

4-27-2001

The market of weight loss products

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LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

Department of Marketing and International Business

Business Project

(BUS331)

Research Topic:

The market of weight loss products

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Section : 5

Date : 27 April, 2001

Special Thanks and Acknowledgments

Special thanks go to Dr. Cui Geng for his advises of the study. I appreciate the understanding and support of him during the process of the study. He is true professional!

For the helpful suggestions during my preparation of this study,

I am grateful to the following individuals:

- *Libby Chan – In depth interview of Herbalife*
- *Karen Ng*
- *Billy Yip*
- *Esther Tong*
- *Victor Lee*
- *T. Y. Suen*
- *Vincent Li*
- *P. M. Ng*

There are numerous interviewees to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for their assistance in making this project a reality.

I thank all these people for their efforts.

Jessica Ng

27 April 2001

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Rationale

It is true that women pay much more attention to their body shape than before, they all want to be slimmer and slimmer. Slim is implied to confidence. It is a new standard of beauty in many developed countries. When this trend has been established, many businesses produce different kinds of weight loss products in order to aid women loss fat. These products are very popular all over the world including Hong Kong.

Nowadays, losing fat is an important issue to women. Women use different kinds of weight loss product especially young women. However, some of the products are harmful to our health and they are with many side effects. And some contents of weight loss product advertisements are not real. There are many people overtaking or misusing weight loss products. Finally, it was harmful to their health and some of them even died. In order to understand how losing fat deeply becomes part of our life and why do weight loss products become much more popular than before, it is important for us to do the study.

In order to meet the research objectives, the main origins of weight loss products will be discussed. They are China, Japan, USA, etc. When they enter to Hong Kong market, some producers perform very well. A research will be done in order to understand what marketing strategies are they used. And, because of the popularity of weight loss products and easy access to such information, weight loss products are reported with many side effects and without helping lose fat. Even some of the products can damage our health. So, we need to know the

government regulation(s) to see if there is any law to regulate the producers and to see either the weight loss product producers have business ethic or not.

It is very common that the weight loss products are very expensive, but still many people buy them. And, people always say that women's money can be earned easily. So, doing a research can understand the buying decision making of buying these products. In fact, there are many kinds of methods to lose fat, and the main competitor of weight loss products is, for example, beauty center. And even some of the weight loss methods are without side effect such as nutrition meal. In this situation, will weight loss products still be popular or will be replaced by other kinds of products in the future? And, nowadays, men also paid much attention to their body shape, so we need to know whether the market still can be explored or not.

Research objectives

In this project, the research objectives are to understand the consumer behavior of buying weight loss products and we especially need to know consumer knowledge, attitude and value. Finding out the social responsibility and business ethic of producing and promoting weight loss products is another objective. It is important to understand what promotion strategies are used by weight loss product producers. Finally, it is to understand what is the market trend of these products in the future.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The trend of slimming

When the modern struggle against fat, women therefore have been much more aware of their body shape than before. This trend has been pervasive and cuts so deeply into many people's lives. (Stearns, 1997). "They need to stay thin, or at least to desire to become thin" (Stearns, 1997). It is a new standard of beauty and morality. So, a huge commercial literature and products line are designed in order to aid the women who want to be slim. All over the world, women like to take weight loss products and other kinds of weight loss methods in order to stay thin and gain confidence, especially in those developed countries.

Weight Survey in Hong Kong

Women always feel unhappy with their weight. According to the survey from the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (1993), the average weight of females is 118.9 lbs., and 77% of the females are within the weight range 100 to 129 lbs. However, 52 % of females are dissatisfied with their current weight. 45% feel they are over-weight, while 8% believe they are under-weight. Of those dissatisfied with their weight, 28% feel unhappy about it. When those who are dissatisfied with their weight, 61% have adopted some means to improve it. In order to improve their weight condition, 47% and 36 % of females choose dieting and doing more exercise respectively. Actually, many women are not over-weight, but they still think that it is a need for them to lose fat. It shows that losing fat becomes part of Hong Kong culture.

The seriousness of losing fat

Dieting is commonly adopted when women lose fat. However, over-dieting can cause anorexia nervosa. In Hong Kong, about 10% of the population potentially have this kind of disease when most of them are women, their average age is only 25. It shows that young women are especially aware of their body shape (Apple Daily, 2000). When people have Anorexia Nervosa, their weights will be reduced up to about 25%. Some of them even died because of over dieting (Atkinson, 1994). It is a serious problem in many developed countries. Clearly, the concept of slimming is over-emphasized. In fact, when women want to lose fat, taking weight loss products is the best choice. By virtue of that they can eat anything as usual, they need not do exercise. It can match the needs of Hong Kong people.

Understanding Consumers

Losing weight has become a pressure to most women. According to Solomon (1999), women's physical appearance is a large part of her self-concept. Body image is very important to females. Women have their ideal of beauty, and the pressure of losing weight is continually reinforced both by advertising and by peers. A distorted body image has been linked to the rise of eating disorders, which are particularly prevalent among young women. Most of them are found in white, upper-middle class teenage and college-age women.

The traits of consumers

The target customers of weight loss products can be estimated as female and the age group is about 18-34 according to the above findings. The educational level of the target customers is high school graduate or above, and they are middle class or above. It is because professional/executive/traders and women from high-income groups are more likely to use drugs to improve their weight condition. The reasons are that they do not have much time to do exercise, and they have the ability to buy the drug pills (Family Planning Association of Hong Kong, 1993). In the psychographic dimension, these women perceive a strong link between self-esteem and appearance. And they are bombarded by images of thin, happy people.

Consumer behavior

It is difficult to know exactly how thin women want to be. However, people commonly hope that they can be as thin as a super star, this trend can be found in many developed countries such as Japan, Hong Kong and USA. According to Bigge (1982) and Bandura (1925), observational learning is one of the reasons why people learn from the super star. By virtue of that the super stars are with the traits which are beauty, ability, etc. So they will be the “model”, and people will imitate them in order to be recognized by the others (Fong, 1994).

When women feel dissatisfied with their weight/body shape, they will have the intention to lose weight. According to the survey by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, it found that half of the 342 interviewees (women, aged 18-55) have used weight loss products in the past two years, and one third of them spent about \$800 per month on weight loss products. But 67 % of them stopped using them within 1-2 months because they found that the products couldn't help them to loss weight. One fact must be pointed out, that is 60% of the interviewees believed that the products were without side effect. Most of them ignored the dangers of the products (Hong Kong Commercial News, 2000).

From the survey, it can be seen that women are particularly vulnerable. They are willing to spend much in order to be more beautiful and confident, it is a social force and pressure. And they tend to believe is the advertisement contents. When women feel that they are fat, they will think it is very urgent to improve it. Women also have curiosities to try weight loss products in

order to know whether the products can really help lose fat or not. They believe that if they do not try it, they have never known the benefit.

Doing exercise needs long term commitment, so the weight loss products may be the best ways to help women losing weight within a short period but without doing exercise and dieting. In Hong Kong, people are always very busy with their work. Recently, 1,322 office workers were interviewed. The survey discovered that 40 per cent of them did not do exercise at all, and more than 45 per cent of people rather to spend more than three hours per week sitting in front of the television or the computer (Sing Tao Group, 2000). So, weight loss products play a significant role when people are less willing to do exercise. People can lose fat or weight easily after taking the products, it is without dieting and spending time on doing exercise.

Understanding the promotion strategies of weight loss products

The market researchers and advertising firms have used their special skills to educate people about healthy behavior. It is why there are many kinds of weight loss products and many businesses are successful. During the 1980s, the social marketing approach to health education has made an important contribution to the promotion strategies (Unicef, 1990). And, the marketers use a good promotion strategy in their advertising, they always emphasize that their products are tested. And they ask specialists to prove that their products are reliable and useful. “Consumers are often influenced by experts who are assumed to be able to evaluate products in an objective, informed way” (Solomon, 1999).

Another strategy is to ask the celebrities (or super stars) to promote their products. Women then will think that they can be as thin as the super star if they use the products. Another strategy for selling these products is, attractiveness and confidence can be achieved after taking the products. It is very important, all women agree the phrase “it is better to be beautiful”, not only the outlook, if their body shapes are thin enough, they will think that “a waist that a man can close his hand around” (New York Times, 1999). Women think that “a beautiful woman is not just admired, she is idealized, lusted after and envied” (New York Times, 1999). In fact, those unattractive women are easily discriminated or laughed at. In order to gain the confidence and attraction, some women tend to buy and use weight loss products.

