure 4.7 Various forms (key words, text, images & videos) of customer reviews on Tmall.

care buyers who always use social e-commerce platforms will depend on reviews more than others.

Answers to Question 6 tells that "Many reviews" is not the main reason for people to choose a platform, but the review does play an important role when they look at the product before making the purchase decision. However, the review is a double-edged sword. Products with many positive reviews and few negative reviews can be successful. It doesn't look authentic if all reviews are perfect, while too many negative reviews would hinder the conversion rate.

Level 3: "Brand introduction", "Discount information", "Country of origin", "Logistics information", "Monthly sales", "Change and refund information"

These types of information all got the mean value between 3 and 4 (out of 5). They can be regarded as the second priority in design.

Country of origin (COO) got the lowest score among all types of information in Question 8. A reason gained from the pilot test is that to many Chinese consumers, "overseas products" is just a general concept to distinguish from domestic products. They don't know the unique advantages of brands from a specific country.

■ **Attitudes to WeChat MP stores**

From figure 4.7, we could tell that nearly 40% of participants in the target group don't have a clear attitude toward buying overseas products on WeChat MP stores. It is actually a good finding because MP store is a new thing. We can't expect people to accept it immediately. Even better, participants who hold positive attitudes are nearly as many as those who are

neutral, regarding buying overseas products in "brand's official MP stores" and "MPs recommended by my friends" (Figure 4.7 (a) and (b)).

(a)

(b)

(c)
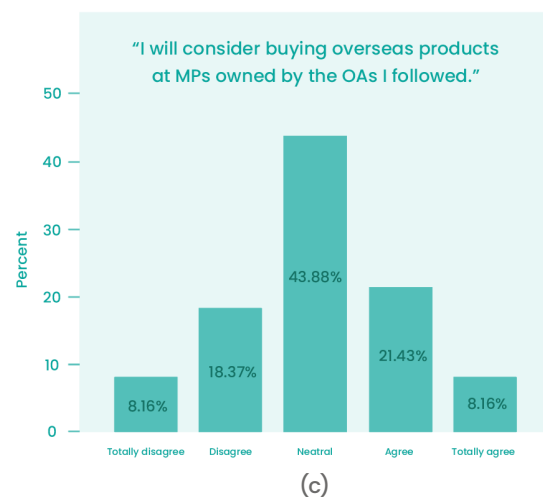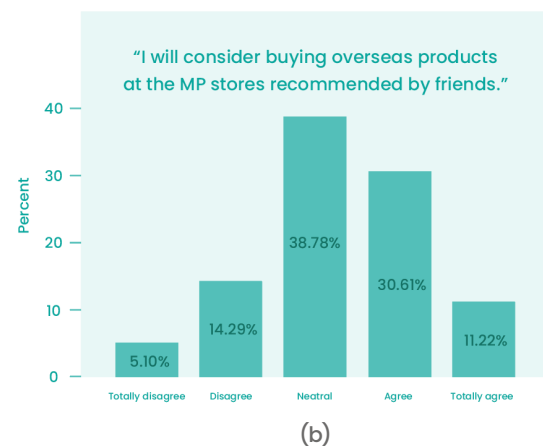
Figure 4.7 People's attitudes toward buying overseas products on WeChat MP stores.

But when it comes to buying "at the mini programs owned by the WeChat OA I followed", people are not that optimistic compared to the previous two situations as only 29.6% participants hold positive attitudes (Figure 4.7 (c)). This result reinforces the previous conclusion that people are not strongly affected by influencers' opinion when they choose the shopping platform.

Figure 4.8 shows people's attitudes towards "Currently, I won't buy overseas products on WeChat MP stores". Only 27.6% (=9.18%+18.37%)of them tend to buy products on MP currently. This number is not competitive compared to the proportions in figure 4.7(a) and 4.7(b). But still, it is better than my estimation before. Together with people who stay neutral, there are enough potential buyers if we can create reasons for them to buy on MP stores. Reasons like "brands' official MP store" and "MPs recommended by my friends" are both directions that we could consider.
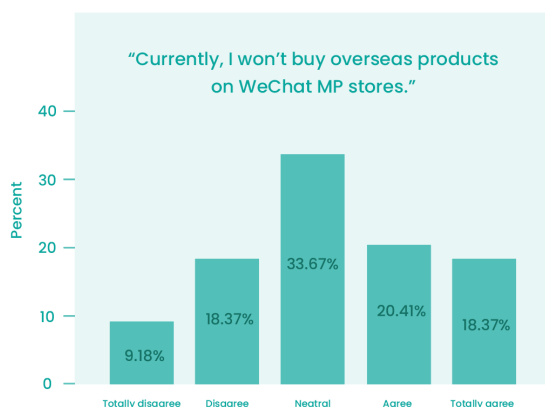
Figure 4.8 People's attitudes toward "Currently, I won't buy overseas products on WeChat MP stores."

Besides, some people are worried about the security of buying on mini programs (Figure 4.9). 24.5% (=17.35%+7.14%) of participants in the target group think it's more likely to get counterfeits on MP stores, which is twice that of people who have the opposite opinion.
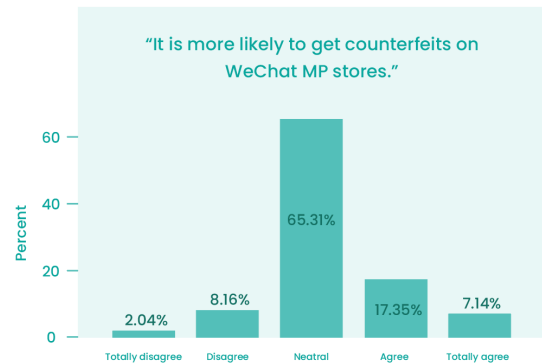
Figure 4.9 People's attitudes toward "It is more likely to get counterfeits on WeChat MP stores."

■ Product category

Question 4 and 13 are about product categories for overseas shopping. Firstly, Respondents are asked to choose categories that they often buy when they do overseas shopping (Q4). Then I added the condition "when you are traveling in the Netherlands" (Q13) and asked them again to choose the product categories they are likely to buy. The options of the two questions are the same: Beauty & Skincare, Maternal products, Clothing & Shoes & Bags, Nutrition, Food, Watches & Accessories, and Digital products & home appliances.

The answers to these two questions are shown in table 4.2. Among the 98 respondents in the target group, 61 people (62.2%) are buyers of Beauty & Skincare products when they do overseas shopping. However, when it comes to buying things in the Netherlands while traveling, only 37 of them (37.8%) still buy Beauty & Skincare products, which discloses a 40% decrease. The same situation applies to Digital products & home appliances (-37.5%). For Clothing & Shoes & Bags and Nutrition, there is a slight drop after adding the travel condition, but overall, there is no significant difference. The categories with the most obvious growth are Maternal products and Watches & Accessories, both have 100% increase.

Category name	Overseas online shopping (1)	Travel in the Netherlands (2)	Change $\frac{(2)-(1)}{(1)}$
Beauty & Skincare	61	37	−39.3%
Maternal products	17	34	+100%
Clothing & Shoes & Bags	40	36	−37.5%
Nutrition	26	25	−3.9%
Food	24	34	+41.7%
Watches & Accessories	9	18	+100%
Digital products & Home appliances	16	10	−37.5%

Table 4.2 Compare the purchase desire for different product categories between overseas online shopping and offline shopping when traveling in the Netherlands.

■ Characteristics of Dutch bands

In Question 12, I asked participants to choose the descriptions that correspond to their impression for Dutch brands. These descriptions are: Stylish, healthy, good design, cost effective, safe, unique, high quality, and others. They are derived from conversations with people living in the Netherlands about their shopping experience. One participant can choose multiple descriptions. Figure 4.10 shows the outcome.
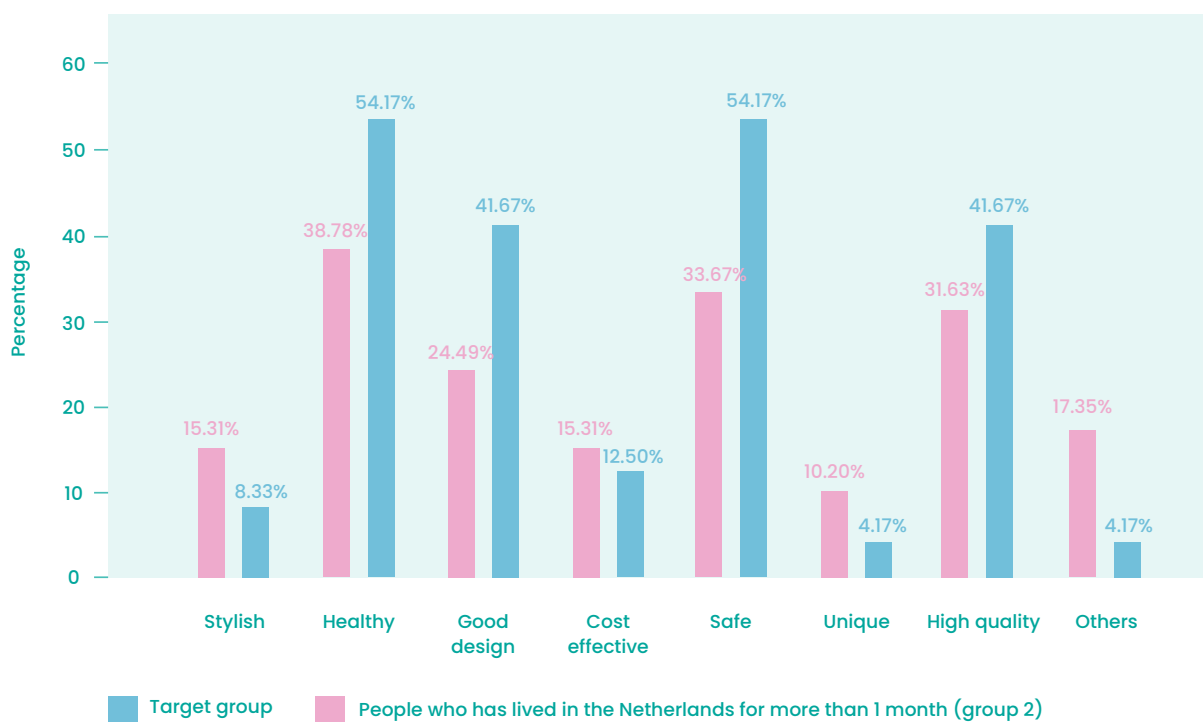
Figure 4.10 Outcome of Question 12. Blue bars represents the target group while pink bars represents Chinese people who have lived in the Netherlands for more than 1 month (group 2).

It is interesting if we compare the outcome of the target group with that of Chinese people who have lived in the Netherlands for more than 1 month (group 2), because the people in the latter group are generally more familiar with Dutch brands. Healthy, safe, and high quality are top three descriptions chosen by people in the target group. They also corresponds to the impression of people in group 2. Stylish, cost effective, and unique are selected the least for participants in both groups. Good design is selected by 41.67% of people in group 2, but for the target group it is 24.49%. Here lies a cognitive difference that might be caused by previous experience. 17.36% of people in the target group chose "others", and a common reason given was that they have no idea about Dutch brands.

■ Familarity to Dutch brands

Question 14 is about participants' familiarity to Dutch brands. 12 brands in different categories are given (figure 4.11). Some of the brands are potential clients for NextportChina. Partic-

ipants are asked to indicate how much they know about these brands. Four choices for them are "never heard of", "know something", "heard of but don't know much", "bought/used before".

The outcome is shown in figure 4.11. Infant formula brands Nutrilon and Friso got the most positive feedback with more than half of the people know them. Brands in the second tier are G-star and Tony Chocolonely. G-star has entered Chinese market for years and opens more than 80 retail stores in China. Tony Chocolonely does not officially enter the Chinese market, but there are many Daigous and "Zhongcao" contents on social media. People in the target group know very little about the other 8 Dutch brands, with more than 80% of them never heard of their names.

The outcome indicates that except for some brands that have entered Chinese markets for years, Dutch brands generally have low awareness among Chinese consumers.
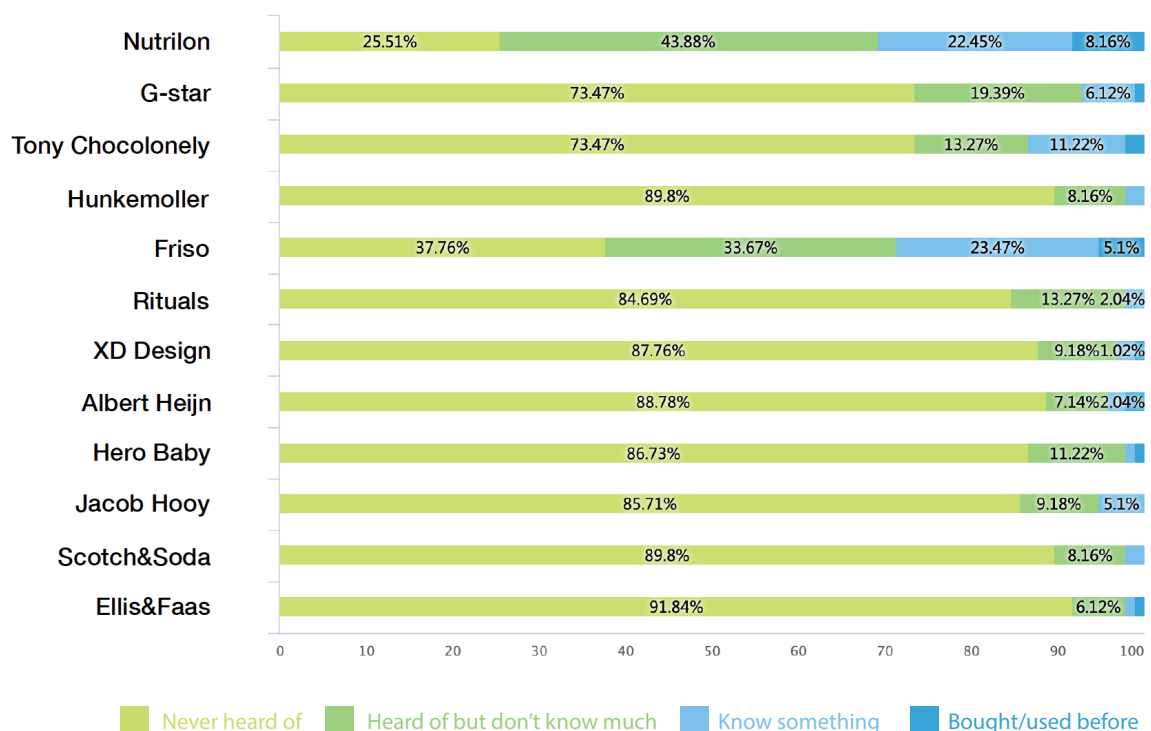
Figure 4.11 The outcome of Question 14 which shows participants' familarity to 12 Dutch brands.

■ Key take aways of the questionnaire analysis

1. Overseas shopping is more widely accepted among females than males in China.

2. Consumers who are driving much of the overseas-product markets in China are mostly young people aged 18-45. In the future, **Gen Y** and **Gen Z** are promising customers to target at.

3. "**Genuine Security**" is always the most important concern for consumers when choosing shopping platforms. The other two important factors are "**Cheap**" and "**Wide range of products and brands**". Influencers have little effect when people choose shopping platforms.

4. The most accepted way to get information about products and brands offline is **word-of-mouth**. Getting information **online** is more widely accepted than offline.

5. Consumers still rely on contents created by **influencers** to get shopping information or decide whether to buy a certain product.

6. Males generally don't spend much time searching for shopping information. They prefer things that come to them directly like advertisements. In the contrary, females enjoy searching for shopping information from multiple channels.

7. Regarding articles published on WeChat OA, people prefer to look at the brand's OA rather than influencers' OA. However, for unrecognized brands and niche brands, it is difficult to get the first batch of followers. Then it is necessary to get awareness first by collaborating with influencers or advertising.

8. **Authenticity** is the most important thing to look at before making purchase decisions. "**Product quality information**" is also very important to look at. It can be explained by consumers' intention to buy high-quality overseas products.

9. **Reviews** play an important role for Chinese consumers before making the purchase decision.

10. Nearly 40% of people don't have clear attitudes to WeChat MP stores while another 40% of people hold positive attitudes. Nearly a quarter of participants still have concerns about products' authenticity on MP stores. Adding extra values like "brands' official MP storess" and "MP stores recommended by friends" is worth to be considered.

11. Chinese consumers are more willing to buy "maternal products", "food", and "watches & accessories" when they travel in the Netherlands.

12. "Healthy", "Safe", and "High quality" are the most accepted descriptions of Dutch brands among Chinese consumers. "Good design" is the description accepted by Chinese people who are more familiar with Dutch brands.

13. Except for some brands that have entered Chinese markets for years (especially infant formula brands), Dutch brands generally have low awareness among Chinese consumers.

4.2 Qualitative Interviews

The outcome of the questionnaire shows that most Chinese consumers are not familiar with Dutch brands. It is impossible to get rich insights about Dutch brands from their experience. As a result, to further investigate the research question: "What are the key values of Dutch brands?", it is necessary to find people who are more familiar with Dutch brands while having similar tastes to normal Chinese consumers. As a result, I turned to these two types of people in below:

- Chinese living in the Netherlands
- Chinese travelers who have visited the Netherlands

The research method used here is qualitative interviews as I want to understand people's own framing around Dutch brands and shopping experience and get some deeper insights (Patton, 2002), rather than verifying my assumptions as in the questionnaire.

▪ Interviews with Chinese living in the Netherlands

I did interviews with eight Chinese people living in the Netherlands. They all grew up in China and came to the Netherlands later, so they retained similar preferences to normal Chinese consumers. Also, they are youngsters (22-35) who enjoy shopping, which matches the demographic conclusion drawn from the quantitative analysis.

The interview starts with questions about their shopping behavior and preferences both in the Netherlands and in China. After that, there are some brand-related questions with the purpose to find out why they buy certain Dutch brands.

One participant was interviewed on the phone, and others were all face-to-face interviews. One interview session lasts about 40 minutes.

> The full interview guide can be found in Appendix 3.

Qualititative analyses were done after each interview. In the end, three main advantages of Dutch brands or shopping experience in the Netherlands are summed up:

1 Relieved & Reliable

The Chinese word "Fangxin" which means relieved in English is frequently mentioned when interviewees try to describe the shopping experience in the Netherlands, especially when compared with previous shopping experience in China. Some interviewees talk about Chinese shopping platforms like *Taobao*[1] and *Pinduoduo*[2] to emphasize the contrast between shopping in two countries.

> "When I was in China, some Taobao stores also sold vintages, but I didn't feel very relieved at that time. But here I feel that the environment is good when I go inside, then I am relieved."
> –YC, Msc student

> "My parents like to buy super cheap things from Pinduoduo, which I can never accept."
> –RW, Msc student

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1 Taobao is the biggest online marketplaces in China.

2 Pinduoduo is an Chinese e-commerce platform targeting at budget-savvy shoppers.

There are several reasons to explain why people have this feeling.

a. Good environment in offline stores.
Many interviewees said they enjoy visiting offline stores in the Netherlands more than in China because the environment inside the stores make them feel relieved.

> **"When I do shopping , I will actually make decisions based on that store. Some stores are very chaotic, so I don't feel relieved...But some stores have good arrangements. I feel that the environment is good when I go inside, then I'm relieved. "**
> **-YC, Msc student**

The environment also affects their perception of the products' quality.

> **"Here in the Netherlands, I am mainly attracted by the stores' overall environment. When I entered the store (with good environment), I feel the products' quality is guaranteed."**
> **-RW, Msc student**

b. Strict quality standards
Another reason is the strict quality standards in Europe. People don't need to spend time finding out whether the products contain harmful material or whether they are counterfeits. Some participants gave their examples.

> **"I believe in the quality of products here because they have stricter standards that comply with EU regulations."**
> **-RW, MsC student**

> **"At first I only bought cosmetics in a certain price range. But later I realized there were cheap brands with good quality here, and I don't worry that they damage my skin."**
> **-MC, employees in a Dutch company**

> **"It is the brands that are cheap. When you are in China, you don't really dare to buy them, because you feel that the quality control of Chinese products is not very strict. But you feel quite relieved to buy those things here."**
> **-YC, Msc student**

c. Culture and history
The culture and history of the Netherlands also reinforce this impression. One participant gave the reason below to explain why she feel Dutch brands are more reliable.

> **"Because Dutch merchants are more reliable. The are direct and honest. They care more about transparency. If you read Dutch history, you will know that's how they get reputation in 1600s. "**
> **-YY, Msc student**

2 Good design at reasonable prices

As mentioned in the questionnaire analysis before, many Chinese people living in the Netherlands think Dutch products are of good design. Also, they think the price of these design brands is reasonable compared with brands from some European countries like France and Italy. Here are some quotes from the interviews that support this point.

> "I think people in the Netherlands put emphasis on design. There are many design brands...and concept stores...in every city, those designer stores. But there are few in China."
> —YC, Msc student

> "For household items, I think the price is good with such good design and high quality. It will be more expensive in China if you buy them from Daigou."
> —RW, Msc student

This point is also verified by Lenny, who is the agent of Dutch brand Property Of in Chinese market.

> "Dutch design has great potential in China because their design philosophy is in line with our culture. They won't design very expensive things. They prefer to make things look better but keep it in a reasonable price."
> —Lenny

To explain what is "good design", interviewees mainly use these words: functional, simple, neat, low-key. Here are some quotes about it.

> "Dutch people pay more attention to functionality in design. For example, the Dopper bottle, and the Secrid wallet. "
> —YC, Msc student

> "I feel Dutch brands have unique charcteristics, like very simple, and very neat."
> —LW, employees at a Dutch company

> "They (household items) are like friends who keep a low profile. You don't always notice them, but they are always there."
> —RW, MsC student

3 Unique personality

Chinese people living in the Netherlands have more chance to know niche Dutch brands. Many interviewees who are fond of fashion products think Dutch brands have a very unique personality, which is different from domestic brands. Words like cool, flexible, young, energetic, colorful are used to describe its personality. Here are some quotes from interviews.

> "There are many Dutch niche brands. They are pretty cool and unique. They are not like those normal brands which are everywhere."
> —LW, employees at a Dutch company

> "I think the Netherlands is a very flexible and energetic country. It also applies to Dutch people and Dutch brands."
>
> "You see those people on their bikes. You see those guys with colorful pants. They are really promoting a young image."
>
> —MC, employees at a Dutch company

One interviewee said she would recommend Chinese tourists to buy these kind of niche brands that are exclusively found in the Netherlands instead of popular brands (e.g. Zara, H&M) that can be seen everywhere.

> "There are some niche brands position between "high-end" and "popular". I think if people know these brands, for example Rituals and Suitsupply, they will definitely buy them, but people don't know them."
> -LW, employees at a Dutch company

For the first group of interviewees (Chinese living in the Netherlands), the above three points are the most common impressions to Dutch brands. Although there is no one strong identity to describe all Dutch brands, most people do have their own understandings of what is the value of Dutch brands to them. It is very important when they decide to buy Dutch products.

■ Interviews with travelers to the Netherlands

Chinese outbound travlers are one of the target groups suggested by the company. As a result, I did six interviews with travelers who have visited the Netherlands before with the purpose to find out their shopping behavior during the trip, and their perception to Dutch products. All interviews with travelers are done remotely via phone call. One interview lasts about 30 minutes.

> The full interview guide can be found in Appendix 4.

The interview starts with their shopping experience in the Netherlands. The result is presented in figure 4.12 to 4.14, showing their shopping related activities before, during, and after the trip.
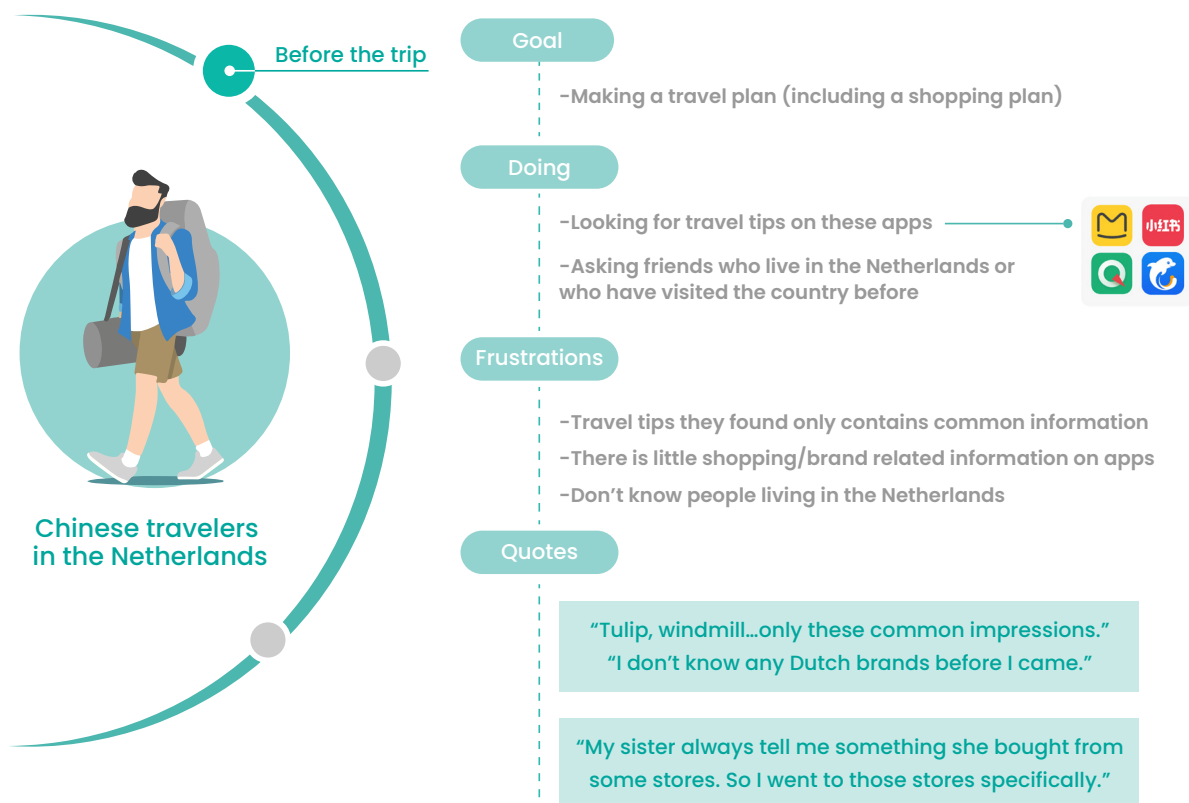
Figure 4.12 The journey map of Chinese travlers in the Netherlands - before the trip

1. Before the trip

Before the trip (figure 4.12), the main goal for travelers is making a travel plan. For most of them, shopping is also an important part in the plan. Chinese mobile apps such as Mafengwo, Ctrip, Qyer, and Red are mentioned the most for making travel plans by interviewees. Some people with friends living in the Netherlands also ask friends for advice, and they admitted they trust information provided by friends more than information online. However, for travelers who don't have friends there, it is difficult to get shopping/brand related information. Also, travel tips on those apps are mainly written by other travelers and contain only common things. Most participants said they don't know what to buy except for general things like Nijntje toys and Cheese.

2. During the trip

During the trip (Figure 4.13), the main goal is to find good products both for themselves and for others as gifts. However, because most of them failed to make a good shopping plan before the trip, when they arrived at the destination, they didn't have a clear mind about where to buy and what to buy. Some interviewees just visited random stores nearby their hotels, and some went to outlets and big shopping malls to buy luxury stuffs which are not exclusively found in the Netherlands. Except for interviewees with friends here, travelers generally don't buy local Dutch brands because they don't know them. People also said they didn't have time to visit every store because the schedule in the Netherlands was tight, so they just chose common brands which they were familiar with.

Goal
- Buying good products for themselves
- Buying gifts for others

Doing
- Visiting random stores nearby their hotels
- Visiting outlets and shopping malls to buy common brands
- Visiting souvenir shops to buy gifts

Frustrations
- Don't have enough time to do shopping
- Don't know what to buy when everything is unfamiliar

Quotes

"I only stayed in Holland for 3 days. There is no enough time to do a lot of shopping."

"We did some random window shopping around our hotel. I couldn't tell where those brands are from."

"I planned to buy two luxury bags in Europe. I went to De Bijenkorf to find those bags."

Chinese travelers in the Netherlands

During the trip

Figure 4.13 The journey map of Chinese travlers in the Netherlands - during the trip
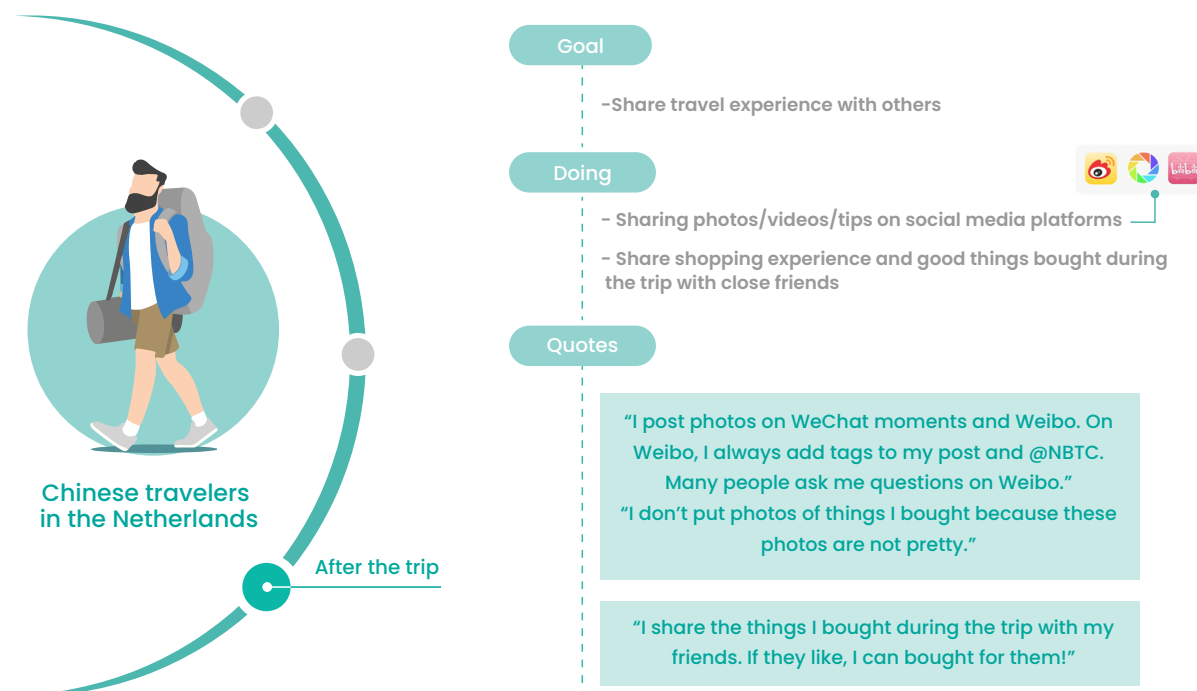
Figure 4.14 The journey map of Chinese travlers in the Netherlands - after the trip

3. After the trip

The topic after the trip is **sharing and keeping memories** (figure 4.14). Many travelers would share the travel experience with others. Posting contents including photos/videos/tips on social media platforms such as WeChat Moments, Weibo, and Bilibil[1] is very common. Normally people don't share the products they bought during the trip on social media, but are willing to share them with their close friends.

4. The unmet need

From the journey map and their answers to other questions in the interview, an unmet need was discovered.

The unmet need

There is a lack of local shopping knowledge for Chinese travelers in the Netherlands.

When talking about this problem, all interviewees admitted that they wanted to get shopping tips from locals (both local Dutches and Chinese living in the Netherlands), but there was no channel.

"Travel tips on the Internet can be pretty one-sided. I really want to know what Chinese living here will recommend."

"My first choice is Chinese people living in the Netherlands, because we have same tastes."

"I want to know things recommended by local Dutches because they live here for longer time."

"I want to do some really local things. For example, try street food and weekend activities.""

---

1 Bilibili is a video sharing website based in China, similar to Youtube.

Authentic

Authentic experience with little pressure;
Out of the comfort zone, but not so far;
Shopping guide according to one's interest

Relaxed ——————————————————— **Stressful**

Too much pressure;
Language problems;
Little shopping-related information

One-sided information
Not authentic

Not Authentic
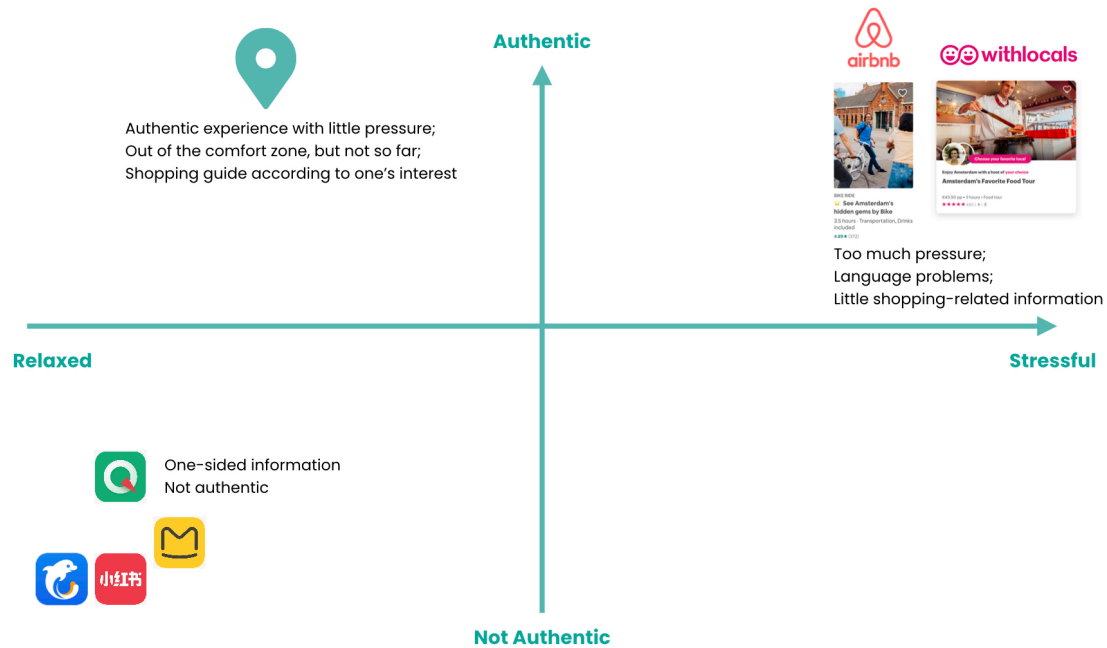
Figure 4.15 The desired experience for Chinese travelers when traveling in the Netherlands.

It is a worldwide trend that today's travelers are searching for local experience. They want to engage with and participate in the local culture (Revfine, 2019) instead of just visiting classic attractions. Current travel apps in China cannot fulfill this need because the information is one-sided and not considered as authentic.

There are services like *Airbnb Experience* and *Withlocals* that enable tourists to meet up with locals in the trip. However, their services don't fit well into Chinese travelers. One interviewee who once joined a trip on *Airbnb Experience* admitted that it was too much social pressure for her because she was the only Asian in that group. There are also language problems for many Chinese travelers to join these activities. In addition, there are few shopping-related activities on these platforms.

As a result, Chinese travelers need a new form of experience between what domestic apps offer and what western platforms offer (figure 4.15). It is an authentic experience with little pressure. It encourages people to take a step

in order to experience local culture, but doesn't make them feel anxious. Also, it should provide people with authentic shopping tips according to their interest.

■ **Compare the results between two participant groups**

For the interviews with Chinese travelers to the Netherlands, the previous intention is also to find the value of Dutch brands, but ended up with nothing. It is obvious that there is a big gap between two partcipant groups in regard to their understanding of Dutch brands.

Dutch brands don't have an overall strong identity, which makes it difficult to brand them as a whole. However, Chinese living in the Netherlands do see many advantages of Dutch brands, which means we could convey their knowledge and experience to travelers and normal consumers in China. With the design of this project, I hope to bridge the gap between these two groups and help travelers get authentic shopping knowledge about Dutch brands and products.

35

In this chapter, both trends and potential in Chinese consumer marketplace will be investigated. It starts with the WeChat ecosystem which plays an important role in social e-commerce. Then consumption trends that matter most for defining market segment will be listed. The goal of the chapter is to answer the question: what is going on in the industry that the company wants to enter.

5.1 WeChat ecosystem

WeChat is China's top mobile app with more than 1 billion users worldwide. It started from an instant messaging app in 2011, and gradually extended to a multi-purpose app including messaging, payment, social media, city services, etc. WeChat has changed the way that marketing is done in China (Yanes and Berger, 2017), so it is worth to study.

Figure 5.1 shows the WeChat ecosystem composed by Official Accounts, Moments, and Mini-programs.

Official Accounts (OA) can be registered by organizations or individuals, which enables them to push feeds to subscribers and provide them with services. **Brands** and **KOLs** use it to publish content and notify followers of new promotions. The feeds can take various forms like articles, images, and videos. OA plays a pivotal role in China social e-commerce as it is an efficient way to engage customers.
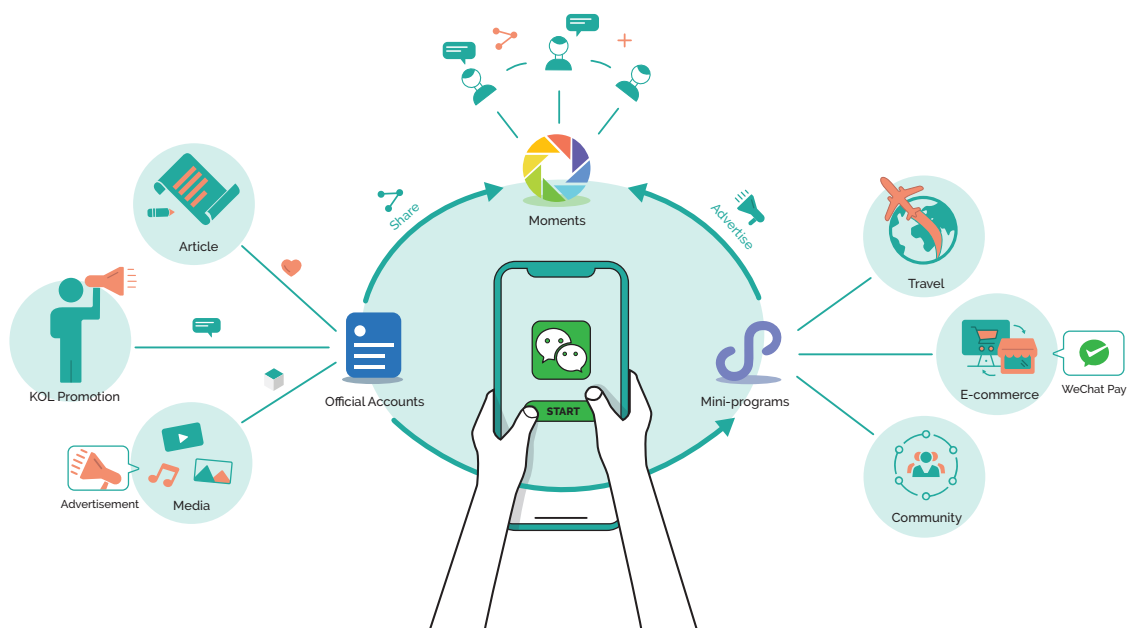

Figure 5.1 The WeChat ecosystem composed by Official Accounts, Moments, and Mini-programs.

Moments is a forum in WeChat where users can share information with the users' choice of close friends (similar to Facebook). It allows users to post images, text, comments, share articles from OA and post "likes". Brands can also place advertisements on Moments which gives users the feeling that they were sent by friends. Marketers can define target audience for the ads according to age, gender, location, etc.