Understanding the competitors

In Hong Kong, besides weight loss products, many beauty centers also provide weight loss service. They use special machines to help burning fat, or use body massage and “weight loss creams” to help losing fat. At the same time, they provide full set of service for customers. It seems that women are more willing to consume in beauty centers rather than taking weight diet pills. However, weight loss products are still very popular because of the cheaper price. Another issue is that when people consume in beauty center, it takes much time. In the mean time, the weight loss ways that are adopted by the beauty center are more risky than taking weight loss products. First of all, the service providers always ask customers to pay much at the first time. When customers find that the course is not suitable for them, they cannot claim back the money. Sometimes, the customers charge the beauty center because the customers get hurt from the unsuitable course, and some beauty consultants are not professional enough to help people losing fat (Apple Daily, 2000).

Compare with these two kinds of weight loss methods, weight loss products are much more popular than beauty centers because of less consumption fee and less risk. However, the beauty centers still can survive because customers can get advises from beauty consultants. Also, many rich women are willing to pay much, what they want to get is the excellent service. So, many beauty centers with good reputation still have many customers, it is a kind of brand loyalty.

Understanding the benefits of weight loss products

The Consumer Council (Sing Pao, 2000) pointed out that most of the contents of weight loss product advertisements were not real although the weight control product producers always say that their products can really help lose fat. A weight loss product is made by pepper and chili, the producer said that the ingredients could help burn fat. It seems that it is very scientific, so the product is very popular. However, eating too much pepper and chili can never lead to losing weight, it only leads to ill health. And people may suffer nervous disorders when taking this kind of product. Such diets could have serious health effects like causing stomach ulcers, anaemia and menstrual difficulties (SCMP, 1999). In the above case, it clearly states that that weight loss products cannot really help us to lose weight. On the contrary, it may have serious effects on us if it is not used properly.

The unreal pharmaceutical value of the weight loss products

The goals of slimming are not only for beauty, fatness can cause heart disease, hypertension and diabetics. In order to be healthier, people are always encouraged to lose fat if they are over weight. Therefore, recently, many weight loss products always emphasize the function of speeding up the excretion of body waste, harmful substances and excess fluid in order to clear pimples. So, it attracts the people who especially want to improve their skin. However, the Consumer Council in Hong Kong has tested 10 products which emphasize that they have the above medical or health benefits. It was found that some product ingredients are

without the above medical benefits. Some producers even said that their products could cure the hypertension, diabetes mellitus, etc. Definitely, it is not real. And, the Consumer Council received 293 complaints about the health food (Sing Pao, 2000). In USA, also, there is a popular weight loss product producer—CONCORD, Calif. They pointed out that they are “all-natural products”. However, the Inter-Health Nutraceuticals Inc., found that the active ingredient of the product is ineffective (Chain Drug Review, 1999).

Understanding the Government Regulation

The above findings suggest that there is a need for the government to regulate weight loss products. In fact, the government has laws to regulate drugs. However, the diet pills are not monitored. According to Scarlett, (SCMP, 1999) President of the Practicing Pharmacists Association, “the sale of diet pills was largely unmonitored because many were marketed as **health products.**” Under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, only drugs need to be registered with the Department of Health, leaving health food unmonitored. So, there is a need for the government to call for new laws to monitor the sale of diet pills.

The weight loss product marketers are trying to avoid the monitoring. In Hong Kong, up to now, there is only one diet pill approved by the Department of Health. But the pills are sold as a prescription drug only. An expert has warned that taking the pills will face embarrassing side effects (SCMP, 1999). Clearly, people will rarely choose this weight loss pill. They rather choose other kinds of weight loss products (or health products) which are without embarrassing side effects. Another important reason is that other weight loss products can be bought anywhere.

USA Government regulation in monitoring weight loss products

In USA, there are several laws of weight loss products to protect customers. According to Federal Food and Drug Act (1906), it prohibits adulteration and misbranding of foods and drugs

involved in interstate commerce, and it is strengthened by the Food, Drug, and Cometic Act (1938) and the Kefauver Harris Drug Amendment of 1962 (Boone, 1996). Recently, the FDA also issued a health warning about a weight loss product that was marketed as a natural remedy but which the agency said was an “unapproved new drug” (Dataline Washington, 1999). In comparison, Hong Kong does not have such laws, Hong Kong government should therefore learn from the other countries in order to protect the customers.

Summary

From the above secondary data, we still cannot know what exactly consumer behavior of buying weight loss product is. A slim body shape is the common ideal for every woman. However, we still do not know when they will stop losing fat. If the height of a person is 150cm, she may think that 100 pounds are thin enough. But some may think that 90 pounds will be better. And some women think that too thin is no good at all. If the price of the weight loss products is decreased, will women buy it even they do not have the intention to lose fat?

Recently, the economy of Hong Kong is not good. However, weight loss products are always set for a high price. Will women still be willing to buy the products? Will they choose dieting instead of taking weight loss products? Because of the bad economy, can weight loss products still survive? Recently, it is easy to see that the weight loss products are on sale. The price of weight loss products is even cut half. However, do women have confidence to buy the product which is in a low price? In people's mind, the price of a product has been linked to the quality of the product.

Furthermore, although people commonly know that weight loss products are with many side effects and the medical benefits of the products are not real at all, people still buy much. Even some products are with excellent sale, people buy them again and again. Is that because the products really help losing fat or just psychosomatic complaint (心理作用) only? The weight loss products are mainly made in Japan, China and USA. When they enter Hong Kong

market, they use different kinds of promotion strategy. So, their advertisements should be understood deeply in order to know why some of their products have good sale. Recognizing what factor(s) cause their products successful (or failure) is an important issue in this study. Is that the advertising or the product effectiveness?

Some weight loss products can help women lose fat and gain confidence, some cannot. Some products have side effect, others do not. In this situation, is that the producers have aid to the society or they just bring some trouble to the society? When they are marketed as “health food”, the producers should have the social responsibility to improve users’ health. Therefore, it is a need to understand whether they have business ethics or not.

Government regulations are also very important. However, as mentioned before, the law in Hong Kong is not well developed to protect the customers. Does it mean weight loss product producers can do unethical things because of the imperfect law? In fact, cigarette is harmful to health and the packages of the product have been needed to add a government warning for a long time. So, the government also can add a warning in the package of weight loss product. Just like USA, the warning “unapproved new drug” is required to add in.

Now, males also pay much attention on their body shape. And the rate of male getting Anorexia nervosa is increasing (Apple Daily, 2000). It is a signal for the marketers that weight loss products (for men) is a potential market. It is a must to understand this trend and know whether it should have male weight loss products or not. At the same time, after pregnancy,

women will be much fatter than before. Women always worry about this. In many beauty centers, they have courses for women who have given birth. However, it is still not popular for the weight loss products which for those women use. This research will help predicting the market trend.

All the above points should be found in the primary data. And this study can let us know more about this market. As the weight loss products are very popular now, even it becomes part of women's life. Knowing more about this market and consumer behavior can definitely learn much.

Chapter 3

Theory Construction

Body Mass Index (BMI)

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a very important factor which can affect people' perceptions, attitudes and actual behavior. Therefore, the term "Body Mass Index" must be defined first before going to the part of measure and analysis. BMI is used to test whether people are thin, standard or fat. BMI is a common formula to calculate people's body figure all over the world. Interviewees' current weight will not be measured in here. It is because weight cannot exactly show how is the body figure of a person. People's body figure is affected by their height at the same time. Using BMI can indicate how is the body figure of a person.

The formula is as follow:

$$\mathbf{BMI = Weight (Kg) / Height (M) / Height (M)}$$

The standard BMI of Male and female should be 19 to 24 and 20 to 25 respectively, However, some experts pointed out that Asian women should be 19 to 23, but not 24.

For example, Hong Kong famous actress, Kwok Ho Ying, her weight and height are 44Kg and 1.675 M respectively. Applying to the formula, her BMI is only 15.68. Therefore, she is under weight.

Perception of weight issue (Independent Variables)

In the questionnaire, interviewers (both female and male) will be asked the perception of weight. That is, a height is given and respondents will be required to make a judgement of standard weight based on the given height. The calculation of the standard weight is based on the calculation of Body Mass Index. Female will be asked if a woman is 155CM, what is the ideal standard weight then. If their answers are 97 pounds or below, they will be defined as Unrealistic Perception (too thin), 98-119 pounds will be defined as Reasonable Perception (standard weight), 121 or above is Optimistic Perception (too fat).