Mini-programs (MPs) are sub-apps within WeChat that can run instantly without down-loading. Business owners can create MPs and bind them to their OAs. Just like normal apps, there are all types of MPs, such as travel MPs, MP stores, MP communities. An MP store allows businesses to sell on WeChat direct to con-sumers, using WeChat Pay[1] as the payment mechanism. MPs can be inserted into articles published by OAs, and can also be shared with friends.

The WeChat ecosystem create a lot of situa-tions and opportunities for foreign brands to develop business in China. Except for giving an alternative sales channel to reach online con-sumers, it also facilitates user acquisition and improve the ability to engage customers.

5.2 Consumption trends

▪ From marketplaces to D2C mode

In recent years, there is a strong preference of Chinese online shoppers to buy from overseas brands and retailers through cross-border online shopping[2]. It is mentioned in literature review that Chinese outdoor shoppers prefer

1 A digital wallet service incorporated into WeChat.

2 Known as Haitao (海淘) in Chinese.

to buy foreign brands. They perceive them as better quality and of higher symbolic value.

With the e-commerce boom in China, Chinese shoppers no longer need to leave their home in order to purchase foreign products. There are big online marketplaces (e.g. Tmall Global, JD Worldwide, and Kaola.com) selling overseas products. However, people start to look beyond marketplaces now. More and more people are shopping on retailers or brands' standalone online stores, which offer them "a greater level of personal engagement and a more authen-tic online shopping experience" (Frost & Sulli-van, 2018). This is called direct-to-consumer (D2C) mode.

▪ From symbolic consumption to primitive consumption

These years, Chinese consumers have been surrounded by a great variety of consum-er goods and advertisements. After the cra-zy period of searching for symbolic products such as luxury bags, Chinese consumers start to become rational and pursue products that meet their real needs. Products that are char-acterized as simple, comfortable, reassuring, and healthy become a new trend. At the same time, consumers start to pay more attention to the quality and functionality instead of the brand effect. Many fast fashion brands from western countries now have a difficult time in China. Some of them have already left this market such as Forever 21 and New Look. It is because Chinese consumers realize that their products are actually of worse quality than domestic counterparts.

When Chinese consumers become mature, over marketing is less useful. Business owners need to know Chinese consumers better and enphase the intrinsic value of their products instead of the symbolic value.

■ From the hard sell to the soft sell

Back to ten years ago, when there was no smartphone and social media in China, consumers are greatly influenced by sales messages on TV or newspapers which are direct and overt. But now, social media apps like *Weibo* and *Red* has become the most popular channels to get shopping information. Sales messages on social media are always subtle and friendly because business owners don't want people to find out they are advertisements. On UGC[1] platforms like *Red*, contents from brands and normal buyers are mixed together. It is difficult to distinguish which messages are from normal buyers. This kind of "soft sell" is called "Zhongcao"[2] in Chinese. It means influencers or normal buyers share the good experience of using certain products online.

If consumers buy certain products because of their words, it is called "Bacao"[3]. Sometimes people do it because they believe "if I buy it, I can be the same as the influencer" (Zhimeng, 2019). It is confirmed by the research saying that Chinese consumers like to "be the same as everyone else" (Schmitt, 1997).

---

1 UGC: User Generated Content

2 种草, literally means planting grass.

3 拔草, literally means removing grass.

■ From popular brands to niche brands

In the past few years, the preference of Chinese high-end consumers have been changed steadily. People are not that into big names like before. Instead, niche high-end brands and boutique products become trendy and are reshaping the market.

It is especially applicable to generation Z in China. That's because "they are very connected on social media, and know what is trending globally", and they like to "hunt down brands that are new, unique, and relevant" (Cerini, 2019). For Chinese youngsters with strong self-expression desires, niche brands with unique style match their identity.

> **"The idea of finding a cool brand their peers don't know about is quite exciting. But they're also looking for authenticity, originality, and a sense of personality."**
> –Chen, Director of a luxury communication agency

6

In this chapter, four levels of competition that NextportChina faces in e-commerce business will be discussed. For each competition type, essential information such as their playing fields, strengths and weaknesses will be investigated. The goal of this chapter is to provide possibilities for differentiation, and in the end help the company to develop the positioning in the market.

6.1 Four levels of competition

There are four levels of competition which are commonly used to assess competitors in the industry. The four levels of competition are form, product category, generic, and budget competition. Their relationship is shown in Figure 6.1. In this project, the central circle represents the NextportChina's WeChat OA and MP stores for Dutch brands/retailers.
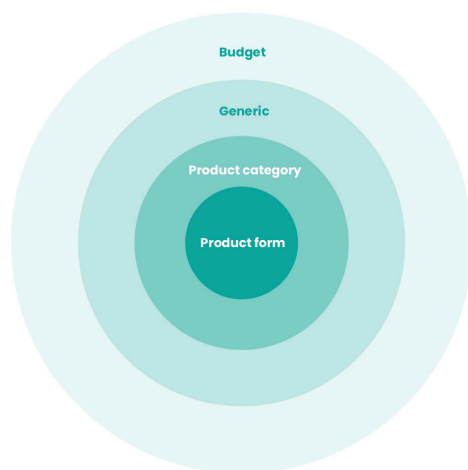
Figure 6.1 Four levels of competition

■ Product form competition

Competition at product form level includes products that have the exact same feature and the same values as the NextportChina's MP store solution.

Currently, V2Future is the most direct competitor because it provides MP store solution to Dutch brands/retailers at a low price. V2Future has developers to customize the MP store according to clients' requirements. However, it doesn't have a strong touch point with end users (Chinese consumers) like "Next Port Holland". As a result, it is difficult for them to do further marketing. For clients, it is meaningless if they have a store but don't have customers. In addition, V2Future doesn't have a user experience design team to continuously improve the interface and interaction of the MP store.

Other prodcut form competitors are e-commerce solution providers outside the Netherlands like Azoya. But these players lack the insights for Dutch market, which makes them less competitive.

■ Product Category Competition

Competition at product category level includes products that belong to the same product category. For this project, they are other online platforms/channels that enable Dutch brands to officially sell in China.

The most obvious competitors are major marketplaces like TMall Global, JD Worldwide, Red etc. For example, at TMall Global there is a page named "Holland Pavilion" (Figure 6.2).
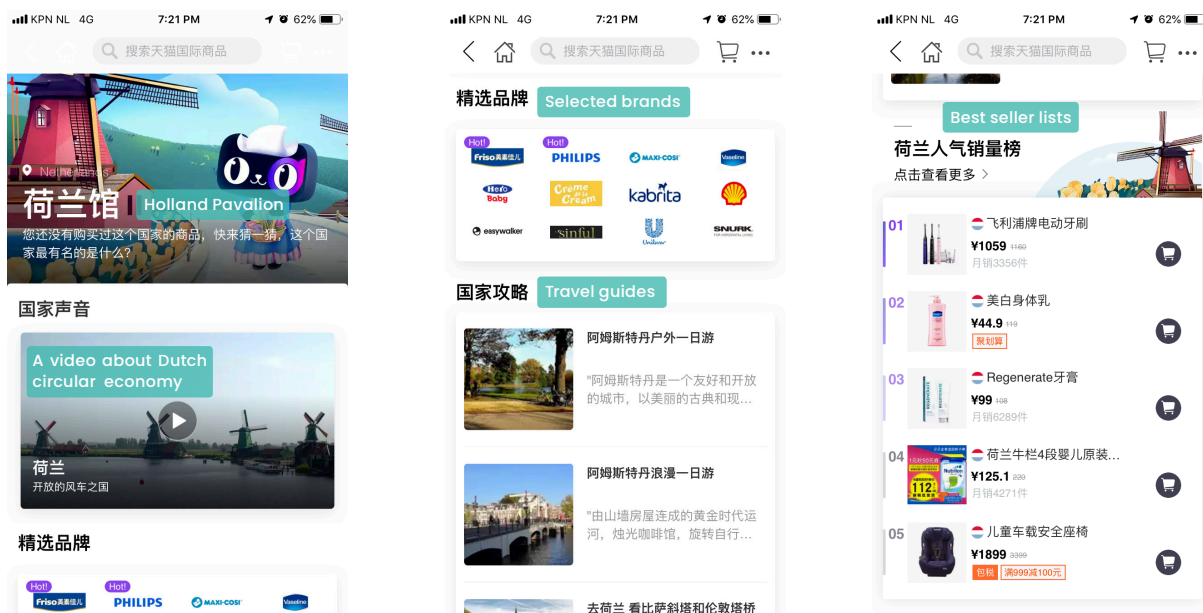
Figure 6.2 "Holland Pavilion" page in Tmall Global

These marketplaces have a large user basis. For Dutch brands, it means more exposure to consumers. However, as mentioned in company analysis, setting up such a store requires a large amount of money, thus super risky for middle and small companies.

Another competitor in product category level is an e-commerce company called Holland at Home. It is a Dutch company that sells Dutch products to people abroad. Holland at Home started the China-focused business in 2011. It already has good reputation and large consumer base in China now. The biggest advantage of Holland at Home is its infant formulas and baby food because the company has offical collaboration with Nutritia, MeadJohnson, and Nestle. It is almost impossible for Nextport-China to compete with it in this product category. But Holland at Home doesn't sell other categories like fashion, household products, which provide some opportunities for other companies.

■ Generic Competition

Competition at generic level includes products that fulfill the same need. For Chinese consuemrs who have the needs to buy western brands, Daigou is an option that many will choose.

Daigou is a form of cross-border smuggling in which an individual or a group outside China purchases commodities for customers in China. Daigou used to be very popular. But recently, Chinese governement launched several policies to surpress Daigou. In addition, Daigou is a high-risky way for Chinese consumers to buy expensive products. Some people claim that they buy products in foreign contries, but actually they are counterfeits made in China.

The biggest advantage of Daigou is the low price. That might be caused by Daigou people who buy a lot of products when there are discounts. But it can also be caused by counterfeits. However, if there are official channels to buy things at a samilar price, consumers will definitely choose the official way.

■ Budget Competition

Budget competition includes all products and services that compete for the same amount of money. It is a large scale and hard to make it specific for this project. But maybe we can think about offline stores that sell overseas products, or domestic brands with the same quality and symbolic value. For example, some interviewees with babies said they would go to offline baby goods store instead of searching for Daigou or buy from online marketplaces.

6.2 Gap identification

From the competitor analysis, three gaps are summarized which provide possibilities for NextportChina to differentiate with all other competitors:

1. No competitor targets at Chinese tourists in the Netherlands

There are about 300,000 Chinese overnight visitors in the Netherlands every year (NBTC, 2018). However, none of those competitors target at this group. Although "Holland Pavilion" page in Tmall Global does show some travel guides, it is not related to offline shopping experience.

NextportChina has offered tourism services to clients, and also owns a travel MP. It is a big advantage for the company to target at Chinese travelers.

2. No reliable channel to buy Dutch brands

Dutch brands are generally not that popular in China. As a result, there are few official channels to buy Dutch products especially from premium niche brands. Currently, the major way for many Dutch brands to enter Chinese market is Daigou. But Daigou is not considered as reliable, which doesn't meet Chinese consumers' requirement for authenticity.

3. Lack of genuine evaluations from consumers in the origin country

Interviewees mentioned that there are some products in online marketplaces labled as overseas brands, but are actually only sold in China. They sometimes fail to distinguish these "inauthentic products" from others. There is little information from local consumers' perpective or about the brands' performance in the origin country. NextportChina has both Dutch and Chinese employees. It is not difficult for the team to collect insights from Dutch market and present them to Chinese consuemrs.

7

Based on all analysis did in the research phases and the insights listed in previous chapters, this chapter explained the design direction, target users and requirements for the final solution. This is the starting point for the later brainstorming and concept iterations.

7.1 Design Direction

Insights from the 4C's analyses (Chapter 3 to 6), especially the consumer analysis, are taken into consideration while determining the design direction:

Design Direction

Design a platform for Chinese travelers and consumers who are willing to experience authentic Dutch lifestyles, and help them to discover the culture and value behind Dutch brands and products.

Typical e-commerce platforms always list products and brands in categories and stimulate people to buy things as quickly as possible. However, for this platform, I didn't expect people to make purchase decisions immediately. The more important thing is that they

spend time exploring contents related to Dutch culture and brands. Little by little they can get the unique value of Dutch brands and start to try the new lifestyles.

7.2 Target users

Three types of target users are determined based on the result of consumer research.

Type 1 Travelers to the Netherlands
As mentioned in Chapter 3.2, people who are interested in traveling to the Netherlands are one of the target groups of NPH WeChat OA and travel MP.

According to the literature (chapter 2.2) and user interview (see figure 4.12), People in this group have a strong desire to make shopping plans before departure. This is the motivation for them to visit a platform which provides such information. They are of high customer stickiness in short term (Khalifa, Limayem and Liu, 2002) because they tend to visit the platform multiple times while they are making the travel plan.

As a result, according to the Innovation Adoption Curve theory developed by M Rogers (1983), they are likely to be the innovators and early adoptors of the platform (Figure 7. 1) .

Type 2 People who are interested in Dutch culture
Another type of NPH WeChat OA followers are people who are interested in Dutch culture, including students who want to apply for Dutch universities, people who have traveled to the
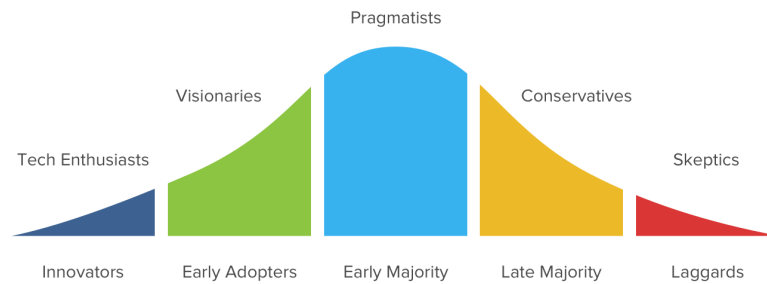
Figure 7. 1 Innovation Aoption Curve developed by M Rogers: a standard model that reflects who buys your products and when.

Netherlands, and people who have friends or relatives here.

People in this group have emotional connections with the country. They are likely to show interest in a platform that fulfills their curiosity to the Netherlands. Also, because they tend to search for information related to the Netherlands online, it is easier for the company to reach them via social media platforms. As a result, they are the early adopters or early majority of the platform.

Type 3 Chinese Consumers who are eager to buy overseas products

As mentioned before, more and more Chinese consumers start to buy overseas products. But the outcome of questionnaire shows that most of them still prefer platforms with high reputation and a wide range of products. As a result, currently, NextportChina could never compete with major marketplaces like Tmall Global to win this group.

However, it is a trend that Chinese consumers start to switch from marketplaces to D2C mode, and from popular brands to niche brands (chapter 5.2). It is an opportunity for NextportChina as it fits its e-commerce strategy (chapter 3.3 & 3.4).

For this group, it is important to convey the intrinsic value of brands (e.g. reliable, good design, unique personality) instead of the symbolic value of "Made in the Netherlands". That's because they are not fond of this country, but really want to buy things that match their personality.

To sum up, at the early stage, the main goal is to attract travelers to the Netherlands and people who are interested in Dutch culture to use the platform. After create some awareness among these groups, we should also consider involving more Chinese consumers who are eager to buy overseas products. By emphasising the added value of Dutch brands, we hope people in this group could trust the platform and continue to buy things on it.
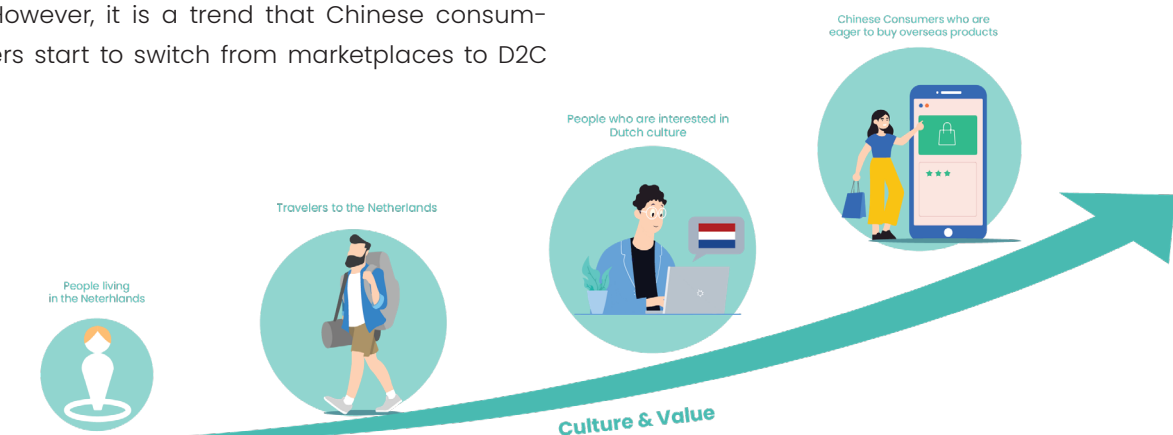
Figure 7.2 The process to involve three different types of target users.

7.3 Requirements

Requirements for the solution are resulted from previous research and analysis. They are presented in two categories considering both business needs and user experience needs.

■ Business requirements

1. Low investment at the early stage
It is a new business model for NextportChina, and is not the key project at the moment. To avoid risks, the solution should not require huge investment[1] at the early stage. We could apply the lean software development model (Poppendieck, 2003), start small and interate rapidly.

2. Well-designed CMS
For an e-commerce platform, it is essential to update contents regularly to meet business needs and increase customer engagement. It requires a user-friendly CMS for platform operators to update contents without too much effort.

3. Good adaptability to business needs
The company had a list of potential clients to join the platform, but it is still unclear who will join and whether they have specific requirements (for example, does the brand want to offer coupons). It is important that the platform have good adaptability to different kinds of brands, and leave freedom in program development for future possibilities.

■ User experience requirements

1. Authentic feeling
From interviews with travlers, it is clear that people want to experience authentic Dutch lifestyle. How to prensent the authenticity is an important topic to think about.

2. Unique experience
The competitor analysis indicates that the platform should not be a typical e-commerce platform like *Holland at Home* to avoid direct competition. It is important to provide unique experience which customers cannot get elsewhere.

3. Engaging interactions
This is a platform about culture and value, which is kind of abstract. Providing engaging interactions helps users to understand abstract concepts, and encourage them to spend more time on the platform.

4. Facilitate sharing
From the customer analysis, we know many people like to share good products with friends. As the platform is based on WeChat, we can use the advantage of WeChat ecosystem to faciliate the sharing experience.

---

1 The development fee for one WeChat MP store should be less than €2,000.

8 THE CONCEPT

This chapter is about the design concept based on the brief discussed in the last chapter. This chapter includes the design process, concept structure, and three sprints of the consumer product. At the end of this chapter, an MVP and user test results are presented, which is the foundation of the final design.

8.1 Design process

The design process follows the **agile way**, including **three ideation-prototyping-testing cycles**. The first cycle is about the scoping of the platform, the other two cycles is about the interaction. At the same time, the **business service** for clients (Dutch brands) is discussed and the prototype was made (Figure 8.1).

8.2 Concept structure

As mentioned in design process, the solution contains two parts: **consumer product** and **business service**.

■ Consumer product

It is a digital platform for target users defined in 7.2. Consumer product is the main focus of the design phase.

■ Business service

It is the service for Dutch brands who want to target at Chinese consumers by joining the platform. More details will be explained in 8.5.