Males will be asked if a man is 165CM, what is the ideal standard weight then. If their answers are 120 pounds or below, they will be defined as Unrealistic Perception (too thin), 121-150 pounds will be defined as Reasonable Perception (standard weight), 151 or above will be defined as Optimistic perception C (too fat).

Gender

Males believe that having a healthy and muscular body figure is much more attractive. However, most females believe that slim body figures can show their attractiveness.

H1: Males have a more realistic perception of weight issue than females do.

Age

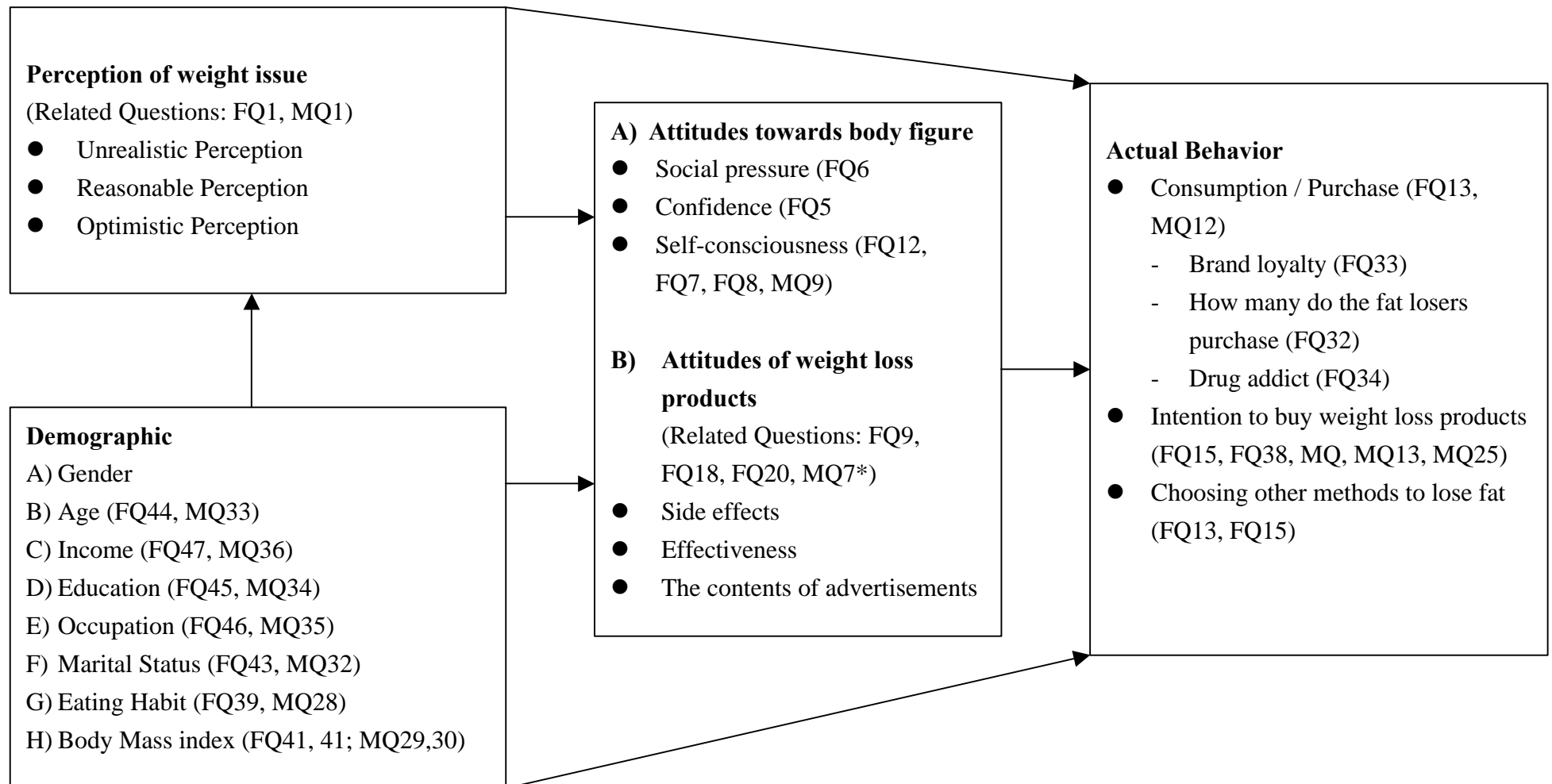
Younger people (especially younger women) are easily affected by the other. When the society emphasizes that slim is beauty, younger people misunderstand that slim is good.

H2: Younger people have a more unrealistic perception of weight issue than older people do.

Body Mass Index

Under weight people trust that they have a standard weight, otherwise, they will gain fat. When the mass media emphasizes the concept “slim is beauty”, they tend to believe that a slim body figure is a must.

H3: Under weight people have a more unrealistic perception of weight issue than heavy people do.



(FIGURE 1 – Theory Construction)

* The explanations can be seen in the next pages.

Attitudes towards body figure (Independent Variables)

In the questionnaires, people will be asked their attitudes towards body figure. Some attitude statements will be given to the interviewees and they are required to tell whether they agree with the statements or not. The statements are to test people's self-consciousness, confidence and social pressure, etc.

Gender

As suggested before, women always feel unhappy with their weight. However, most males do not mind whether they are fat or not because men's confidence is gained by having a high social status.

H4: Females think that a slim body figure is more important than males do.

Perception

If a person has an unrealistic perception of weight issue, that means he or she does not know what is standard weight. He or she will then has a negative comment on their own body figure even he or she has a standard weight.

H5: People who have unreasonable perception of weight issue will have negative attitudes their own body figure than the people who have a reasonable perception.

Body Mass Index

Although many under weight people still are not satisfied with their body figure, they want to be thinner. However, over weight people will feel more “terrible” with their body figure and they will comment badly with their own body figure.

H6: Over weight people have negative attitudes of their body figure than under weight people do.

Attitudes towards weight loss products (Independent Variables)

A customer's overall evaluation of a product sometimes accounts for the bulk of his or her attitude. Therefore, interviewees will be asked their attitudes of weight loss products. There are three dimensions of this problem, they are side effects, effectiveness, the contents of advertisements.

Side effect

If a weight loss product has side effect, it can damage people's health. People want to be healthy, they are less willing to buy weight loss products if they think that all weight loss products are with side effects.

H7: If people trust that weight loss products are without side effect, they will buy more weight loss products than those who do not trust.

Effectiveness

The main theme of buying weight loss products is to lose fat. Therefore, people are not willing to buy it if the product does not have a good weight loss benefit.

H8: If people have a positive attitude of weight loss benefit of weight loss product, they will buy more weight loss products than those who have a negative attitude.

The contents of advertisements (weight loss products)

It is common that the advertisements of weight loss products are very attractive. However, most contents of these advertisements are true. As suggested before, the advertisers use different kinds of methods to make their products more attractive such as using celebrities, expert, etc. However, not all customers are vulnerable and they do not believe the advertisements at all. It implies that this kind of customers is less willing to buy weight loss products.

H9: If people trust that the contents of advertisements of weight loss products, they will buy more weight loss products than those who do not trust.

Actual Behavior (Dependent Variables)

1) Gender

Women's physical appearance is a large part of her self-concept. And the pressure of losing weight is continually reinforced by advertising and by peers. And women fear that they will be discriminated if they are fat. Women think that happy life and confidence are come from a good body shape. So women are more easily persuaded to buy weight loss products.

H10: Women purchase more weight loss products than men do.

2) Age

Younger women want to be slimmer. By virtue of that they want to be more attractive and gain confidence. When women are getting older, their peers also are more mature, they do not laugh at the one who do not have a slim body figure.

H11: Younger people buy more weight loss products/ pay more attention to body shape than older people do.

3) Income

The price of weight loss products is quite high especially for the products which are promoted by super stars. However, the most expensive way to lose fat is in beauty center, and they provide excellent services and consultations to customers. So, it is predicted that high-income

groups will choose losing fat at beauty center. And middle income group will choose to buy weight loss products. And low-income group will choose doing exercise, dieting to lose fat.

H12: High-income groups will buy more weight loss products than low-income groups do.

4) Education

If women are well educated, they will understand that obesity is unhealthy at all. And they know that the most effective way to lose fat is to do exercise. They are not influenced easily by the others such as peers, advertising easily. Less educated people are much vulnerable than well-educated people.

H13: Well-educated women will buy less weight loss products than less educated women do.

5) Occupation

White collars always sit in the office, so they gain fat easily. And, women always discuss the topic “loss fat” in the office. Professional are extremely busy with their work. Therefore, it is predicted that they do not have much time to do exercise.

H14: White collars buy more weight loss products than blue collars do.

6) Marital Status

Single and divorce women pay more attention to their body figure because they want to be

more attractive. However, it is predicted that married women pay less attention to their body shape. One of the reasons is that women pay much effort on their family and do not have time to pay attention to their body figure. And they think that happiness is the most important thing in their lives. However, after pregnancy, women will think that it is urgent to lose fat because they will become fat.

H15: Single / divorce people pay more attention to their body shape / buy more weight loss products than married women do.

7) Eating habit

In the questionnaires, people will be asked their eating habits. If they choose the following eating habits, they will be defined that they have a good eating habit which will not cause them to gain fat:

- 1) Eat much vegetable than meat
- 2) Do not have breakfast / lunch / dinner
- 3) Put much attention to food energy when buying food

On the other hand, if people have the following eating habits, they will be defined as without a good eating habit which will cause them to gain fat:

- 1) Eat much meat than vegetable
- 2) Like to eat night food

- 3) Like to eat much snacks
- 4) Like to eat at outsides rather than cooking / eating at home

If they choose both good eating habit bad eating habit, they will also be grouped as bad eating habit. It is real that eating more vegetable / less oily food will be much healthier, and it will not let people gain fat easily. However, if someone likes to eat much meat and snack, and having the habit to eat night food, they will gain fat easily. And, some people cannot control their eating aptitude, it is a crisis for women because they will gain fat easily. Especially for women, after eating much food, they always feel sad because they worry that their weight will increase.

H16: People who have a good eating habit (eat less night food / snack / meat, etc) will purchase less weight loss products than those who have a bad eating habits.

8) Body Mass Index

If women are too heavy, they will think that it is urgent to lose fat and buy more weight loss products. According to the theory of observational learning, all women want to be as thin as super star. When women think that they are over weight, they are more willing to buy the products. It is because they may think that they can be as slim as the super star after taking the products.

H17: Over weight people buy more weight loss products than under weight people.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

The research will be divided into two parts. The first part is to interview the females about their opinion of losing weight and behaviors with using questionnaires. The second part is to interview males who want to lose fat in order to understand the future market trend and their opinion of losing weight and behaviors.

Sampling

A) Female questionnaire

The sample size will be about 200, women who are between 17-60 will be the population.

They will be divided into several groups as follow:

Group 1 : University students (sample size 60)

Group 2 : Working women and unemployment women (sample size 110)

Group 3 : Housewife (sample size about 30)

In group one, there are two universities will be randomly selected. And each university will have about 30 interviewees. In group two and group three, there are commercial and/or industry zones which will be selected in New Territories, Kowloon and Hong Kong Island randomly. A meter to will be used to measure it, which every 10th person will be invited to fill the questionnaire.

The response rate is predicted as 50%, 400 people will therefore be invited to interview. Women will be asked to fill the questionnaire until getting enough samples. And, when using

meter to measure the 10th women of group two, once they refuse, the second 10th will be chosen until I get enough samples.

B) Male questionnaire

The population will be all fat men in Hong Kong who is 18-50. On account of that this kind of men cannot be met easily, convenience sampling will be used. Once a fat man is met who is about 18-50, they will be invited to fill the questionnaire immediately. The sample size will be about 70. In these non-probability samplings, people will be asked to fill the questionnaire until the samples are enough in order to handle the nonresponse problem.

The survey

Female questionnaire is mainly to measure women' perceptions, attitudes and actual behaviors. Besides, their consumer behaviors will be asked in detailed in order to make recommendations.

In order to know the future trend of weight loss products market, it is quite a need to interview men with a fat body (Because men are predicted to not lose fat unless they are really fat). They will be asked weight perception and attitudes. Also, they will be asked if they have intention to purchase weight loss products. Consumer behaviors will also be included in order to make recommendations.

Chapter 5

Results & Analysis

Survey Background Information

In the survey, there were total 200 women and 70 men interviewed. There were 7 questionnaires done half-only (3 from women, 4 from men), these questionnaires are not counted. Finally, there are 263 questionnaires are counted for analysis use.

For female questionnaires, there were three commercial zones selected randomly, they are Kwai Fong, Tsim Sha Tsui and Admiralty. Most interviewees are working women, some of them are unemployed or housewife. Two universities were selected – Poly University and Lingnan University, there are about 60 interviewees selected randomly. The refused rate is 20% only.

For male questionnaires, convenience sampling was used. The interviewees were found in Poly University, Lingnan University, Kwai Fong, Mong Kok, Tsim Sha Tsui, Admiralty, etc. Some of them were interviewed by phone. By virtue of that only fat men will be interviewed (most of them are not really fat, but at least they do not look thin). The refuse rate is 10% only.

In the research process, about 15% (about 30 interviewees) women interviewees were asked the opinion of the advertisements of weight loss products by the researchers at the same time during they fill the questionnaires. And the results will be illustrated in the part of “the factors of motivating people to buy weight loss products”.

The followings are the general information of the interviewees:

Average age	Females: 26.3 (The youngest one is 17, the oldest one is 57) Males: 26.2 (The youngest one is 18, the oldest one is 41)
Education	62% are tertiary or above 38% are secondary school
Marital status	80% are single / divorced / separate 20% are married
Income	19% are defined as low-income group (\$9,999 or below) 32% are defined as middle-income group (\$10,000 to 19,999) 26% are defined as high-income group (\$20,000 or above) 31% are without income
Occupation	14% are blue collar 86% are white collar
Average height	Females: 160cm Males: 173.5cm
Average weight	Females: 110.2 ponds Males: 169.6 ponds
Average ideal weight	Females: 104.7 ponds Males: 153.3 ponds
Eating Habit	Females: 51% have good eating habit, 49% not Males: 24% have good eating habit, 76% not
Get help from medical professional because of over losing fat or improper use of weight loss products	About 5% (10/196) of women interviewees had this kind of problem before. Some of them had Anorexia Nervosa, stomach pain, Tachycardia, etc.

(TABLE 1 – General information of the interviewees)

The last information shows that every 20 people will have one person who has the problem of over losing fat or improper use of weight loss products. It is definitely a serious problem in

Hong Kong. Over losing fat can cause serious Anorexia Nervosa, stomach pain, etc. Improper use of weight loss products can cause stomach pain, Tachycardia, etc. The seriousness of over losing fat and improper use of weight loss products shown in the questionnaires shows that it is important to do this study.

Based on the above information, the following issues were asked in the questionnaires at the same time in order to analyze the data:

- A) Weight perception
- B) Attitudes towards body figure
- C) In sight analysis of weight loss products
- D) The comparison of weight loss products and other kinds of weight loss products
- E) The factors of motivating people to buy weight loss products
- F) In sight analysis of the promotion strategies of weight loss products
- G) In sight analysis of salesperson of selling weight loss products
- H) In sight analysis of business ethic of selling weight loss products

Weight perception

Interviewers (both female and male) were asked the perception of weight. In this part, there are three perceptions found. They are unrealistic perception (thin is good), reasonable perception (standard weight) and optimistic perception (fat is good).

Gender

Reviewing the theory construction, women want to be thinner than men do. Therefore, the hypothesis is that most women have a more unrealistic perception (thinner is better) of weight issue than men do. The hypothesis is tested by Crosstab (Chi-square test), the results are as follow:

Gender	Unrealistic Perception (No of people)	Reasonable Perception (No of people)	Optimistic Perception (No of people)	Total	Pearson's Chi-square	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Female	53 (27%)	141 (72%)	2 (1%)	196	54.772	0.000
Male	1 (2%)	48 (73%)	16 (25%)	66		

(TABLE 2 – The results of perception VS gender)

The significant level is 0.000 which is very significant. That means the prediction is exactly correct. Females tend to be thinner and a slim body is their ideal figure. Males do not want to be thin as compared with female They rather have a standard (or fat) body figure than a thin body figure. There are 24% males who think that male should have a fat body figure. Based on the result, it can be suggested that most males do no intend to lose fat. However, the findings suggest that males want to be muscular and they are healthy at the same time. Males were asked whether

they pay attention to their health issue or not. The average mark is 4.8 out of 7. The mark indicates that males also pay attention to their health issue. Obesity can cause different kinds of diseases and make people lose confidence. To sum up, most people do not want to be fat.

The different perception between males and females makes they have different attitudes towards body figure, and it may be the main factors to determine whether people will buy weight loss products or not.