Design Process: Agile Model
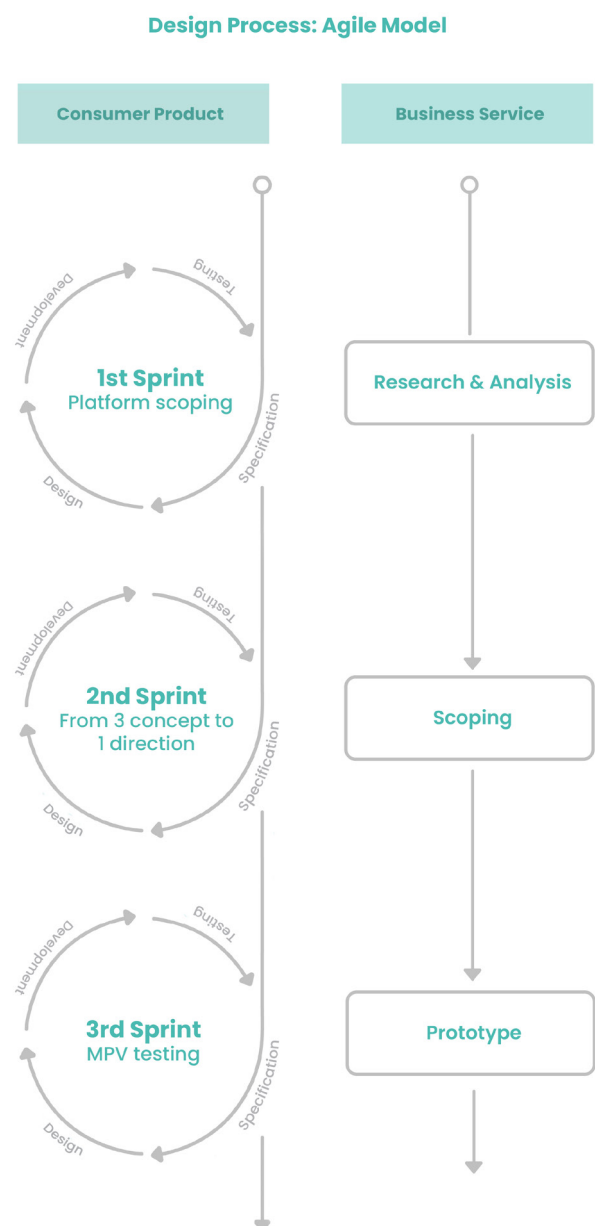
Figure 8.1 The design process of consumer product and business service

8.3 Platform scoping (1st sprint)

It is essential to determine what kind of products to present on this platform. The company already had a list of Dutch brands they want to contact with. There are four categories:

Fashion & Apparel   **Cosmetics**   **Health & Nutrition**   **Food**

However, the company didn't have a plan about where to start, and which category Chinese consumers would love the most. Also, these category names don't convey the extra value of Dutch brands as we found in consumer research, which doesn't meet the requirement of "unique experience" and hinder the platform to stand out.

■ Six new categories

Based on the insights from interviews with travelers, Chinese living in the Netherlands (chapter 4.2) and conversations with local Dutches, six new categories are generated:

1 宝妈帮   *Tips from Dutch mothers*

2 酷设计   *Cool Dutch design*

3 品质生活   *Quality life*

4 荷兰时尚   *Dutch fashion style*

5 吃货淘   *Things for foodies*

6 伴手礼   *Souvenirs & Gifts*

For each category, I selected about eight representative Dutch brands. There are no strict boundaries between each categories. For example, Moooi can be placed either in "Cool Dutch design or in "Quality life".

Each category will be discussed and example brands will be shown in this chapter.

1 宝妈帮   *Tips from Dutch mothers*

In this category, the most popular Dutch maternal brands and children brands are selected. As Dutch children are always branded as the happiest children in the world, and Dutch infant formula brands are quite famous in China, this category could convey the value of "high-quality" and "healthy" even without mentioning those specific words.

Here are some brands/platforms for this category as examples:

2 酷设计 *Cool Dutch design*

There are a lot of good Dutch design brands and products. However, "Dutch Design" is not a familiar word to most Chinese. For this category, we want to convey the idea that Dutch design goods are cool and worth paying attention to.

There are more characteristics for Dutch design such as simple and functional. It is also important to convey these values to consumers. This will be further explained in later tests.

Example brands/platforms in this category are listed here:

dopper.

VANMOOF

SECRID Made in Holland

XDDESIGN

SUSAN BIJL

senz° original

LEFF AMSTERDAM

PIG & HEN

3 品质生活 *Quality life*

For this category, premium brands which represent a high-quality lifestyle to Chinese consumers are selected. Brands here can be cosmetics, household items, or other things that meet the requirement.

Here are some example brands for this category.

RITUALS...

JACOB HOOY natuurproducten sedert 1743

ELLISFAAS

droog®

m o o o i

Blom & Blom

SKINS COSMETICS

MARIE-STELLA-MARIS CARE FOR WATER

4 荷兰时尚 *Dutch fashion style*

Dutch fashion is not always discussed among Chinese people. In the consumer research, it even gets some negative feedback.

However, fashion is one of the most popular topic for cross-boader e-commerce. And there are a lot of fashion brands in the company's list. So I keep this category here for later testing.

Here are some example brands for Dutch fashion style.

WANDLER

SCOTCH & SODA AMSTERDAM COUTURE

VIKTOR®ROLF

SUITSUPPLY

DAILY PAPER   SISSY-BOY

 Patta   ace & tate

5 吃货淘 *Things for foodies*

Food is a hot topic in the interview with travelers. They are interested to know unique food and snacks in the supermarkets. There are many travel guides on the internet about restaurants, but seldom contents about food & snack brands. As a result, in this category, popular Dutch food brands are selected.

TONY'S CHOCOLONELY   Albert Heijn

SULTANA   SAMASAYA

Old Amsterdam   Droste HOLLAND

CLUSIUS CRAFT DISTILLERS   ViVANI

6 伴手礼 *Souvenirs & Gifts*

Souvenir & gift is one of the most frequent topic for travelers in the interview. Most of them want to buy souvenirs that represent this country

but didn't know what to buy, or not satisfied with the things they bought. In the case study of "Property Of", many people also montioned that they buy products as presents for others.

As a result, this category is created. Most of the brands here are choosen from previous categories.

RITUALS...   SECRID Made in Holland

PIG & HEN   TONY'S CHOCOLONELY

dopper.   MARIE-STELLA-MARIS CARE FOR WATER

SUSAN BIJL   sedert 1743 JACOB HOOY natuurproducten

■ Card testing

After coming up with these six categories and representative brands, a card testing was done with 10 participants for two purposes.

1. Which categories are the most poplular one among consumers? It is important for the company to know where to start.
2. How to present products and brands on the platform? It provides insights to the interface design in the next step.

Testing plan

I made two cards (card A and card B) for all brands listed in six categories. The structure of the cards is shown in Figure 8.1.

The only difference between the two cards is the image. In card A, a clean image of the product is shown, while in card B, the product is displayed within a real using context. Taking Artipoppe as an example (Figure 8.2): In card A, the image is a single baby carrier; in card B, it's a Dutch mother walking on the street with the same baby carrier.

Beverland (2005) indicates that using culture as referent is a method to show the sincerity of wine brands, thus help to increase brand authenticity. For Dutch products, except for the word description, another way to show culture is to put the products into the situation of how Dutch people use them in daily life. And that is the criterion for choosing images in card B. With the test, I want to find out if the images showing Dutch culture increase the brand authenticity, thus making people more interested in them.

Card A   Card B
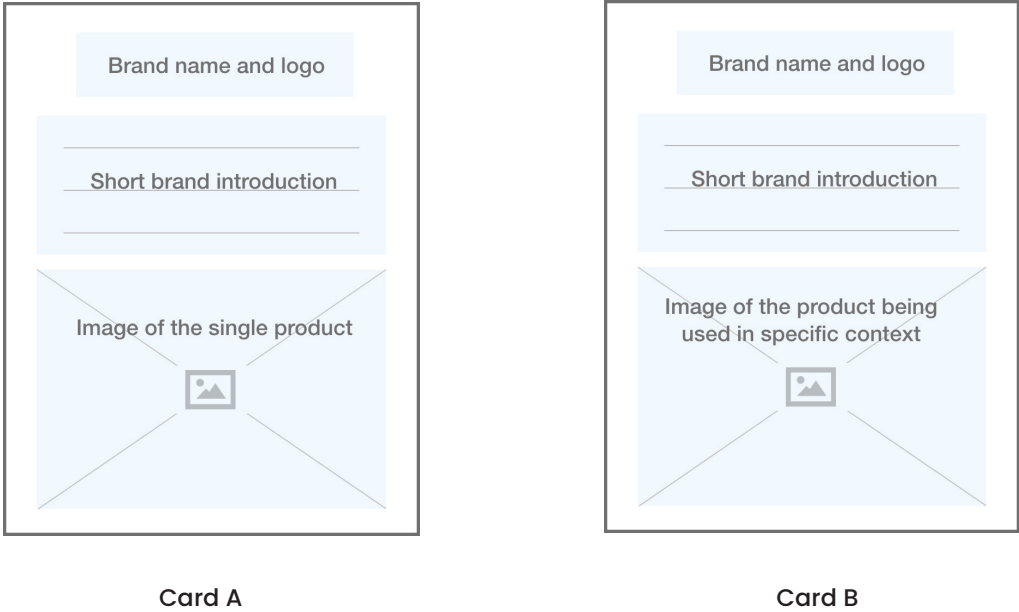
Figure 8.1 The information structure of two types of cards for the testing

Card A   Card B

Figure 8.2 The two cards for Artipoppe

In total, there are 80 cards from 40 brands. Participants are asked to scan all of them quickly and decide whether they want to click it (suppose they are blocks on an online store) to see more information about the brand or product. There are two sheets of paper with the text "Click" and "No Click". They need to explain the reason when they put the card on the paper.

Pilot test

There are two cards with different images for one product, I'm afraid that the impression of the first card would influence the second one. For this concern, I did two pilot tests. Only 20 cards were given to participants in the pilot.

For most of the brands, both two participants didn't noticed that there are two cards showing the same thing. For some brands, they did find there are similar cards, but they said the previous card wouldn't influence their decisions for the second one.

> **"Everything goes too fast, I even didn't remember my previous decision if I didn't check the paper."**

As a result, I decided to keep the plan in the pilot test and let each participant categorize all cards.

Testing

The testing was done in the library of TU Delft with 10 participants. All of them are Chinese who enjoy shopping, and most of them have great travel experience in Western countries. As a result, it is valuable to learn from their opinions.

Figure 8.3 Settings of the card test

Result and interesting findings

The result of the each category product are listed in table 8.1.

	Total Clicks	Card A Clicks	Card B Clicks
1. Tips from Dutch mothers	74	35	39
2. Cool Dutch design	80	35	45
3. Quality life	64	29	35
4. Dutch fashion style	65	32	33
5. Things for foodies	79	37	42
6. Souvenirs & Gift	72	33	39

Table 8.1 The result of the card testing

From table 8.1, we could see that "Tips from Dutch mothers", "Cool Dutch design", and "Things for foodies" are three most popular categories.

Another interesting finding is for all six categories, Card B clicks always outnumbered Card A Clicks. But it is not always the same case for all brands. Some participants said they liked to see products in the context, but sometimes the products were too small.

Qualitative insights

Because the sample size is too small (N=10), it is more important to analyze the qualitative part than quantitative part. Here are some qualitative insights based on what parcipants said.

1. Interesting information help a lot

About half participants care text information more than the image. Whether there are interesting information in the description determines their decision. For example, in the brand introduction of Victor & Rolf, I mentioned a Chinese celebrity wore the wedding dress from Victor & Rolf, and three people said they chose to click it because of this message.

2. Context conveys more brand value

Here is the reason why Card B clicks always outnumbered Card A clicks. When people see card A, they only talk about the appearance of the product. But for Card B, they talk about the users, the environement, and even the culture.

A good example is Artipoppe. Most participants don't know what is a baby carrier. When they saw Card A, they still don't know what it is. But when they saw Card B, things became clear. People even mentioned words like "independent" and "western style" which are not in the brand description.

Another example is Pig & Hen. One partipant said the product doesn't suit her when she saw Card A. But later when she saw a man wore the bracelet, she said it could be a present for her boyfriend.

3. Fashion brands need to be selected carefully

For fashion brands, three participants use the phrase "very Dutch" for multiple times. When asking what is "very Dutch", they said:

> **"Just don't suit me. They are too colorful and not my style."** (Suit Supply)

> **"You know some people may like it, but not me. There are too many options for clothing, and Dutch brands don't have advantages."** (Scotch & Soda)

But there are also exceptions. For example, Wandler got 7 clicks for Card A and 8 clicks for Card B. People used words like "simple" and "beautiful" to describe Wandler's bag.

To draw a conclusion, consumers can be very skeptical about Dutch fashion brands. It requires careful research for choosing clients in this area.

■ Article testing

In the card testing, "Cool Dutch design" is the most popular category. However, the sample size is too small to draw the conclusion. Also, because most of participants have design backgrouds, there might be selection bias.

To test whether Dutch design products really have potential in Chinese market, an article about Dutch design products was written and published on NPH WeChat OA (Figure 8.4).

Figure 8.3 The screenshot of the article

View the article at https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/KpjLe5ZRmMpMbMPkHklL0g

There are ten carefully-selected Dutch design brands introduced in this article, they are:

1. Dopper   2. Susan Bijl
3. Secrid   4. Leff Amsterdam
5. VanMoff   6. Senz°
7. The Cyclist 8. XD Design
9. Snurk   10. Allocacoc

The criteria for selection the brands is that the brand should have good reputation among Dutch consumers, and also show the characteristics of Dutch design (innovative, functional, and simple).

For each brand, there is information about the designer, design background, development process and unique brand value.

Figure 8.4 shows hwo the brand Susan Bijl is presented in the article.

Figure 8.4 How Susan Bijl is presented in the article

Testing result

There were some limitations for the test. For example, WeChat doesn't allow OA owners to start conversations with readers. And it is not appropriate to put shopping links in the article with the concern of NPH's brand image. As a result, the key identifiers for this testing is the number of readers and their comments.

0.05%

34.02%

65.93%

7918
Sex distribution (total number)

■ Female 5220 ■ Male 2694

■ Unkown 4

Readers in China: 5185
Readers in other countries: 2733

2733   1
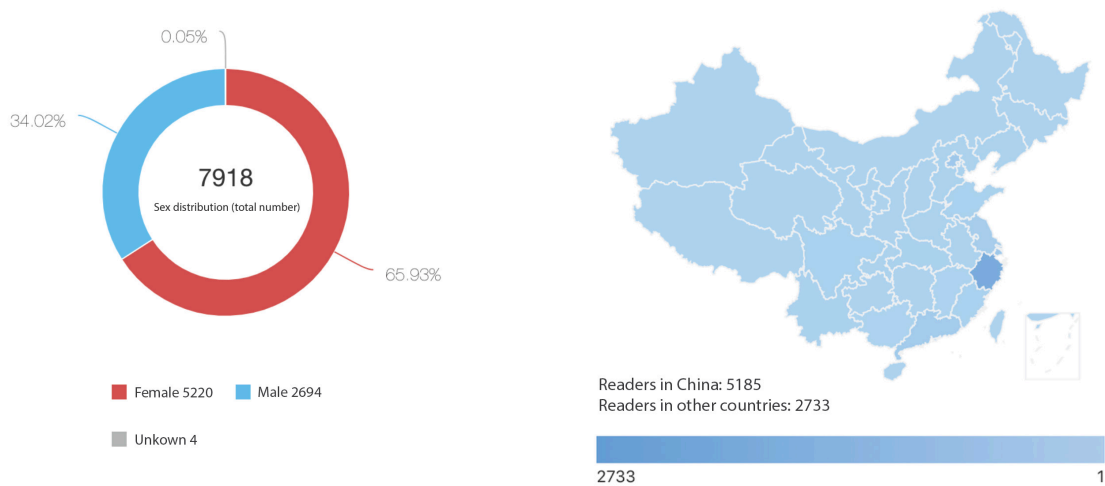
Figure 8.5 Demographic information of readers (data was collected one week after the article was published)

As shown in figure 8.5, nearly 8,000 people have read the article. 66% of them are females. 5185 out of 7918 (65%) readers are located in China.

Article name	Date	Number of reader	Number of shares
最夯中华小吃店来啦！占据阿姆黄金地段，手…	2019-07-12	4485	435
离开荷兰前，你一定要做的30件事	2019-07-11	3550	118
荷兰周末灵感	7月13-14日	2019-07-09	1970	52
总说北欧设计好看，荷兰人绝对不服气	2019-07-06	7918	404
不要轻易走进阿姆斯特丹这家苹果派店！	2019-07-05	2673	130
毕业去留？应届毕业生是这么回答我们的	2019-07-04	2300	25
欧洲涨工资难？你知道该怎么和老板谈薪资吗？	2019-07-03	2321	28

Table 8.2 Compare the data with articles published in the same week

From table 8.2, we could tell that this article achieved a good result compared with other articles published in the same week: both the number of readers and the number of shares are far ahead of others. It implies that Chinese people like to read these contents and may have positive impressions towards Dutch design brands.

The comments from readers are also very satisfying. Here are some of the comments:

小美子
简约大气，设计感十足！很喜欢，所有东西都想收了，但最想收的是荷兰人的设计思维和设计观念！
2019-07-05 23:49:04

"Dutch design is simple and stylish! I really love it. I want to get all the things, but what I want most is Dutch people's design thinking ability and their design philosophy."

大家都是人
瞬间被leff Amsterdam圈粉，刚在淘宝上下单了，没救了哈哈哈各种冲动消费
2019-07-06 03:04:12

"Fall in love with Leff Amsterdam immediately and just bought one from Taobao..."

柠翊Chelsea
这些店都在阿姆哪里有啊？求指路❗
2019-07-06 06:45:30

"Where are the stores for these brands in Amsterdam? Anyone helps me?"

There are also many positive feedback from collegues in NextportChina, such as their friends bought products from these brands after reading the article.

To sum up, the article testing validates that target users defined in 7.2 have a great potential to be buyers of Dutch design brands. Information related to value and culture can be well delivered to people if presented in a good way.

8.4 From 3 concepts to 1 direction (2nd sprint)

The Brainstorming for how to show products and brands was done while writing the design article. It is mainly guided by user experience requirements discussed in chapter 7.3.

The method used in the brainstorming is How-to (Van Boeijen, Daalhuizen, van der Schoor & Zijlstra, 2014). There are four user experience requirements:

1. Authentic feeling
2. Unique experience
3. Engaging interactions
4. Facilitate sharing

For each short brainstorming session (15 minutes), I asked the question:

-How to achieve authentic feeling?
-How to realize unique experience?
-How to build engaging interactions?
-How to facilitate sharing?

It is important to write down all the answers on the paper as quickly as possible in these sessions. The post-its generated in these four sessions are presented in figure 8.6.

Figure 8.6 Use How-to method to do the quick ideation

As ideas on the post-its are general and unclear, I sketched some of them on paper with more details (Figure 8.7).

Figure 8.7 Sketches to specify draft concepts generated in brainstorming.

Business requirements discussed in 7.3 are also taken into consideration when choosing concept to develop. For example, concepts related to customization and smart chatbot are abandoend to save money.

In the end, three potential concepts were chosen:

1. Comments by locals
2. Showing photos of local people on the street
3. Virtual shopping

For the three directions generated in brainstorming session, three simple prototypes were made.

■ **Prototype 1**

Prototype 1 is for the direction "Comments by locals". There is one page for each category. The page's structure is shown in figure 8.8.

In this concept, Chinese buyers could see original contents created by Dutch consumers and Chinese consumers living in the Netherlands.