Age

Younger women want to have a slim body figure in order to keep the attractions to the others. However, older women rarely do so and they think that a slim body figure is unhealthy. Therefore, the hypothesis suggests that younger women have a more unrealistic perception of weight issue than older women do. ANOVA is employed to test whether it is true or not. The results are as follow:

Age Vs perception	Unrealistic Perception	Reasonable Perception	Optimistic Perception	F-value	Sig
Average age	24.6863	26.6798	27.1250	1.168	0.260
No of people	51	178	16		

(TABLE 3 – The results of perception VS age)

The above results suggest that age does not affect people’s weight perception. But it is affected by the other factors. The result is out of the prediction.

Nowadays, the media always reports that some older super stars are still very slim. It creates a kind of new perception which old women should also have a slim body figure. The modern example of this issue is the famous actress, Wong Ming Chun, Chiu Ah Chi, and Chang Yu Ling. Although they are more than 40 years old, they still have a slim body figure. Therefore, older women's weight perception is changed by the media now.

Body Mass Index (BMI)

As explained before, BMI is to measure people have standard body figures or not. It is possible that people's weight perception is influenced by their BMI. The hypothesis is that under weight people (BMI is under 18) have a more unrealistic perception than over weight people (BMI is more than 24) do. ANOVA is used to test the hypothesis.

BMI Vs perception	Unrealistic Perception	Reasonable Perception	Optimistic Perception	F-value	Sig
Average BMI	19.0	21.2	26.4	1.434	0.024
No of people	53	181	14		

(TABLE 4 – The results of perception VS Body Mass Index)

The result indicates that the theory is correct. Underweight people tend to have an unrealistic perception of weight issue, vice versa. It can be concluded that people's BMI can affect their perception of weight issue. People use their own body figure to make judgement of standard weight. In conclusion, gender and BMI have a relation with people's weight perception.

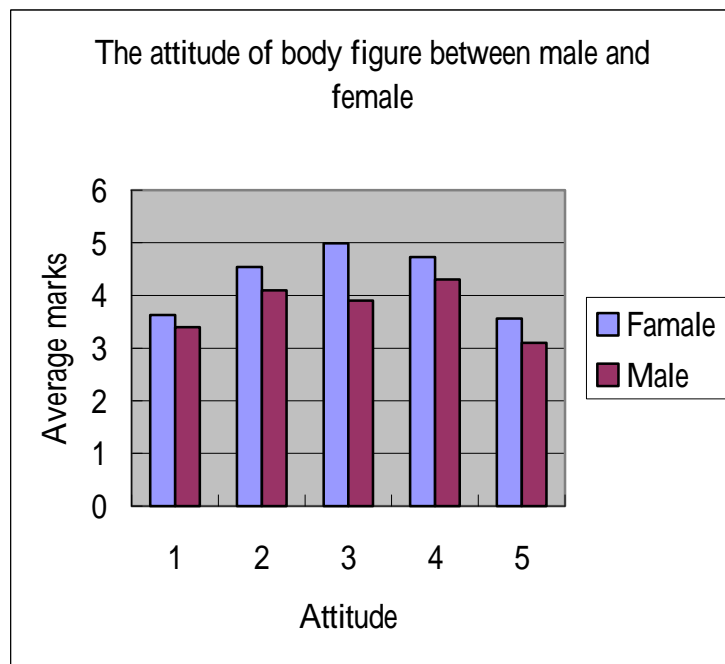
Attitudes towards Body Figure

Attitude is a key factor to determine whether people will buy weight loss products or not.

Therefore, it is extremely important to understand the attitude of the interviewees.

Gender

First of all, gender makes different attitudes. The result is as follow:



(FIGURE 2 – The attitude towards body figure between males and females)

Attitude 1 = Losing fat has become part of your important life.

Attitude 2 = Losing fat can help you to gain confidence.

Attitude 3 = Fat women / men will be laughed or discriminated

Attitude 4 = A good body figure is very important for you.

Attitude 5 = You always feel sad because of your body shape.

T-test was employed to see whether there are attitude differences between males and females,

the results are as follow:

Attitudes	Gender	Mean	Std. Dev.	T-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
1) Losing fat has become part of your important life.	F	4.5436	1.06472	1.858	0.064
	M	4.1077	1.6117		
2) Losing fat can help you to gain confidence.	F	3.6327	1.5845	0.619	0.536
	M	3.4923	1.5824		
3) Fat women / men will be laughed or discriminated	F	4.9897	1.4287	4.965	0.000
	M	3.9077	1.7741		
4) A good body figure is very important for you	F	4.7347	1.4326	1.991	0.048
	M	4.3231	1.4802		
5) You always feel sad because of your body shape.	F	3.5612	1.5856	2.021	0.044
	M	3.1077	1.5117		

(TABLE 5 – The results of attitudes VS gender)

The above results show that attitude 3, 4, 5 have significant level. First of all, attitude 3 is fat women / men will be laughed or discriminated. The result is extremely significant which is 0.000. Women therefore extremely want to avoid discrimination. It is a kind of social pressure. Males are less this kind of pressure. By virtue of that people pay more attention on women's body figure than male. Woman's body figure can determine whether she is attractive or not.

Actually, the society emphasizes too much on slim body figure. The newspapers, advertisements and magazines always emphasize the importance of slim body figure of women. The mass media always comments negatively on the women who do not have a slim body figure.

Even those people are not really fat, they are also laughed. In this situation, it gives a kind of pressure to all women including all developed countries. Finally, most women want to be thinner and thinner in order to avoid laughing and discrimination.

Attitude 4 is “a good body figure is very important for you”. Women think that a good body figure is very important than men do. Based on the above explanations, female do not want to be laughed, they want to gain confidence. The social pressure is very heavy and it affects to the women very much. Finally, women think that having a good body figure is important to them. On the contrary, the society rarely emphasizes that men should have a good body figure. Even some male celebrities are fat, the mass media rarely laugh at them. Therefore, the social pressure is very low to male.

People commonly measure women by their body figure and their appearance. If they are slim and beautiful, the women are half success then. However, people think that the condition of being a successful man is to have a good occupation, high educational level and high income. Therefore, a good body figure is very important to female. And that’s why women always put much effort on keeping their bodies slim.

The third one is “You always feel sad because of your body shape”. As mentioned before, a good body figure is very important to women. Therefore, if women do not have a slim body figure, a kind of pressure is created immediately and they feel sad eventually. Women always feel that it is a terrible issue if they are becoming fat. The answer is clear, males do not mind whether they

are fat or not, but women do.

Perception

Besides gender, people's perception can also affect their attitudes. The hypothesis is that if people have unrealistic perception of standard weight (under weight), they will strongly agree with the above attitudes.

The theory is partly true. By using ANOVA, the result shows that perception has strong relation with "fat women / men will be laughed" and "a good body figure is very important for you". The other attitudes, "losing fat has become part of your life", "losing fat can help you gain confidence", "you always feel sad because of your body figure", these attitudes are not affected by their perception. They do not have significant level, the result is quite amazing.

Attitudes	Mean	F-value	Sig.
Fat women / men will be laughed or discriminated	A=5.43, B=4.60, C=3.89*	8.871	0.000
A good body figure is very important for you	A=5.28, B=4.43, C=4.78*	7.546	0.001

(TABLE 6 – The results of attitude VS perception)

**A= Unrealistic perception (thinner is good), B= Reasonable perception*

C= Optimistic perception (fatter is good)

People's perception, when thinner body figure is the judgment of standard weight, people will then strongly think that there is a high social pressure towards them. They will also think that if they do not have a slim figure, they will be laughed or discriminated. In order to get recognition

from the others and avoid the pressure, people who are without a good body figure will try to use different kinds of ways to lose weight because of their wrong perception of standard weight. Again, it is because of the wrong message from the mass media or the society.

Attitude 4 is also a social pressure. When people think that thinner body figure is the “right” body figure, they will be depressed if they do not have a slim body figure. The first reason is that they lose confidence when they are not thin. They think that they are fat even they have a standard weight. Another reason is that they may concern their health, unrealistic perception causes them to think that they are over weight. At least, they think that they do not meet the social demand. As the society requires women to have a slim body figure. If they do not meet the requirement, they will feel sad by virtue of that they are not in the group.

BMI

BMI is to test whether a person has a standard body figure or not. It is believed that BMI can affect people’s attitude towards weight issue. The hypothesis is that over weight people will more agree with the attitude statements than the people who are under weight do.

In order to test it is real or not, ANOVA is employed to test the issue:

Descriptive				Statistic Result	
Attitude	BMI	N	Mean (Full=7)	F-Value	Sig.
1) Losing fat has become part of your important life.	Under weight	84	3.2262	5.268	0.006
	Standard	119	3.9412		
	Over weight	41	3.5610		
2) Losing fat can help you to gain confidence.	Under weight	83	4.1325	4.664	0.010
	Standard	119	4.7815		
	Over weight	41	4.1701		
3) Fat women / men will be laughed or discriminated	Under weight	83	4.9398	3.898	0.022
	Standard	119	4.8319		
	Over weight	41	4.1463		
4) A good body figure is very important for you	Under weight	84	4.8571	5.562	0.030
	Standard	119	4.7143		
	Over weight	41	4.1463		
5) You always feel sad because of your body shape.	Under weight	84	3.2262	2.712	0.068
	Standard	119	3.6975		
	Over weight	41	3.2439		

(TABLE 7 – The results of attitude VS Body Mass Index)

Except attitude 5, all attitudes have significant levels when they are less than 0.05. People's BMI have relationship with weight attitudes. However, the results are very interesting. As the hypothesis mentioned, people who are under weight will much more agree the attitudes than the others do. However, it is not all real.

Attitude 1 and 2, people with standard weight especially agree that “losing fat has become

part of their life” and “losing fat can help gain confidence”, but over weight people less agree with them. Most obviously, losing fat is not an important issue to under weight people. However, it is suggested before, people do not always have a reasonable perception of weight issue. Therefore, those who are not under weight but have standard weight, they will also misunderstand that they are over weight. Therefore, they always try to lose fat in order to gain confidence.

People who have standard weight (and under weight people) especially agree with “people with fat body figure will be laughed or discriminated” (attitude 3) and “slim figure is very important to them” (attitude 4). It is because they want to be admired by the others. A good body figure can help them avoid laughing. This is the important factor. For attitude 5, the statistic shows that it does not have significant level, therefore, the result will not be discussed.

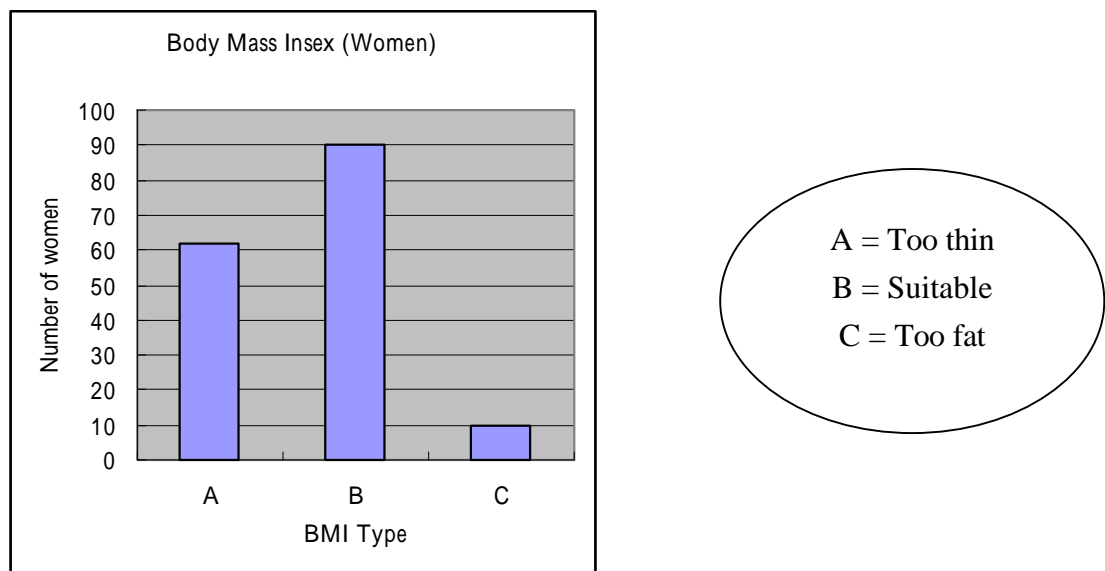
One point must be mentioned, it is quite strange that over weight people pay less attention to weight issue than those people who have standard weight do. It is out of the prediction, However, the reasons can be very complicated such as optimistic perception (fat is beauty), they are “anti-society”. Maybe over weight people used to be fat, they do not care what people’s sayings. And the answer cannot be known if fat people are not deeply interviewed.

Weight attitude

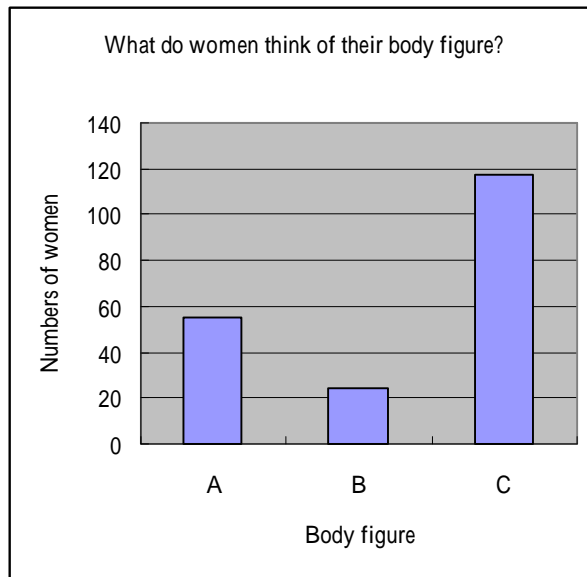
In this part, only women's weight attitude will be discussed. As suggested before, women pay much more attention to their body figure than men do. And, most male interviewees are not thin at all. If males' weight opinion also discussed, it is meaningless.

From the survey, women interviewees were asked to give their height and weight information, also, their ideal weight. After that, their Body Mass Indexes are calculated to see how are their body figures. Women interviewees were asked their opinion of body figure at the same time. That is, if they think that they are too thin, too fat or suitable. The results are extremely interesting.

Figure 3 shows that there are only about 6% of the interviewees (see fig B1) who are really over weight. However, when they were asked the attitude of their own weight, the results are very interesting.



(FIGURE 3 – Body Mass Index of women interviewees)



A = Under Weight
 B = Standard Weight
 C = Over Weight

(FIGURE 4 – What do women think of their body figure?)

Crosstab (Chi-square) is employed to test women’s actual body figure and what do women think of their body figure. The result shows that it has significant level.

Body Mass Index	What do people think of their body figure? (No of people)	Sig
Under weight	Too thin: 37/84 (44%), Suitable: 37/84 (44%), Too fat: 32/84 (38%)	0.000
Standard weight	Too thin: 5/91 (5%), Suitable: 16/91(17%), Too fat: 71/91 (78%)	
Over weight	Too thin: 0/13 (0%), Suitable: 1/13 (8%), Too fat: 12/13 (82%)	

(TABLE 8 – The results of actual Body Mass Index of women interviewees VS women’s self-consciousness of their own weights)

Under weight people especially think that they are too thin, vice versa. However, the most crazy thing is that there are 32 under weight people (out of 84) who think that they are over weight. And there are 71 standard weight people (out of 91) who think that they are over weight. In fact, those under weight and standard weight people need not lose fat. Indeed, some of them need to gain fat. However, they still lose fat. It is very unhealthy. It also shows that most of them

have unrealistic perception of weight issue. In fact, there are only 6% women who are really over weight. The big gap suggests that women do not only want to be slim, but they want to be thin. They have negative attitude towards their own body figure. Unfortunately, only 13% women interviewees feel satisfied (they think their body figure is suitable) with their current body figure. It can be concluded that about 87% women feel dissatisfied with their body figure. But actually, there are more than 55% of them have a standard weight.

In the mean time, it is fortune that some women interviewees also know that they are under weight. It can be concluded that most women agree that they are fat, some women think that they are under weight at the same time. Only a few women trust that they have a suitable body figure.

In sight analysis of weight loss products

This is the main part to discuss why people choose weight loss products to lose fat. In this part, it will be divided into two parts.

- A) Which kinds of people will choose weight loss products?
- B) Consumer behavior on purchasing weight loss products

Before discussing these issues, the ways of losing weight are defined clearly first.