Figure 8.8 The wireframe of the concept for prototype 1.
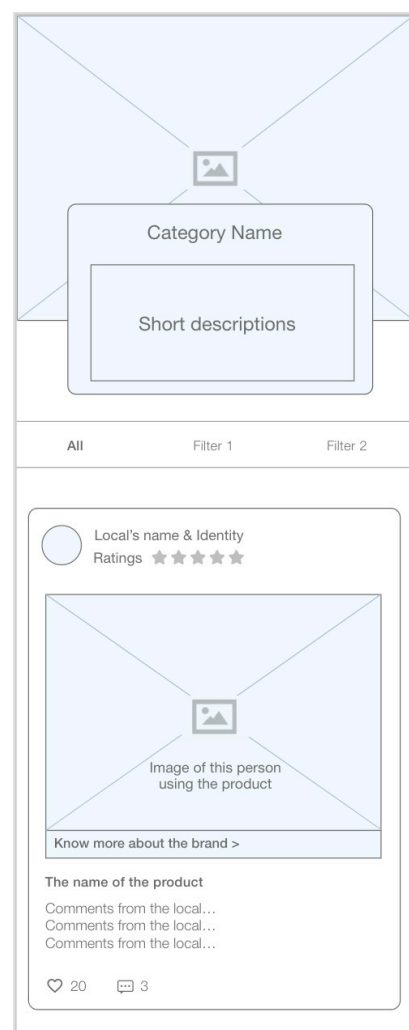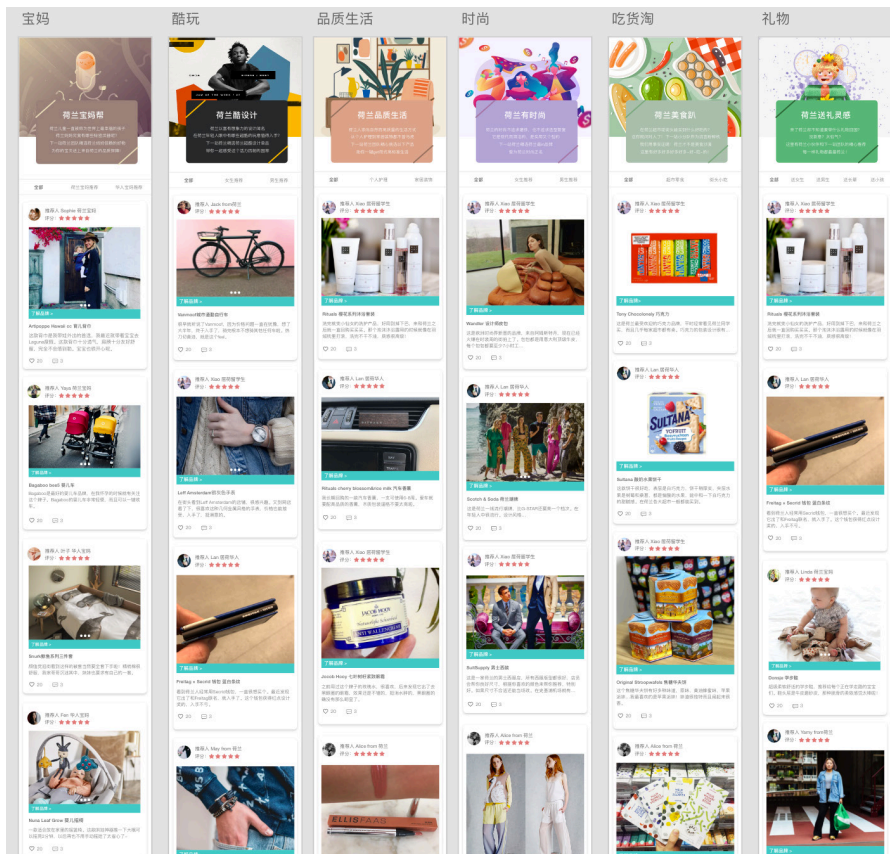
Figure 8.9 Prototype 1 for the user testing. There are eight brands in each category.

Users can click "know more abou the brand" button if they are interested in the content. They can also like the posts and leave comments.

This concept aims to convey the authentic feeling by showing reviews from local Dutches and Chinese living in the Netherlands. From the business perspective, the program development is easy as there is no complex functionality. It can also adpates to different types of products easily.

■ Prototype 2

Prototype 2 is for the direction "Showing photos of local people on the street" (Street snap).

The wireframe of this concept is shown in figure 8.11. Both the single product image and context image are displayed in this concept. The con-
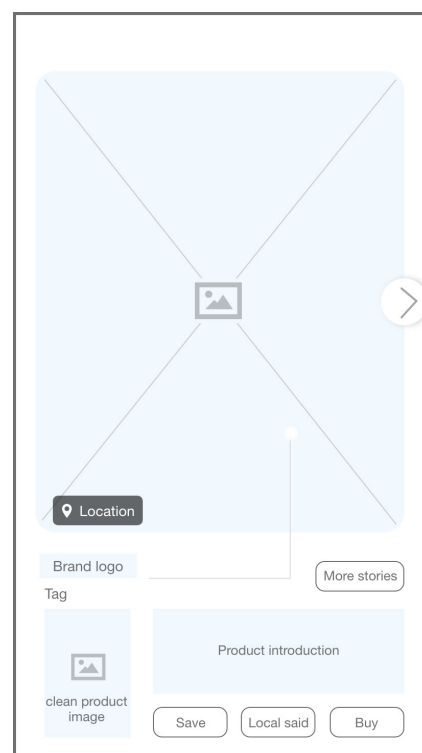
Figure 8.11 The wireframe of the concept for prototype 2.
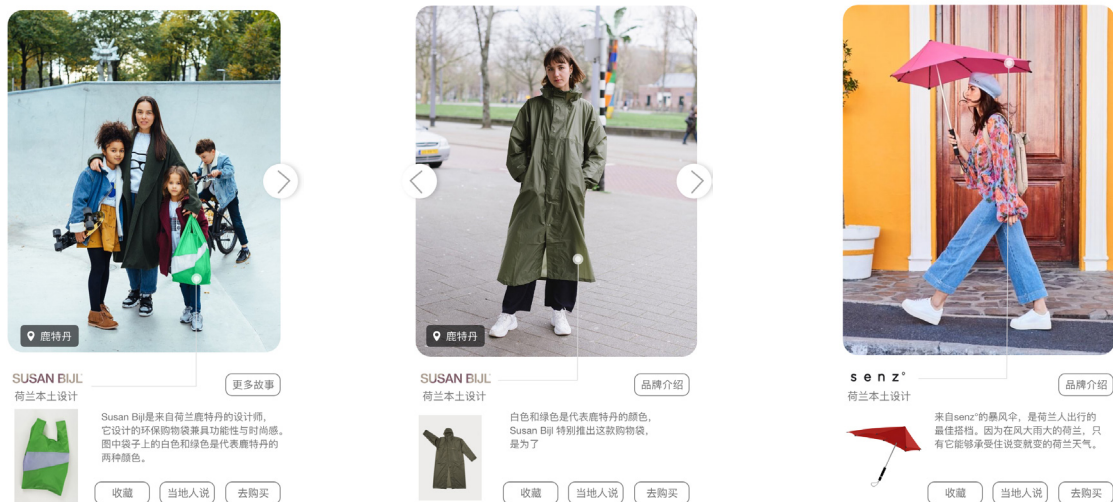
Figure 8.10 Prototype 2 for user testing.

text image is more dominant than the single product image based on the findings from the card testing. With this concept, users can explore authentic Dutch street style by sliding left and right.

This concept wants to convey the authentic feeling by showing the real context of how local people use these products. It provides unique experience to users because it is very different from the typical e-commerce store. Normally, online stores will emphasis the products' details and price. But for this concept, I want consumers to be attracted by the exotic lifestyle, and pay more attention to the users and environment.

■ **Prototype 3**

Prototype 3 is for the direction "Virtual shopping" (Figure 8.12). Figure 8.12 shows the map of a Dutch city. There are stores selected for Chinese on the street.

After clicking one store, it will jump to another page (Figure 8.13). People can see the environment inside the store. There are staffs, product designers, and other customers in the store that people can interact with (e.g. ask them
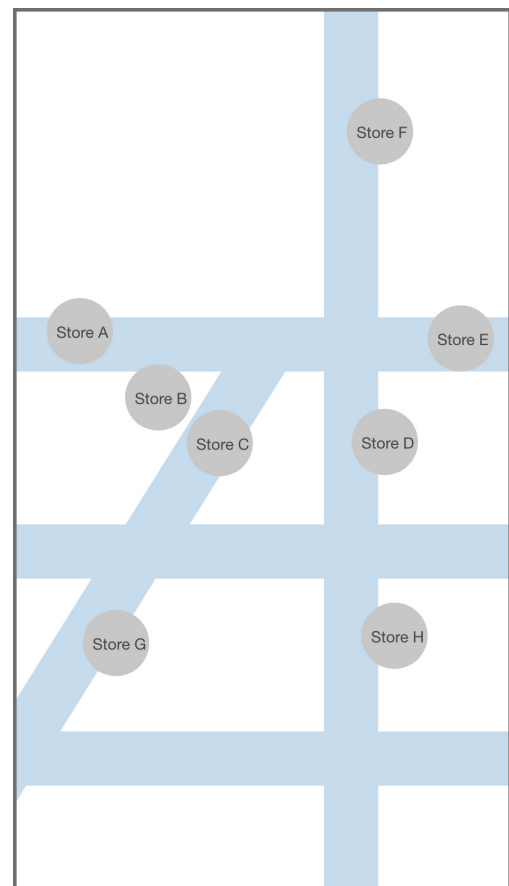
Figure 8.12 The wireframe of the concept for prototype 3.
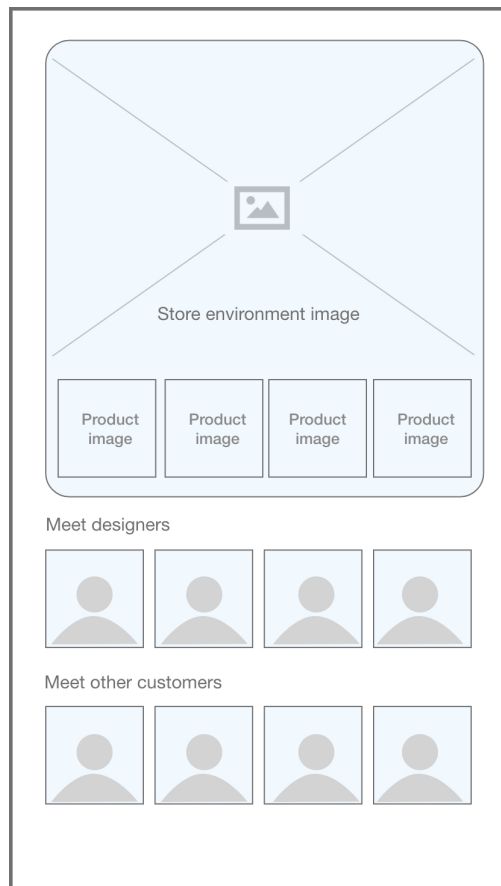
Figure 8.13 The wireframe of the concept for prototype 3.

questions or see the video of their stories with the brand).

This concept also meets the user experience needs as it is unique and innovative. By interacting with staffs and customers in the store, users can get the feeling that they are really do shopping in the Netherlands.

However, from the business perspective, the concept is difficult to implement because there are too many contents to fill in. In addition, it doesn't suit brands that areonly sold online (e.g. Artipoppe and Ellis Faas).

■ Testing the three prototypes

Three prototypes are tested with five participants, all of them have traveled to the Netherlands before, and is now living in China. They are the target group of the platform.

The testing was done online. I sent them the screen shots of each prototype, gave explanations and asked them to talk about their feeling. Here are the results of the test.

Concept 1

Participants showed interest in some brands, especially design brands and food brands. But they don't think the idea is innovative enough.

When asking whether they believe the contents are from locals, the answer differs a bit. Some people believe they are real reviews from locals, but some people think they might be created by business owners if everything seems to be perfect.

There is feedback saying the "quality life" category" is a bit confusing. It's because they saw both cosmetics and household items in that category. But the buyers of cosmetics and household items are not always the same.

Here are some quotes from participants about conept 1.

"It's a bit normal. I always saw same thing in other shopping platforms."

"(...)That is not a problem for me. I trust Nextport Holland. "

"(...)I'm not sure. I'll have my own judgement according to the content."

Concept 2

Most people showed interest in concept 2. They think it is an interesting perspective to look at this country.

> "I didn't pay any attention to local people's clothing when traveling in the Netherlands. That's also because I cannot distinguish local people with other travelers. But if I saw these photos before I came, I would probably pay attention to certain brands and styles."

Apart from the photos taken on the street, they also mentioned other things that they are curious about, for example, the food that local people like to eat, and the makeups for Dutch girls.

Concept 3

Concept 3 also gets good feedback among participants. Most people like to see the stores at the destination before the trip. Some people even suggested using Virtual Reality technology instead of just seeing photos. People are also excited about the idea that they can interact with staffs, designers, and other customers inside the store.

However, when asking if they would still like the concept after they left the country, most participants' answer was "no".

> "I might lose interest after I came back. I want to see the environment of that store because I want to visit the store. But if I can't, why should I do that?"

Concept selection

In the testing, concept 2 and concept 3 both get positive feedback among travelers. From the business perspective, concept 2 is much easier and cheap to develop than concept 3. Besides, concept 2 also has better adaptability to different kinds of brands.

As a result, the prototype developed in the next sprint (see chapter 8.6) will mainly base on concept 2. Good points in concept 1 and 3 that get positive feedback will also be taken into consideration.

8.5 Business service

Up to now, the design mainly focuses on the consumer product. But before we start the the third sprint, it is necessary to make it clear what is NextportChina's role in the business, and what is the relationship between the new platform and the exsiting products/services (NPH OA, NPH travel MP, & MP stores for clients).

For NextportChina, the initial idea for the e-commerce business is to provide MP store templates to clients. However, as discussed in company analysis (chapter 3), only offer store templates is not the best solution. There are more things the company could do based on its strengths and the opportunities.

The essence of the consumer product is a platform that gathers all kinds of Dutch brands which Chinese consumers are likely to buy. But is it necessary that the platform must function as a marketplace like *Tmall Global* or *Holland at Home*? In other words, is it worthwhile for the company to build its own warehouse, logistics, payment, etc at this moment?

To answer the question, I analyzed opinions

from 4C's analyses and user tests again.

In the interview and the second sprint, many participants mentioned the platform *Red*. They like to search for shopping information on *Red*, but seldom buy things on *Red Mall*. It means a recommendation platform without shopping function can also be popular among consumers.

The context analysis (chapter 5.2) also suggests that Chinese shoppers are transforming from buying things on overseas marketplaces to brands' standalone online stores. That is because the brands' store offers "a greater level of personal engagement and a more authentic online shopping experience" (Frost & Sullivan, 2018). It just fits the design requirements of the project.

From the company perspective, it also saves money if it is a recommendation platform at the beginning instead of a shopping platform. The company is not ready to build a shopping platform that requires huge investment for things like warehouse and logistics when there is no proof that the business will make a profit.

As a result, the main jobs for NextportChina is:

1. Select good Dutch brands that have potential in Chinese market and recommend them to Chinese consumers on its own platform.

2. Help selected Dutch brands to set up official WeChat MP stores.

Based on the previous discussion, figure 8.14 shows the relationship between three players in this project.
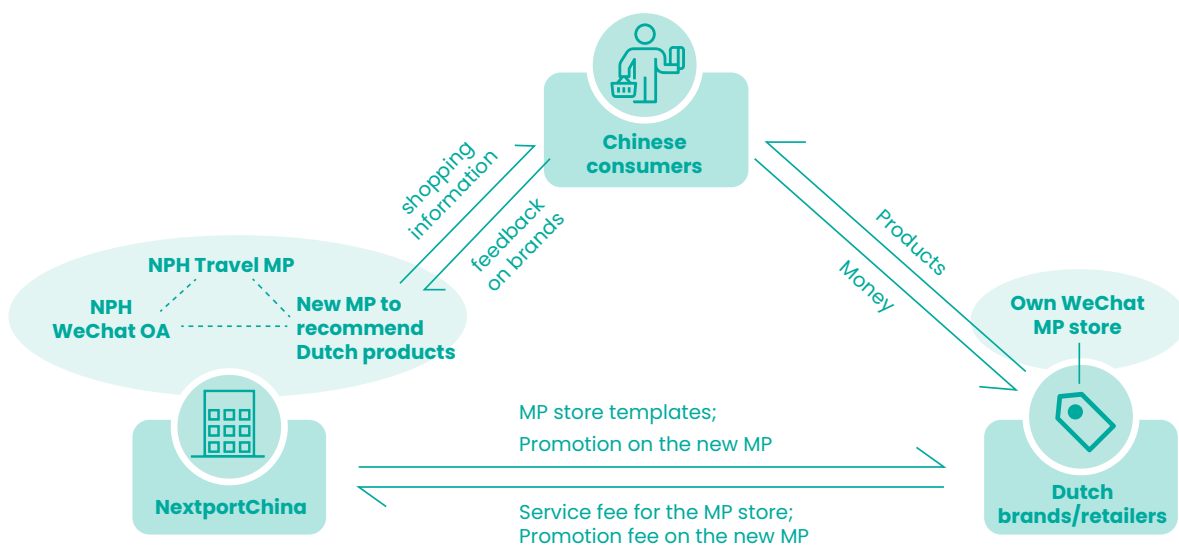
Figure 8.14 The relationship between NextportChina, Chinese consumers, and Dutch brans/retailers.

NextportChina is the bridge between Chinese consumers and Dutch brands/retailers. It helps Chinese consumers to discover good Dutch products, and facilitate the brands to build sales channels in China. But the purchase is done between consumers and brands.

The relationship between three platforms (NPH WeChat OA, NPH Travel MP, & New MP to recommend Dutch products) owned by NextportChina will be further explained in sprint 3. The design of MP store templates will be displayed in the final design (chapter 9).

8.6 MVP design and testing (3d sprint)

After making it clear what's the company's role in the business, I started the third sprint of the consumer product. An MVP was developed based on the selected direction: Showing photos of local people on the street. According to the feedback from the second-round testing, the platform not only shows products on the street, but also other aspects about Dutch people's life and culture.

The MVP is a WeChat mini-program in order to better interact with existing platforms of NPH and MP stores.

■ Name & Logo

下一站有好物

The name of the MP means "Good things at Next Port" in English. I didn't include the word "Holland" or "Netherlands" in the name for the future development of the platform. Although the company only has Dutch clients currently, it is not a wise idea to limit the scope only to the Dutch market. There can be opportunities in the Benelux market and Nordic market. We will discuss the possibility in chapter 10.

The logo is of NPH's style. The shopping bag indicates that the platform is about shopping.

■ Homepage

Figure 8.14 is the homepage of "Good things at Next Port". There are banners at the top for promotion. Under the banner is the slot for marketing tools such as coupons.

Figure 8.14 Homepage of the MP

"Discover good things" is a module on the home page. It shows various topics related to the Dutch way of living. For example, figure 8.15 shows four topics: what are things on the street, what are things at local people's home, what things Dutch girls like to use, and what things Dutch people like to eat. The purpose of this module is to arouse people's curiosity and encourage them to find out the answer by clicking the block or click the "find more" button in the top right.

Figure 8.15 "Discover good things" module on the hoem page

Short introduction to the theme

Figure 8.16 "Daily recommendation" module on the hoem page

Figure 8.16 shows the "Daily recommendation" module on the home page. Contents in this module will be updated daily. Every day there will be a new theme slider with three to eight products. The products are shown in the same way as the prototype 2 in the second sprint.

For example, figure 8.16 is the slider of the theme "Rotterdam style". All products selected here are what people in Rotterdam are using.

If users are interested in the product, they can click the card to see more information on the

product details page. They can also click the "like" button to add the product into their wish-lists.

■ Discover page

The "find more" button on the "discover good things" module leads users to the discover page. There are two sub-pages with the discover page. The first is called "Lists of good things" (Figure 8.17 a). There are topics related to people's life and culture in the Netherlands.

●●○○○ EE 🛜   12:53 pm   31% 🔋

发现   ⋯ ◉

好物清单 · ‎   好文精选 ·

荷式生活

新   荷兰人家里有什么   ❤️
25件好物

热   荷兰人
10

走出家门

新   荷兰街上有什么   ♡
87件好物

新   超市里
24

🏠 首页   🛍️ 全部好物   📷 发现   ♡ 心愿单

当地人视角

新   荷兰小姐姐用什么
8件好物

热   荷兰宝
10
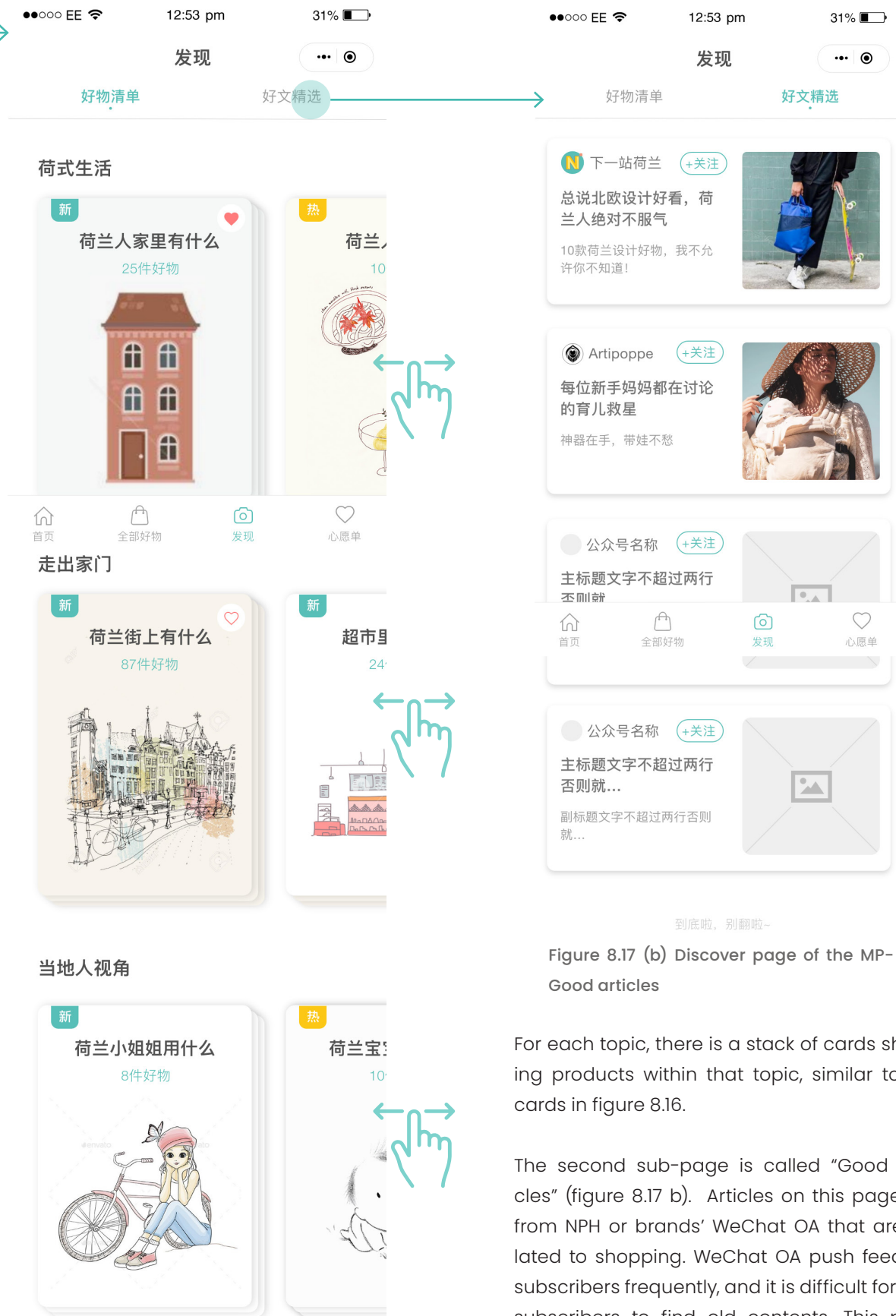
Figure 8.17 (a) Descover page of the MP-Lists of good things

●●○○○ EE 🛜   12:53 pm   31% 🔋

发现   ⋯ ◉

好物清单   好文精选 ·

Ⓝ 下一站荷兰   +关注
总说北欧设计好看，荷兰人绝对不服气
10款荷兰设计好物，我不允许你不知道！

Artipoppe   +关注
每位新手妈妈都在讨论的育儿救星
神器在手，带娃不愁

◯ 公众号名称   +关注
主标题文字不超过两行否则就

🏠 首页   🛍️ 全部好物   📷 发现   ♡ 心愿单

◯ 公众号名称   +关注
主标题文字不超过两行否则就…
副标题文字不超过两行否则就…

到底啦，别翻啦~

Figure 8.17 (b) Discover page of the MP-Good articles

For each topic, there is a stack of cards showing products within that topic, similar to the cards in figure 8.16.

The second sub-page is called "Good articles" (figure 8.17 b). Articles on this page are from NPH or brands' WeChat OA that are related to shopping. WeChat OA push feeds to subscribers frequently, and it is difficult for new subscribers to find old contents. This page functions as a collecting box for shopping information.

■ Product details page
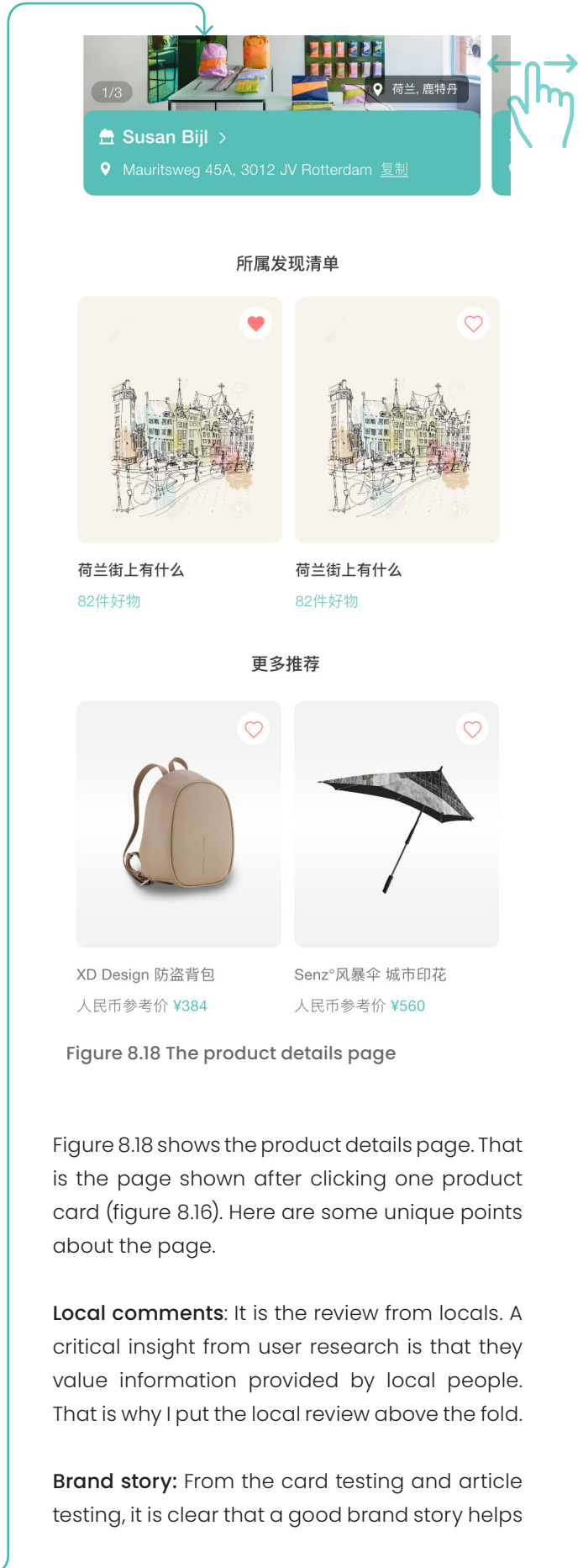
Figure 8.18 The product details page

Figure 8.18 shows the product details page. That is the page shown after clicking one product card (figure 8.16). Here are some unique points about the page.

Local comments: It is the review from locals. A critical insight from user research is that they value information provided by local people. That is why I put the local review above the fold.

Brand story: From the card testing and article testing, it is clear that a good brand story helps

customers to build emotional connections with the brand. Consumers who are interested in the brand can click "follow the brand" button to see the WeChat OA of the brand.

Offline stores: It shows the offline store where consumers can buy the product. The name and location of the store are provided here. It will jump to the store's profile page on NPH travel MP (p.13 Figure 3.5) after clicking.

Discover lists: That is the lists which the product belongs to. It gives more exposure to other products in the same list, and provide more background knowledge to users.

More recommendation: Products that appear here are other popular products in the same category. In the future, it could be products selected by the collaborative filtering algorithm (Ciocca, 2017).

There are three buttons on the footer which are "Add it to the wishlist", "share", and "Buy now". By clicking the "Buy now" button, consumers will jump to the MP store owned by the brand/retailer and buy the product there.

■ Wishlists

Saved products and lists will appear in the wishlist page. Figure 8.19 (a) shows the saved products, while figure 8.19 (b) shows the saved product lists. The user can share both of them to their friends via WeChat.

At the bottom of the page is a line of text: At the next port, realize your little wish. For travelers, they can save the things they like before departure, and use this page as the shopping plan when they are traveling in the Netherlands.
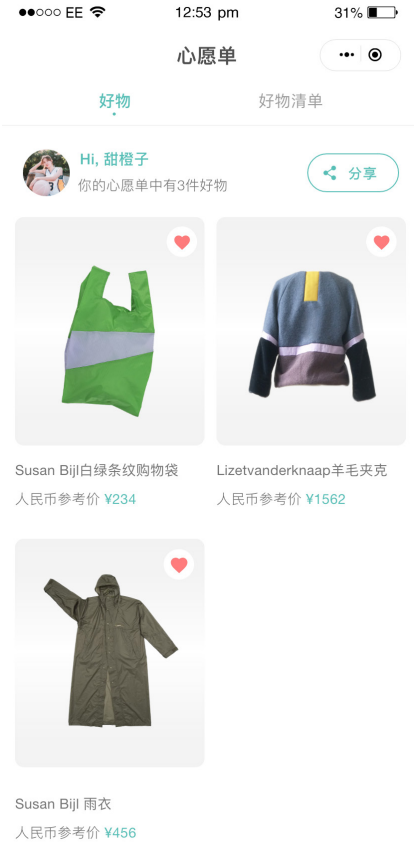
Figure 8.19(a) Wishlist-good things

Figure 8.19(b) Wishlist-discovery lists

■ Third-round testing

Testing plan

The concept was tested with five people in China. The participants have the following things in common:

1. They all live in China and have never been to the Netherlands before.
2. They all love to buy overseas products online (spend at least two hours per week shopping online).
3. They all had outbound travel experience.

They are potential customers of the platform. They are currently type 3 users (Chinese people who are eager to buy overseas products). But they can also be type 1 (travelers to the Netherlands) and type 2 (people who are interested in Dutch culture) users if they got opportunities.

The test was done remotely. Three days before the test, all participants were asked to follow "Nextport Holland" WeChat OA and read articles on that.

During the test, the participant follows the instruction on the testing guide (Figure 8.20). There are ten steps in total. For each step, participants are asked to scan the QR code to check out one page or use one function of the MP, and answer questions related to it. The complete testing guide and the English translation were shown in Appendix 5.

Figure 8.20 The testing guide for participants.
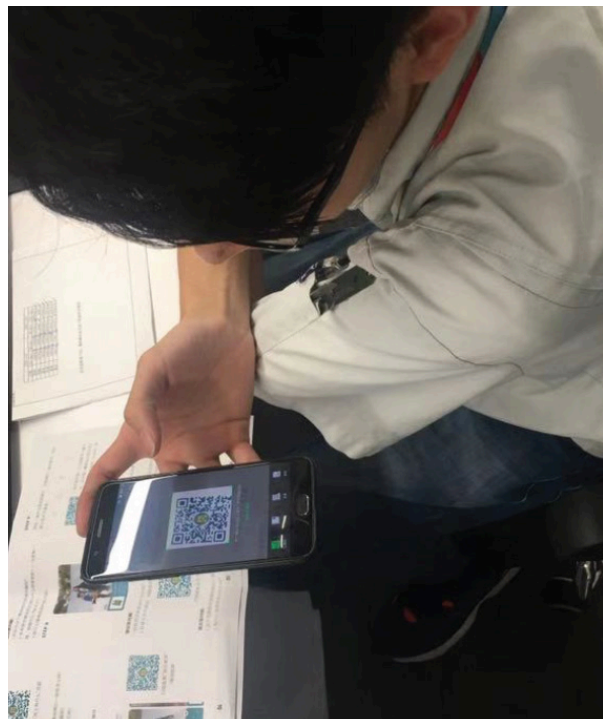
Figure 8.21 Some participants are doing the test.

Testing result

1. "Next Port Holland" WeChat OA
All participants were satisfied with the articles published on "Nextport Holland" WeChat OA. They liked to learn about local culture and travel tips before visiting the country. But some people admitted that they would unfollow it right after they come back.

2. Mini program "Good things at Next Port"

下一站有好物

By just looking at the MP's name and the logo, all participants said they would click it because of curiosity. It is pretty evident to them that it is a shopping program.

3. Discover module

发现好物　更多 >

街上有什么
街头酷拍 最in荷兰

家里有什么
荷兰人的日常生活

小姐姐用什么
荷兰小姐姐带你买

荷兰人吃什么
零食小吃一网打尽

The "Discover module" on the home page got very satisfying feedback. All people showed great interest in those topics. And most people agreed the content in "Discover module" helps them to learn the local culture. However, the product selected for some topics are not aligned with their expectations. For example, in "What's on street", people actually expect for shops, restaurants, and attractions, not local people's dressing style.

4. Product cards
Most people gave positive feedback to the product cards both in home page (daily recommendation) and inside the discover module. They also

Figure 8.22 The "product card" in the mini program and the tags attached to the photo in App Red.

gave some suggestions. One is that the product is not distinct enough. Participants suggested adding tags to the product like in the *Red* (Figure 8.22). Another feedback is the product card seems too commercial now. It wants to convey the lifestyle, but some people think they are like advertisements.

5. Product details page
The design of the page is generally aligned with their expectation. But some participants mentioned that they want to see the detailed product image on that page instead of the previous image about the context.

There are also several suggestions for this page. As travelers, people want to see more information about physical stores. It is appreciated if they can even compare the online price with the price in physical stores. Another suggestion is about the "Buy now button". Some people didn't like it because they got the feeling that we are advertising these products, making them less authentic. One participant said she wanted reliable information, not

boasting about something for a profit. Besides, when participants see the "Buy now" button, they have the feeling that it is a shopping platform. But later when they find it directs them to another platform, they seem to be surprised.

6. Other suggestions

- Most of participants believe in the platform "Next Port Holland", but still have some concerns when they found the purchase was done somewhere else. Some people asked for customer service provided by "Next Port Holland".

- Some participants are not fully convinced that the products are authentic and thus worth buying. They want to see more proofs like bestseller list and reviews from others.

- The discover page can be modified to better convey the Dutch culture. Now it is too abstract for people to get the value by just looking at the photos of how local people use these products. But it also because the topics and products on the prototype are very limited.

Important insights from the testing

1. Travelers to the Netherlands do have the needs to learn local culture and search for good products before departure. The mini program "Good things at Next Port" is able to gain attention based on the WeChat OA.

2. It is necessary to make the platform look less commercial. Firstly, the way of showing the shopping channel needs to be modified. Secondly, it is important to add more culture-related knowledge.

3. NPH needs to take more responsibility because it is the one who recommends these products and shopping channels to consumers. Providing shopping-related services such as genuine guarantee help to build a reliable brand image and increase customer loyalty to the platform.

9

FINAL DESIGN

In the previous chapters, the concept is developed from a general direction to an MVP within three sprints. In this chapter, based on the feedback from users, the final design of both the mini-program for consumers and the business service package for clients will be presented.

9.1 The mini-program for consumers

Based on the feedback and insights discussed in the previous chapter, the final design of "Good things at Next Port" is made. You can scan the QR code in figure 9.1 to try this mini-program. Some suggestions are not put in the final design, but in the implementation plan (chapter 10).

下一站有好物
Good things at Next Port

Figure 9.1 Scan the QR code to try "Good things at Next Port"

The most significant change is the selection criterion for the products. In the previous version, the platform only includes brands and retailers who own WeChat MP stores. It means all products on the platform are available for

online purchase on WeChat. However, it sets a limitation for the platform to convey the authentic Dutch culture. That is because the clients of NextportChina only represents a small part of the market. There are more exciting products for Chinese consumers to discover. It is a pity if the company ignore them just because they are not clients. After all, it is a recommendation platform instead of an online store.

For example, in the testing, many participants mentioned that they like to find out what food is the most popular among locals. But most Dutch food brands are not the target clients defined in chapter 3.4. It will be less convincing if we only put several products on the list that all come from one food brand.

As a result, in the final design, there are three kinds of products on "Good things at Next Port":

1. **Products from partner brands/retailers who have MP stores:** These products are available for online purchase. The shopping process is the same as in the last version.

2. **Products from brands/retailers that can be future clients:** They are from potential clients who are not sure whether to enter the Chinese market or from brands who have other sales channels in China. On the one hand, it can increase the richness of the platform. On the other hand, it is a way to convince these brands to adopt the company's solution if the feedback from users is satisfying.

3. **Products from brands/retailers that are not target clients:** They are popular or distinctive products from the Netherlands. However, they don't fit the China-focused e-commerce business. These products are, for example, street food and snacks in the supermarket. Another example is the cargo bike, which is very distinctive but not fits Chinese cities. The reason to involve these products is to provide travelers
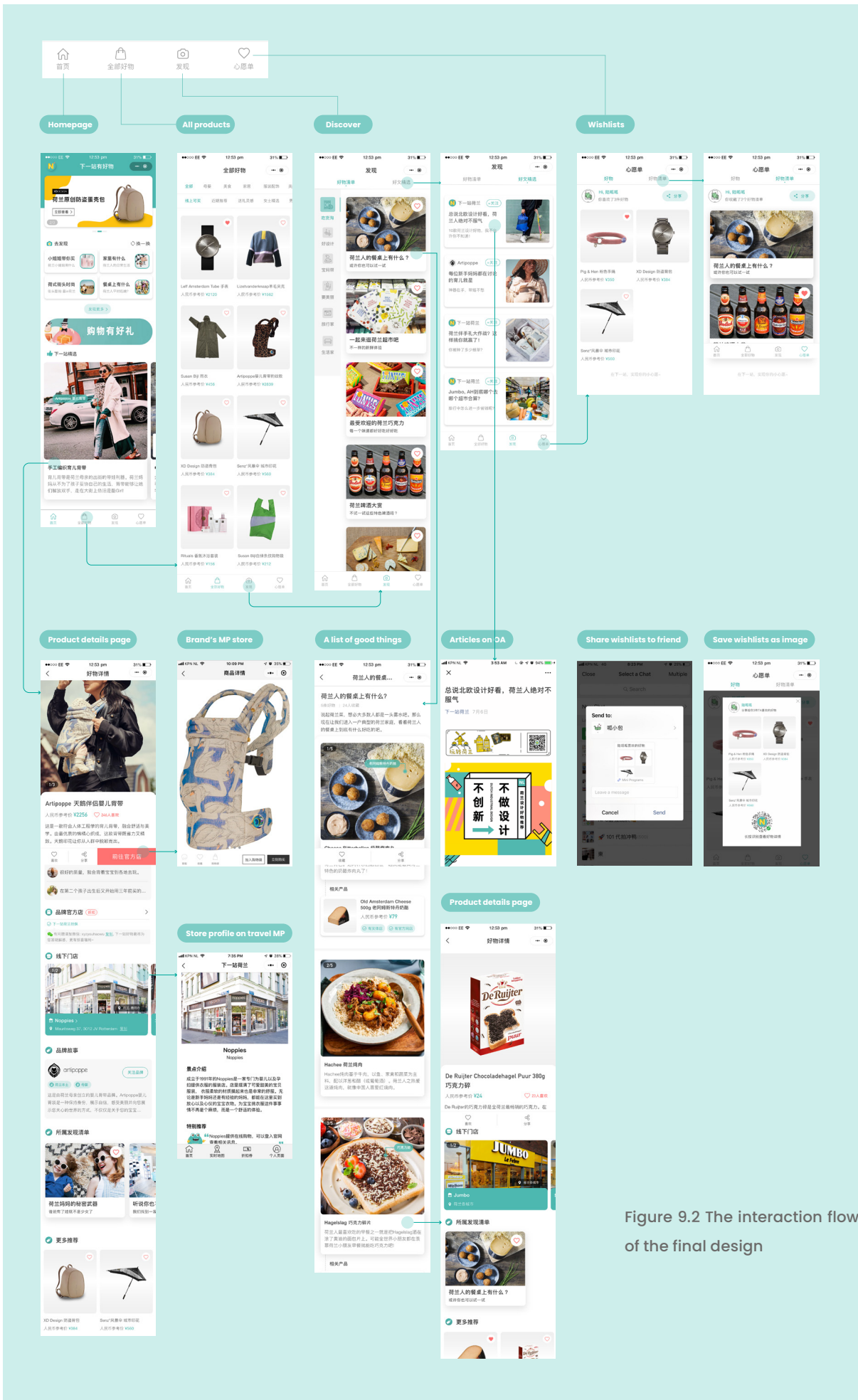
Figure 9.2 The interaction flow of the final design

and people who want to know the Netherlands with more authentic contents.