- 1) Dieting – eating less in order to reduce input, people will then come thin
- 2) Doing exercise – physical body moving in order to burn fat
- 3) Taking weight loss pills – intake pills with a cup of water, it can help lose fat and weight
- 4) Taking weight loss tea – a tea bag, it can help eliminate the extra fat from your body and regulate the balance of body fluid
- 5) Taking weight loss food – it includes candies, fruit juice, wheat, etc, it can help losing fat within a short time. Most of these products indicate that they are 100% natural.
- 6) Losing fat at beauty center – combined with a sensible nutrition plan, was designed to get people' s figure back as fast as possible.
- 7) Having nutrition meal – people just eat and follow to the weight loss menu, it is similar to dieting, but they get enough nutrition in the weight loss process.
- 8) See a doctor – get advises from medical professional, normally, people who are serious obesity would choose to see doctors.

Which kinds of people choose to take weight loss products?

In this part, the purpose is to understand which kinds of people will tend to buy weight loss products. After discussing, a conclusion will be made.

Gender

The first hypothesis suggested that females tend to buy more weight loss products than males do. Women also use more other kinds of weight loss ways than men do.

In order to know whether the assumptions are right or not. Crosstabs (Chi-square test) is used to test the differences. The statistic results are as follow:

Weight loss ways	No. of people using the weight loss ways	Pearson Chi-square	Sig.
Dieting	Famale=85/196 (43%), Male=18/65 (28%)	2.020	0.028
Doing exercise	Female=128/196 (65%), Male=8/65 (12%)	0.988	0.372
Taking weight loss pills	Female=33/196 (17%), Male=2/65 (3%)	7.959	0.003
Taking weight loss tea	Female=35/196 (18%), Male=3/65 (5%)	6.880	0.008
Taking weight loss food	Female=38/196 (19%), Male=5/65 (8%)	4.852	0.033
Losing fat at beauty center	Female=6/196 (3%), Male=1/65 (2%)	0.434	0.684
Having nutrition meal	Famale=24/196 (12%), Male=2/65 (3%)	4.574	0.032
Seeing doctor	Female=13/196 (7%), Male=2/65 (3%)	1.139	0.370

(TABLE 9 – Taking weight loss products VS gender)

The results show that gender is a key factor on determining whether people buy weight loss products or not. The results have significant level which are 0.003, 0.008 and 0.033. Women also tend to use dieting and having nutrition meal than men do. The results prove that the suggestion is

true.

Actually, it is not difficult to get the reasons why women buy more weight loss products. First of all, most women have an unrealistic perception of weight issue, they think that it is better to stay thin. Another reason is that they concern about their body figure very much. Most of them view a slim body figure and beauty as their life. The third reason can be found in the results of the survey. More than 50% women who think that they are over weight. The society and women themselves also create a pressure which women must have a slim body figure. Finally, women use different kinds of methods to loss fat including taking weight loss products.

It is clear why dieting and nutrition meal are other choices to women. By virtue of that these kinds of ways can help losing fat. If men want to lose fat, they will not eat less or have nutrition meal definitely, however, women do. Males rarely eat less, they rather keep fit (but not lose fat) in fitness center. There are more than 30% men interviewees who try to lose fat or keep fit in fitness center.

Doing exercise is natural actually. A healthy person does exercise every day but she/he may not lose fat, but he / she just want to be healthier. There is no significant level on losing weight in beauty center. In fact, the result is quite unusual. However, most probably is the sample size is not big enough. There are only six women (out of 196) who tried to lose fat in beauty center before. Therefore, the results may not be exactly true. There is no significant level in seeing doctor, the result is good. As suggested before, people who are serious obesity will get help from medical

professional no matter they are males or females. The real reason of seeing doctors is not because they want to be thinner, but it is the problem of health as serious obesity can affect health.

** Because females buy much more weight loss products, only women's data will be counted in order to get more exact results in the following parts.*

Age

The hypothesis suggested that younger people tend to buy more weight loss products than the others than older people do.

Products	No. of people using the weight loss products*	Pearson Chi-square	Sig. (2-sided)
Pills	A=14/105 (13%), B=14/55 (25%), C=2/20 (10%)	3.817	0.103
Tea	A=19/105 (18%), B=13/55 (24%), C=2/20 (10%)	0.711	0.390
Food	A=16/105 (15%), B=13/55 (24%), C=5/20 (25%)	3.417	0.331

(FIGURE 10 – The results of gender VS taking weight loss products)

**Age: A= below 25, B= 26-35, C= 35 or above*

Age does not affect whether people buy weight loss products or not. Older women do not buy less, but younger women do not buy more. It is suggested before, older women now pay much more attention to their body figure than before. So, the theory “younger women pay most attention to their body figure” is no longer true at all.

Social Status

Buying weight loss products may need to spend much money, high social status (high-income group and good occupation) people are therefore predicted to buy more weight loss products than the others. Crosstab (Chi-square test) are employed to test it. The results are out of the prediction.

Products	No. of people using the weight loss products*	Pearson Chi-square	Sig. (2-sided)
Pills	A=6/39, B=13/61, C=4/25, E=10/59	3.374	0.497
Tea	A=9/39, B=9/61, C=4/25, E=12/59	2.173	0.704
Food	A=6/39, B=14/61, C=6/25, E=9/59	2.123	0.713
Beauty Center	A=2/39, B=2/61, C=0/25, E=2/59	1.761	0.780

(FIGURE 11 – The result of social status of taking weight loss products)

**A= Low-income groups, B= Middle-income groups, C= High-income groups, E= No income*

The results suggest that people will buy weight loss products no matter which income groups, what occupations they are. It is out of the predictions. First of all, body figure is an important issue to all women. Even their social status is low, they also want to have a slim body figure. In fact, people can use different kinds of ways to lose weight. Mostly, it is affected by their attitude towards weight loss products. Some people believe that taking weight loss products can lose fat quickly, some of them think that it has no side effect. Some people trust that weight loss products are effective and it is not harmful to their health. Based on the above beliefs, it can be concluded that people who buying weight loss products strongly believe that weight loss products are

effective and without harmful to their health.

The above statistic results suggested that all income groups also buy weight loss products. Therefore, whether people buy weight loss products or not, it is not based on they are willing to spend on it or not. But, it depends on their **attitude and perception of weight loss products**.

Another issue is that weight loss tea is not really expensive. By observation, one package of weight loss tea cost \$20 to \$160, most of them are under \$100. Even for the one who is no income, she also can afford it. However, weight loss pills and food usually cost \$200 to \$500. Concerning weight loss pills, in fact, it always contains some harmful ingredients and with many side effects. People are educated that it is dangerous to buy weight loss medicine if it is without doctor's prescription. Therefore, it does not relate to people's social status, but it is the attitudes towards weight loss pills. Regarding weight loss food, most producers also emphasize that their products are 100% natural. And it can help losing weight within a short time. However, people commonly think that it is impossible, they discredit about the effectiveness. Therefore, it also bases on the attitude towards weight loss food, but not their occupation or income.

Education

The education of Hong Kong always emphasizes that doing exercise is the most effective and healthy way to lose fat. Most people are reinforced that buying drugs at the counter is dangerous. The hypothesis is that well educated women will buy less weight loss products than less educated

women do. Crosstab (Chi-square test) is employed to test the hypothesis.

Products	No. of people using the weight loss products	Pearson Chi-square	Sig.
Pills	Secondary school =20/78 (15%), Tertiary =13/116 (25%)	7.349	0.025
Tea	Secondary school =15/78 (19%), Tertiary =20/116 (14%)	0.565	0.754
Food	Secondary school =13/78 (20%), Tertiary =24/116 (17%)	1.695	0.429

(FIGURE 12 – The results of educational level VS taking weight loss products)

Less educated women buy more weight loss pills, but not weight loss tea and food. By virtue of that weight loss pill is similar to drug, it may damage to people's health. Therefore, educated women can recognize that pills are harmful. In fact, weight loss tea and food are much more natural and people rarely view them as a kind of drug. It is why people buy weight loss tea and food no matter they are well educated or not.

Marital Status

From the previous finding (literature review), a survey (done by Family Planning Association of Hong Kong) showed that single/divorced women buy more weight loss products than married women do. Therefore, the suggestion was also employed the hypothesis. That is, single/divorced people buy more weight loss product than married women do. Again, crosstab (Chi-square test) is used to test the hypothesis.

Products	No. of people using the weight loss products	Pearson Chi-square	Sig.
Pills	Single/divorced =24/156 (15%), Married=9/36 (25%)	2.599	0.274
Tea	Single/divorced =30/156 (19%), Married=5/36 (14%)	1.232	0.547
Food	Single/divorced =31/156 (20%), Married=6/36 (17%)	0.595	0.757

(TABLE 13 – The results of marital status VS taking weight loss products)

From the above findings, all are without significant level which is more than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that marital status does not affect whether people buy weight loss products or not. However, the finding results are contrast to the previous finding of Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (FPAHK). However, it is believed that the results in this research are not wrong, the survey from FPAHK was also true at the same time.