Figure 9.2 shows the interaction flow of the new design.

■ Homepage

The product card on the homepage also changed a bit because the previous one is considered as too commercial. The new product card (figure 9.3) shows the product in the real context. There is a label on the image showing the product's name and brand. The text below focuses more on how people use the product in daily life instead of introducing the brand itself. If people want to learn more about the product, they can click the card, and the clear product image will appear. By clicking again, users can go to the product details page.

Figure 9.3 The new product card on the home page

■ All products

There is a page shows all products for people with a clear intention to buy certain types of products. There are two filters on top of the page (figure 9.4). The first line shows different product categories. The second line shows some other keywords, for example, gift inspiration, available online, trending, etc.
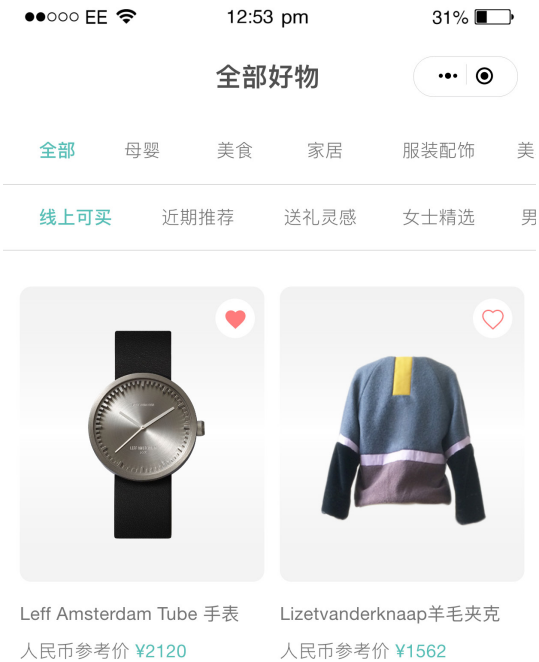
Figure 9.4 All products

■ Discover

Discover page is an essential part of the MP. Users can go to this page from the bottom tab or the "find more" button on the discover module at the homepage.

There are two subpages within discover: Lists of good things & Good articles. The latter stays the same as the previous version, while the former changes a bit (Figure 9.5).

In the previous version, there is no clear standard of how to choose products to form the lists except for some examples. In the new design, there are six categories made which are things for foodies, products with good design, tips from mothers, to be beautiful, for tourists, and enjoy living here. These categories are made according to the testing result of sprint 2 (prototype 1) and sprint 3. They are not the standard categories used for e-commerce platforms, but with the purpose to convey the unique value of Dutch brands. In each category, there are some lists related to the topic, which will be explained on the next page.

The lists can be saved to users' wishlists by clicking the heart button on the image.

Figure 9.5 Discover-Lists of good things

Things for foodies

Products with good design

Tips from mothers

To be beautiful

For tourists

Enjoy living here

Figure 9.6 One example of the list

■ The list of good products

Figure 9.6 shows an example of the list for good things. The name of the list is "What's on Dutch people's dining table?" It starts with a short introduction, then follows with some typical Dutch dishes. Things here are presented in the same form as on the homepage. For the Cheese Bitterballen, the related product is Cheese, so the Old Amsterdam Cheese appears below the card. Except for products, it can also be restaurants (figure 9.7), offline stores, or attractions that have profiles in NPH travel MP.

By clicking the related products or destinations, users can go to the product details page or jump to NPH travel MP. The two MPs owned by NPH are linked together by this design.
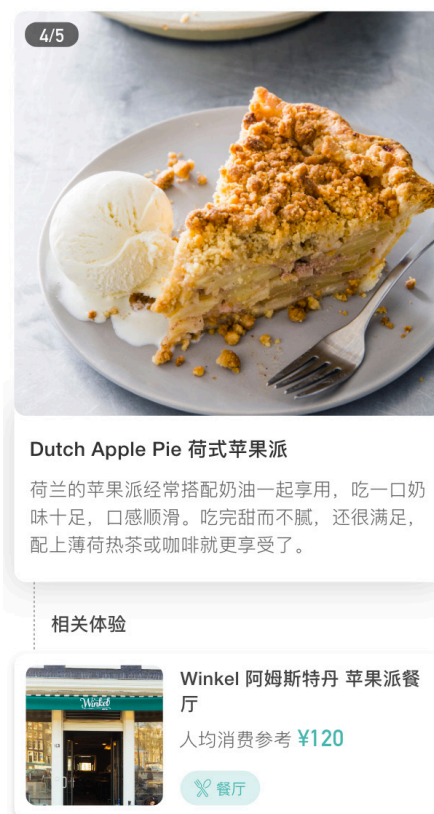
Figure 9.7 The restaurant attaches to the Apple Pie Card

■ Product details page

At the beginning of this chapter, I explained that there are three types of products on the MP (p.69). I will call them Type A, Type B, and Type C in this section. Type A products are from the existing clients so that the platform will place the most emphasis on these products. Type B products are from potential clients and also worth the effort. Type C products are not likely to be sold in China, so there will be less information on the product detail page. Table 9.1 shows the structure of the product details page for each product type.

Besides, there are some further changes to the product details page compared with the previous version (p.64, Figure 8.18):

1. Based on participants' feedback, the first image on the top is now a clear product image instead of the context image.
2. Add more reviews from locals because people like to read them.
3. Change the text "Buy now" on the footer to "Go to the official store".
4. Provide a genuine guarantee and customer service for people who buy products from clients' MP stores.

Information on the page	Type A product	Type B product	Type C product
Product image	3-5 p	3-5 p	1-2 p
Pirce for reference	✔	✔	✔
Introduction	✔	✔	✔
Reviews from locals	✔	✔	✘
Official purchase channel	✔	✘	✘
Offline store	✔ (if there is)	✔ (if there is)	✔ (if there is)
Brand story	✔	✔	✘
The lists it belongs to	✔ (if there is)	✔	✔
More recommendations	✔	✔	✔

Table 9.1 The information on the product details page for each product type

■ Wishlists

The wishlists page stay the same as the previous version. People can share the list to their friends via WeChat, or save the image with the QR code (figure 9.8).
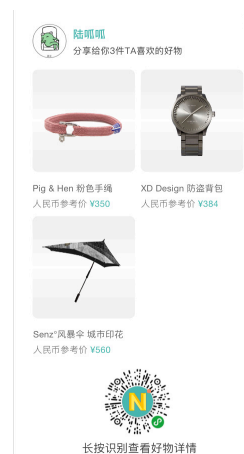
Figure 9.8 Save the image with the QR code

■ Final validation

The final design meets almost all business requirements and user experience requirements introduced in chapter 7.3.

From a business perspective, the MP doesn't have complicated functions that require extended development time (for example, it doesn't have the search function). Also, it has good adaptability to different kinds of products. The advertisement slot on the homepage can be used for various purposes.

From the user perspective, the MP create an authentic feeling in multiple ways. Participants for the final test confirm this point. The wishlists facilitate users to share the products and lists to their friends. Later, functions such as reviews from buyers will be added to the design, which will make the platform more engaging (see chapter 10.2).

The final concept is shown to several end users in China and employees at NextportHolland. The overall feedback is good, and here are some quotes from them.

> **"I like the product cards on the homepage. It is like I'm reading a magazine."**
> -Employee at NextportChina

> **"If I plan to go to the Netherlands, I will definitely use it. I like to find out what local people are using."**
> -Consumers in China

> **"The discovey page is intersting to look at. Maybe you can put more interesting topics on the homepage."**
> -Consumers in China

> **"I don't worry about the authenticity. The platform looks real. And you said it's an official store."**
> -Consumers based in China

> **"I like the offline store and brand stories on the product details page."**
> -Consumers in China

9.2 The business packages for clients

Except for the MP for Chinese consumers, the other part of the solution is the MP store templates for Dutch brands and retailers. After discussing with employees in NextportChina, I learned the quickest and easiest way to realize it is to use the existing MP which the company develops for Schiphol Airport[1]. You can scan the QR code in figure 9.9 to see the structure of this MP.

Figure 9.9 Scan to visit the Schiphol Airport MP developed by NextportChina

■ Structure of the MP store templates

The Schiphol MP contains many UX elements that can be reused in the MP store templates. It will save a lot of development time for the company. However, the Schiphol MP is developed for online pre-order and offline pickup; thus, it has different user flow and page structure to the online store.

To determine the structure of the MP store templates, I did a brainstorming session with the designer at NextportChina. Figure 9.10 shows the outcome. Figure 9.11 to 9.13 explains the UX detail of these options and also give an example.

---

1 It is an MP for Chinese passengers who want to buy tax-free products at Schiphol Airport. People can pre-order products on the MP before the trip, and pick up the products at Schiphol Airport.

Sturcture of the homepage

1. Pop-up windows (optional)
   - For messages and notifications
   - For coupons
   - For promotions
2. Top banner
3. Advertising slots (optional)
4. Coupons (optional)
   - One coupon
   - Several coupons
5. Product category
6. Product recommendation (optional)
7. Seach (optional)

Structure of the category page

1. Top image
2. All products under this category

Structure of the product page

1. Top product images
2. Save button (optional)
3. Share button (optional)
4. Choose the type
5. Descriptions
6. Recommended for you (optional)
7. Footer
   - Customer service (optional)
   - Add to the shopping cart
   - Buy now

Figure 9.10 The structure of the MP store templates

弹窗内容：通知类、信息类
contents for the pop-up: message & notification

弹窗逻辑：视情况而定
Logic: depending

图片不可点击
The image is not clickable

BUTTON

点击按钮后默认关闭弹窗
Close the pop-up window after clicking the button

下单流程

第一步　　第二步　　第三步　　第四步
在线选择　填写个人　到机场领取　取货点
心仪商品　信息并预定　已预订商品　微信支付

旅客须知

1. 目前史基浦机场预定免税商品小程序仅限飞往**非欧盟**的旅客使用（2或3号航站楼起飞）。

2. 每个国家均对免税物品的入境有相应**限额**（如中国入境免税限额为5000人民币）。请务必在购买前仔细确认目的地国家的入境免税限额如果超额携带，请向海关如实申报。

3. **香烟，雪茄和酒**为受限商品。中国海关规定旅客可以免税携带香烟400支（2条）或雪茄100支或烟丝500克，酒2瓶(不超过1.5升)。史基浦机场购物小程序也对此类商品的购买数量进行了限制。

好的

弹窗内容：折扣券 (单张或多张)
Contents: single or multiple coupons

弹窗逻辑：活动期间每位用户每天出现一次
Logic:

整张图片可点击，点击后有两种情况：1.显示领取成功/失败浮层；2.跳转到折扣页面
The whole image is clickable. There're two situations after clicking.
1. show the floating layer
2. jump to another page

点击按钮后默认关闭弹窗
Close the pop-up window after clicking the button

红利日满减优惠券

¥30　　满199可使用　　◆9.5-9.6　　◆仅限满减专区使用　　*3
¥50　　满299可使用　　◆9.5-9.6　　◆仅限满减专区使用　　*3
¥80　　满399可使用　　◆9.5-9.6　　◆仅限满减专区使用　　*3
¥150　 满599可使用　　◆9.5-9.6　　◆仅限满减专区使用　　*3

一键领取

弹窗内容：促销活动 (如黑五、双11等)
Contents: Promotions(e.g. Black Friday, Double 11)

整张图片可点击
The whole image is clickable

点击按钮后默认关闭弹窗
Close the pop-up window after clicking the button

活动大放礼
2018年1月1日-3月31日

Figure 9.11 UX details of three kinds of pop-up screens

Banner内容：促销活动,优惠信息,产品、品牌展示...
Contents: Promotions, discount info, showcase products/brands

Banner 默认长宽比 3:2，支持自定尺寸
Banner default ratio 3:2, can be customized

Banner 可选择 可点击/不可点击
Banner can be clickable or nonclickable

滑动 banner 数量不限。
Unlimited sliders

模块内容：推荐商品
Module contents: recommended products

标题，例如"口碑爆款"
Title, for example "Best Selling"

产品横向滑动条，不限产品数量。
点击绿色区域进入产品详情页。
Horizontal sliders for products, unlimited products.
Click green area to go to the product detail page.

模块内容：商品分类及分类下推荐产品
module contents: Category and recommended three
products in this category

Banner 默认长宽比 2.35:1，支持自定尺寸
Banner default ratio 2.35:1, can be customized

Banner 可点击，点击后进入该分类下商品列表页面
This banner is clickable. Jump to the product list in the category

每个分类下展示 3 个重点商品。包括商品图片、名称、价格。
点击绿色区域进入产品详情页。
Showcase three key products in the category, containing
product image, name, and price. Click any information to go to
the product detail page.

下方按钮点击后跳转该分类下商品列表页面
Click to jump to the product list in the category

目的：为活动页面导流
Drive traffic to the promotion page

广告位默认长宽比 2.35:1，支持自定尺寸
Advertising slots' default ratio 2.35:1, can be customized

广告位可点击，跳转活动页面/其他小程序
Advertising slot is clickable. Jump to promotion page/other MP

Figure 9.12 UX details of elements on the homepage

分类名称

目的：展示一个分类下的所有产品
Display all products in one category

图片默认长宽比 3:2，支持自定尺寸
Image default ratio 3:2, can be customized

展示分类下所有商品。包括商品图片、名称、价格。
点击绿色区域进入产品详情页。
Showcase all products in the category, containing
product image, name, and price. Click any information to go to
the product detail page.

商品名称 € XX.X
Product Name

商品名称 € XX.X
Product Name

商品名称 € XX.X
Product Name

商品名称 € XX.X
Product Name

前沿科技

Beats Studio 3系列头戴式无 € 299

索尼高解析度无线耳机 € 319

戴森超音速吹风机 € 399

飞利浦钻石亮白充电式声波震动刷 € 189

商品详情

商品详情页
Product detail page

收藏按钮，收藏后可以在"我的 - 收藏"中看到
Save button, check saved products in "Me-saved"

收藏按钮，收藏后可以在"我的 - 收藏"中看到
Save button, check saved products in "Me-saved"

产品图，支持任意数量图片，点击后查看原图
The product images, support any numbers. After clicking,
show the original image

商品名称商品名称商品名称 € XX.X
商品副标题 人民币参考价 ¥xx.xx

商品主副标题，价格
The title of the product and price

选择型号 型号1 型号2 型号3 型号4

选择型号 (可选择)
Choose the type (optional)

购买数量 ⊖ 1 ⊕

选购购买数量
Choose the quantity

描述性文字

文字描述
Text description

图片描述 (任意图片数)
Image description (Any numbers)

猜你喜欢

猜你喜欢 (可选择)
Recommended for you (optional)

客服 加入购物车 立即购买

吸底按钮
Fixed footer (add to shopping cart, buy now)

商品详情

Beats Studio 3系列头戴式无线
耳机 € 299
以时尚有型的方式探索音乐世界 人民币参考价¥ 2272.4

选择分类 蓝色 沙黄色 午夜黑 灰色

购买数量 ⊖ 1 ⊕

1. Beats Studio3 Wireless 享受音乐 谢绝噪音。Beats与Apple
在Beats Studio3无线头戴式耳机中配备了Apple W1晶片，为你
带来耳目一新的音乐聆听体验。
2. 充电10分钟=播放3小时。Fast Fuel功能让你于电量不足时，
只需充电10分钟即可播放3小时。

PRODUCT DETAILS
商品参数

品牌	Beats
商品名称	Studio3 Wireless
颜色	黑，白，红，粉，蓝，灰
尺寸	18.4 厘米
重量	260 克
连接方式	3.5mm音频接口/蓝牙连接
外观	头戴式耳机
充电时间	充电 10 分钟即可持续播放 3 小时
电池类型	锂离子充电电池
功能特点	完全自适应消噪 (ANC)
播放时长	22小时

猜你喜欢

客服 加入购物袋 立即预定

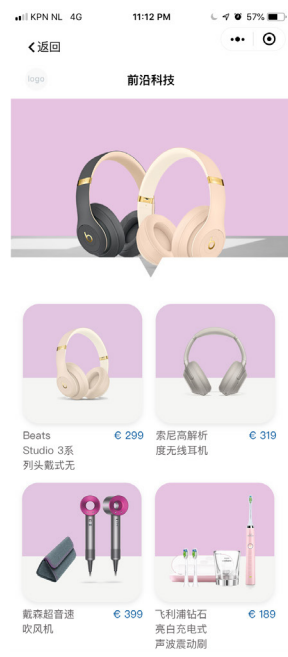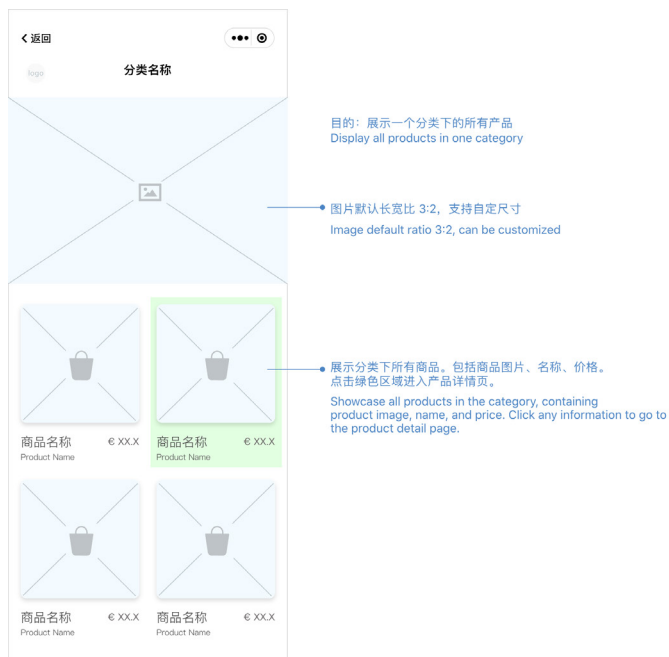**Figure 9.13 UX details of category page and product page**

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10

In this chapter, an implementation plan for the final design will be presented and explained. The plan includes two parts: a vision in 5 years and a tactical roadmap to achieve this vision.

10.1 Vision

As mentioned in company analysis, the e-commerce business is a brand new area for the company, and there is few successful cases to reference . It is essential that the company has a long-term vision of where to go.

Vision in 5 years

Help Chinese consumers to discover authentic products from Benelux and Nordic countries that are worth buying, and guarantee a hassle-free shopping experience.

Help people to discover authentic products
Although the goal of the platform is making money, we should brand it as a helper, not a merchat. As locals, we provide handy information to travlers and consumers who want to experience authentic western culture but don't know how. All the contents we put on the platform should be of high-quality and really

helpful.

Benelux and Nordic countries
In the next five years, we want to scale up the platform, involving not only brands from Benelux, but also Nordic countries for following reason.

"I think Dutch design have a lot of similarities to Nordic design. We are more like a Nordic country, actually."

1. Many interviewees including local Dutches mentioned that Benelux design and Nordic design shared many things in common, for example, they both advocate simplicity and functionality. As a result, the consumers are likely to be the the same group.

2. Nordic design is quite famous in China, but there is no shopping platform focusing on that. It is difficult for consumers to make a choice because there are too many options.

As a result, I would suggest to add Nordic brands to the scope within five years.

Hassle-free shopping experience
Apart from introducing good products, the platform also guarantees a hassle-free shopping experience. It not only means the platform should provide a seamless purchase process, but also means it is a trustworthy organization between consumers and brands who answers questions and solve problems.

10.2 Roadmap

Based on the vision, a 5-year roadmap is created (Figure 10.1). There are three horizons in this roadmap and each one will be discussed in below.

1st Horizon: Preparation

The first horizon starts from October 2019 and lasts for 1.5 years. This is a preparation phase for the 2nd horizon when the "Good things at Next Port" will actually be launched. The principle for the 1st Horizon is to start easily and quickly.

Main activities in the 1st Horizon

1. Develop the shopping MP template as soon as possible (Figure 10.2) as it is the prerequisite of the whole strategy. As discussed in 8.7, the development work wouldn't require big investment based on the Schiphol template.
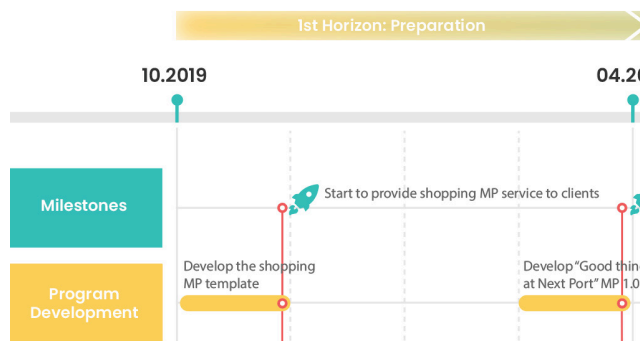

Figure 10.2 Milestones and Program Development in the 1st Horizon

2. After that, we could offer the shopping MP services to our clients at an acceptable price (<2,000 euro per MP). Clients in this horizon are preferably big or middle retailers in the Netherlands with sufficient budget (for example, De Bijenkorf, Funkie House, and Shoeballo). These retailers got more SKUs (Stock keeping unit) than general brands, which is an essential precondition for building "Good things at Next Port" MP in the 2nd Horizon. Also, Chinese consumers are generally more familiar with these big names.

3. Another preparation work is to publish more articles about brands/products/shopping ex-
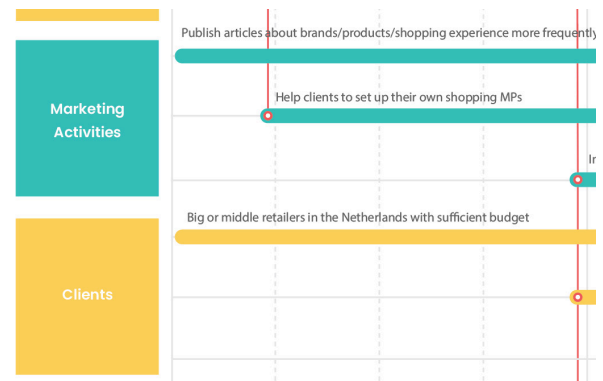

Figure 10.3 Marketing activities and Clients in the 1st Horizon

perience on the NPH WeChat OA, such as the "Dutch Design Products" mentioned in 8.3. Currently, the team publish articles about dining experience in local restaurants every Thursday and build good relationships with some restaurants because of it. It is high recommended that the team could expand the scope to visit local stores and write articles about shopping experience. These contents could be used to fill up "Good things at Next Port" MP later. And it offers a good opportunity for the team to talk with brands and store owners.

Customer segmentation

The customers of the 1st Horizon are mainly Chinese travelers to the Netherlands because the touchpoint here is mainly the articles published on NPH WeChat OA.

One point to note is that different brands certainly bring different types of customers. Travelers are definitely not the only customer segmentation. But other customers need to be obtained through other channels, which requires corresponding marketing strategy based on the characteristics of each brand. As a result, it is meaningless to discuss it here and it doesn't help much to realize the vision.
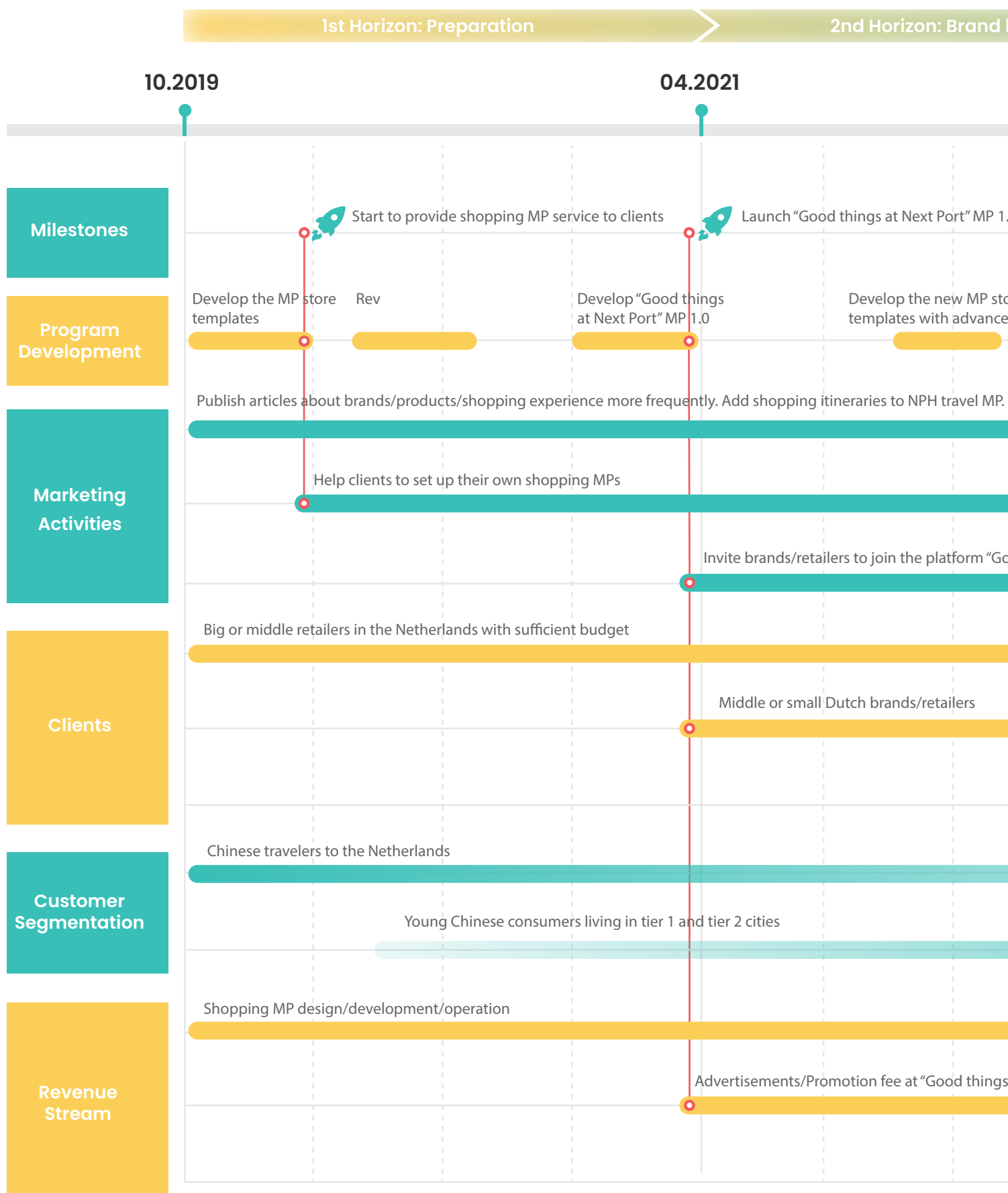
Figure 10.1 The 5-year road map of the e-commerce strategy for NextportChina.

Items connected by red lines starts at the same time and have some causal links.

10.2022

10.2024

🚀 Launch "Good things at Next Port" MP 2.0

ore
d functions

Develop "Good things at
Next Port" MP 2.0

Vision in 5 years

Help Chinese consumers to discover
authentic products from Benelux and
Nordic countries that are worth buying,
and guarantee a hassle-free shopping
experience.

ood things at Next Port"

Brands in other Benelux and Nordic countries

at Next Port" MP 1.0

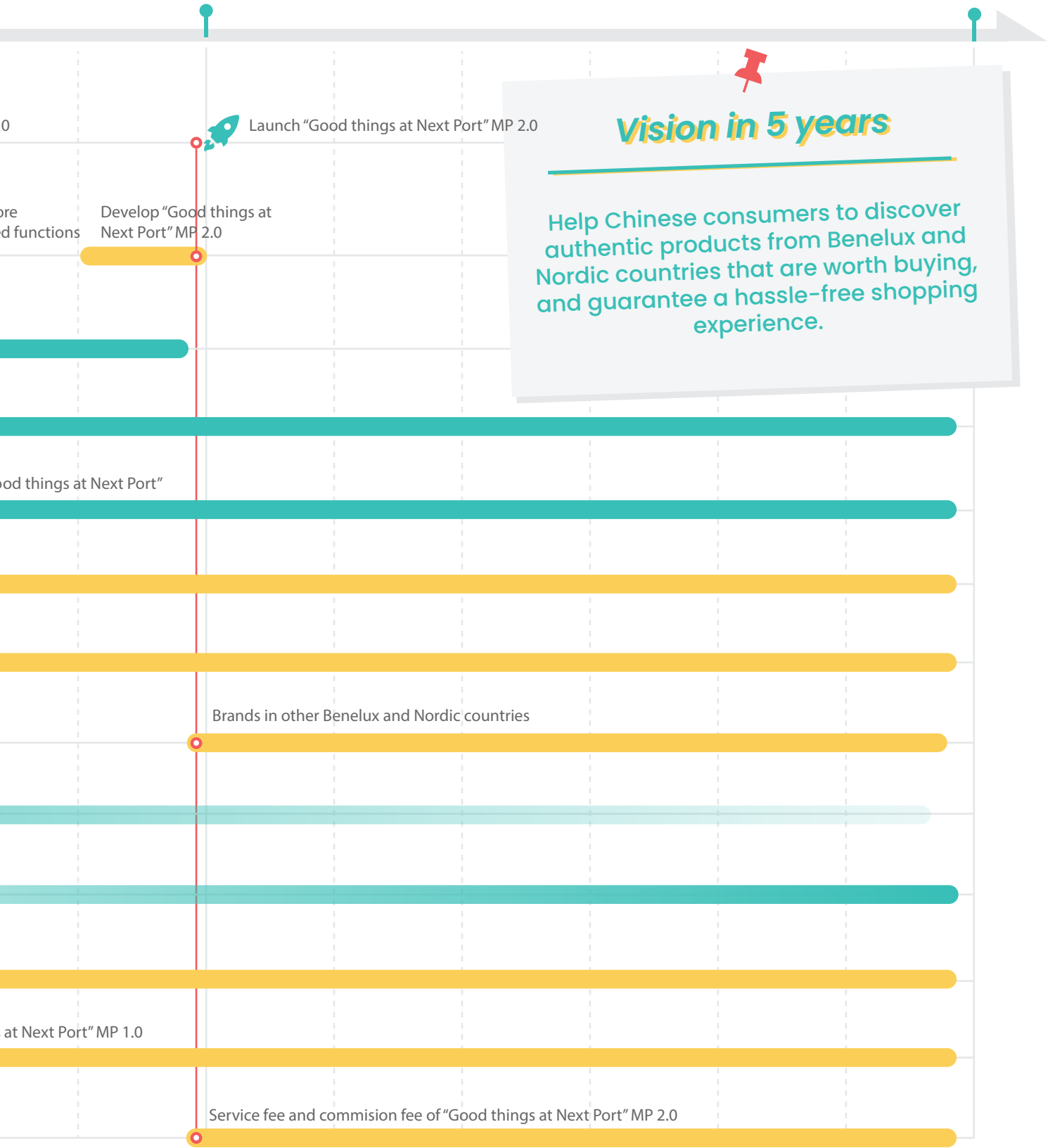Service fee and commision fee of "Good things at Next Port" MP 2.0

Figure 10.4 Customer segmentation in the 1st Horizon

Revenue stream

The main revenue in the 1st Horizon is the design, development, and operation fee of the shopping MP. There should be additional income if extra marketing activities are done.
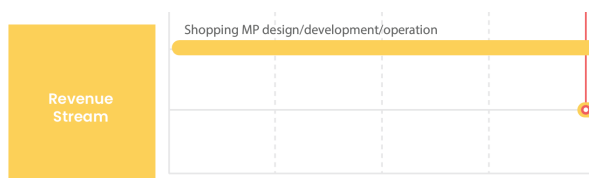

Figure 10.5 Revenue stream in the 1st Horizon

■ 2nd Horizon: Brand building

The second horizon starts from April 2021 and lasts for 1.5 years. At the beginning of the horizon, the MP "Good things at Next Port" will be launched. It is the pivotal moment for the e-commerce strategy. The goal at the end of this horizon is to build a strong brand image of "Good things at Next Port" and generate awareness in Dutch tourism market.

Main activities in the 2nd Horizon

1. The development work for the "Good things at Next Port" MP should be done before the 2nd horizon so the team could start to fill in the platform using resources accumulated in the 1st Horizon.

2. After launching the platform, the team could invite more clients to join it, especially middle or small size brands who don't have enough

budget to set up their own shopping MPs. To be specific, for brands who already have other purchase channels in China, or brands who are skeptical about the result, the team could suggest them to only put their product profiles at very low price and make the decision after checking the traffic metrics (e.g. UV/PV) and engagement metrics (e.g. number of likes and shares). It is also a good opportunity for the team to learn consumer's preference in order to better select brands and promote the platform afterwards.

3. At the middle of the 2nd Horizon, the team could consider to develop a new shopping MP template with advanced funtions. Because the previous one only contains very basic funtions which may not meet marketing needs. Some popular functions in the questionnaire result such as reviews and comments could be added to the new template.
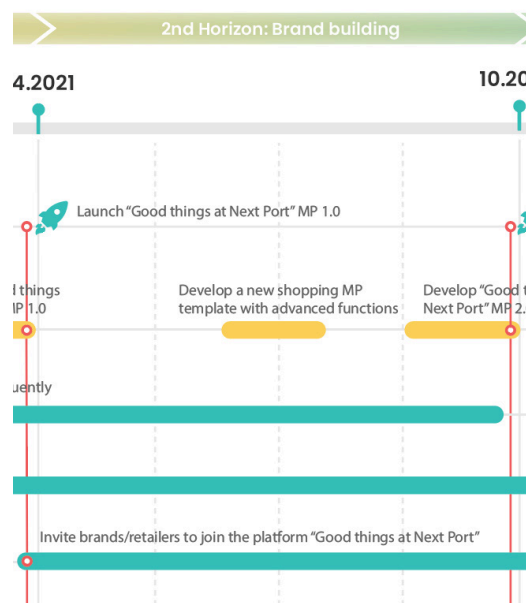

Figure 10.6 Milestones, Program development, and Revenue stream in the 2nd Horizon

Customer Segmentation

In the 2nd horizon, both travelers and non-travelers are our target groups because the plat-

form offers both offline and online shopping information. The strategy in this horizon is to transform travelers into loyal customers so they will keep buying things after the trip. However, according to the testing result, most people won't use the platform after the trip if it only has Dutch brands. A practical way is to guide people to follow the WeChat OA of the brands they are interested in, so they can get notification when there is a promotion.

Revenue stream

Except the revenue gained by the shopping MP, there are also advertisement and promotion fee on "Good things at Next Port" in the 2nd horizon (see Chapter 9).

◼ 3rd Horizon: Scale up

The third horizon starts from October 2022 and lasts for 3 years. At the beginning of the horizon, the MP "Good things at Next Port" version 2.0 will be launched. This is a big transformation. Before version 2.0, the MP is a pure recommendation platform because all purchases are done at shopping MPs owned by different brands. From the 3rd Horizon, the team will start to sell products on "Good things at Next Port" MP. It is a necessary step to reach the vision, because only by doing so, the team could cut the expense and scale up the platform quickly to gain more customers.

Main activities in the 3rd Horizon

1. The most important development work is adding the shopping function to "Good things at Next Port" MP before the start of the 3rd Horizon. It is preferred functions such as reviews and best-seller list mentioned in testing could also be added.

2. The sales team need to expand the scope to wider areas, namely Benelux countries and Nordic countries. Also, the selected brands/products should meet the requirements of overseas shopping, instead of just pleasing travelers.
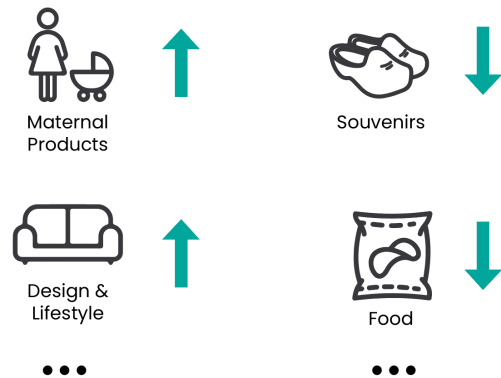
Figure 10.7 Examples of changes to the products

Customer segmentation

The main group in the 3rd Horizon is Chinese young consumers living in tier 1 and tier 2 cities who pursue high-end life style. This definition refers to the user structure of Red App and the case study of "Property Of".

The proporsition of travelers in this horizon will be further reduced. But it is recommended to keep the offline shopping information as it is the proof of the authenticity, and also guide traffic to the travel MP.

Revenue stream

The additional revenue in the 3rd horizon is the service fee of joining "Good things at Next Port" and commision fee for transactions.

11

11.1 Project conclusion

As the assignment is a practical business challenge with little previous experience, I started with the 4C's analyses instead of literature review.

For company analysis, I learned the main resources of the company and its current strategy for e-commerce business.

For consumer analysis, I used both quantitative methods (questionnaire) and qualitative methods (interviews) to find out insights from different user groups. The result helps to answer the first and second research question.

For context analysis, I focused on the WeChat ecosystem and consumer trends that are relevant to the project.

For competitor analysis, I researched competitors from four levels, and find out three gaps that provide opportunities for differentiation.

The literature review was conducted while doing 4C's analysis. I reviewed previous research about outbound shopping behavior for Chinese consumers after the company analysis. That is because I found out the company has already built a strong connection with tourists via the NPH platform. Literature about brand authenticity was reviewed after the questionnaire analysis, which shows authenticity is highly essential to Chinese consumers.

In the design phase, I followed the classical iterative design process. Before I have the final design, three sprints (specification-design-development-testing) are conducted. The feedback from users and business concerns from the company are both taken into consideration while developing the concept.

The final design contains two parts. The first is a WeChat mini-program called "Good things at Next Port". It is a product recommendation platform for Chinese consumers who want to experience authentic Dutch culture. The other part is the MP store templates for Dutch brands and retailers who wish to establish online sales channels in China.

In the end, a five-year roadmap was developed to present the long-term vision and the steps to fulfill the vision.

11.2 Limitations and next steps

■ Limitations

There are several limitations to this project in both research phase and design phase.

Research phase

1. The sample size of the questionnaire is 98, which is a bit small for quantitative analysis. The small sample size might decrease the statistical power of conclusions from consumer research. Also, the respondents for the questionnaire are mainly from one province in China, so the outcome might not represent the situation of the whole country.

2. In consumer research, it is preferred to interview people who are now traveling in the Netherlands or people who just come back, because they have a more profound impression over their shopping experience in the Netherlands. However, I fail to reach these people via social media platforms. Some people I interviewed with already left the country for years, and they forgot many details.

Design phase

1. From the second sprint, most of the testing with Chinese consumers was done online or by someone else. As a result, I cannot observe the behavior and facial expressions of participants. It is a pity because this subtle evidence sometimes can provide rich insights.

2. As the design iteration for the consumer product takes too long, there is no time left to develop the MP store templates for clients further and test the idea with some brand owners.

■ Next steps

1. According to the roadmap, the MP store templates need to be developed soon. But the UX interaction is not fully developed yet. More work needs to be done to finish all the details of the the templates.

2. I validated the final design with three consumers in China, but they are not subscribers of NPH OA, and they don't have a plan to visit the Netherlands. It is preferred if the concept could be tested by more NPH OA subscribers in China.

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