By virtue of that the survey from FPAHK was done in 1993, it is eight years before. The perception, attitude, people's lives have been changed definitely. Due to the different time, married women now are paying more attention to their body figure than before. As the media is now reinforcing the message which married women should also keep slim. Recently, there are many super stars (married, some of them are with children) invited to help promote weight loss products, beauty centers. It seems that they strongly encourage that married women should also have a slim body figure.

Eating Habit

In the questionnaires, women were asked about their eating habits. Eating habit without

gaining fat includes eat much vegetable than meat, do not have breakfast / lunch / dinner, put much attention to food energy when buying food. A bad eating habit includes eat much meat than vegetable, like to eat night food, like to eat much snacks and like to eat at outsides rather than cooking / eating at home.

In the hypotheses, women with a good eating habit (without gaining fat) will buy less weight loss products, vice versa. Croostab (Chi-square) is employed.

Products	No. of people using the weight loss products*	Pearson Chi-square	Sig. (2-sided)
Pills	A=15/98 (15%), B=17/95 (18%)	0.823	0.663
Tea	A=15/98 (15%), B=20/95 (21%)	1.748	0.417
Food	A=19/98 (19%), B=19/95 (20%)	0.744	0.689

(TABLE 14 – The results of eating habit VS taking weight loss products)

**A= Women who are with a good eating habit, B= Women who are without a good eating habit*

Having a good eating habit will not cause people buy less weight loss products. The reason may be they want to be thinner and thinner, so that they remain a good eating habit and buy weight loss products. For those who have a bad eating habit, they buy weight loss products in order to control their weight.

Perception

An unrealistic weight perception can motivate a person to lose fat even she has standard weight. If people feel that they are urgent to lose fat, and they may choose weight loss products as

it can lose fat within a short period. It is predicted that people who have an unrealistic perception (thinner body figure is standard) will buy more weight loss products than those who have a reasonable perception.

Crosstab (Chi-square test) is used. However, the theory is not true as the significant level is not less than 0.05.

Products	No. of people using the weight loss products*	Pearson Chi-square	Sig. (2-sided)
Pills	A=8/53 (15%), B=25/141 (18%)	0.158	0.831
Tea	A=9/53 (17%), B=26/141 (18%)	0.038	1.000
Food	A=13/53 (28%), B=25/141 (18%)	1.228	0.310

(TABLE 15 – The results of weight perception VS taking weight loss products)

* A= Unrealistic perception (Thinner is better), B= Reasonable perception

**As there are only two women who have optimistic perception, therefore, it was not counted in the test because it may create a wrong result.*

Although women have an unrealistic perception on weight issue, they need not use weight loss products to lose fat. Indeed, they can choose dieting, doing exercise, etc to lose fat. And the results suggested that women's perception does not affect them whether they buy weight loss products or not.

Body Mass Index (BMI)

When people have a fat body figure which BMI is more than 24 (over weight), they will put

more effort on losing fat. Therefore, the hypothesis is that over weight women buy more weight loss products than under weight women.

Products	No. of people using the weight loss products*	Pearson Chi-square	Sig. (2-sided)
Pills	A=9/84 (10%), B=18/92 (20%), C=5/13 (38%)	7.047	0.029
Tea	A=12/84 (14%), B=20/92 (22%), C=2/13 (15%)	1.718	0.424
Food	A=12/84 (14%), B=21/92 (23%), C=5/13 (38%)	4.922	0.085
See doctors	A=2/84 (2%), B=5/92 (5%), C=5/13 (38%)	24.899	0.000

(TABLE 16 – The results of Body Mass Index VS taking weight loss products)

**A= Under weight, B= Standard weight, C= Over weight*

Crosstab (Chi-square) is used to test the above assumption. Although the above results reject the hypothesis, the result is good. Weight loss products is mainly to help people more slim if they have had a standard weight already, for those who are over weight, weight loss products is useless to them. The target market of weight loss products is those who are with standard weight. However, because of unrealistic perception, they use weight loss products get a slim body figure. The result of buying weight loss pills is significant. On account of that people commonly think that weight loss pills can cure obesity since it is a drug with chemical and medical ingredients. Therefore, over weight people tend to buy more pills than the others.

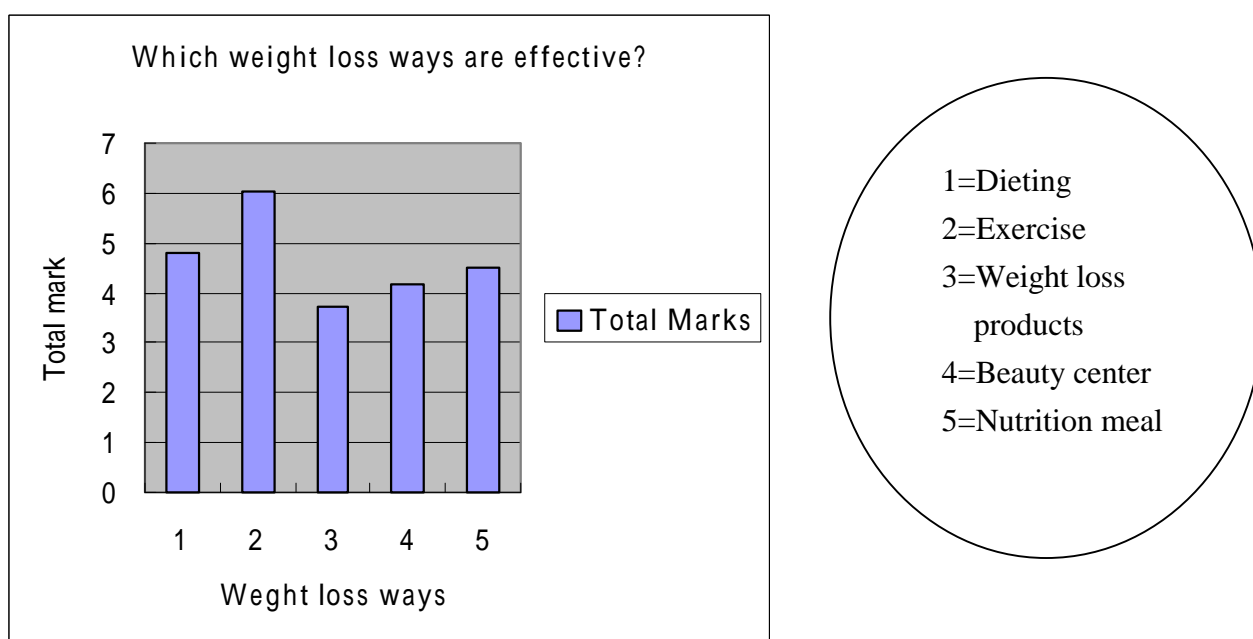
On the other hand, if people are over weight, it is better to get advises from medical professional. Therefore, those who are over weight especially like seeing doctors. People know that it is impossible to just drink weight loss tea and then have a standard weight (when they are

over weight). Be safe, it is wise to get professional opinion and treatments. One reason is that the treatment are more effective, another reason is that it can guarantee that the treatments are not harmful to their health.

Usually, people will not go to see a doctor if they do not have serious weight problem. On account of that getting advises from medical professional can spend much (except from the government). If people do not have a serious problem in weight issue, they definitely will not go to see a doctor. They will choose dieting, doing exercise, buying weight loss products, etc to lose fat.

Consumer behavior on purchasing weight loss products

There are many factors to affect whether people buy weight products or not. Before choosing which kinds of weight loss methods, first, they need to recognize that they have a need to lose fat. The reason of losing fat is to be more beautiful and attractive. Some of them want to be healthier. Fat losers then start to search the weight loss ways from their evoked set. These are dieting, exercise, weight loss products, beauty center, nutrition meal, etc. Based on their perception, attitudes and previous experiences, etc, fat losers will choose the most effective ways to lose weight. In this research, interviewees were asked their opinion of different weight loss methods.



(FIGURE 5 – Which weight loss ways are effective?)

The above diagram (Fig 5) shows that doing exercise is the most effective weight loss way in people's perception. The average mark is 6.04 (when 7 is full mark). The finding also shows that people do not think weight loss products can help losing fat which only score 3.72 (when 7 is full

mark). It is the lowest mark among other kinds of weight loss ways. It indicates that people generally have a negative perception of the effectiveness of weight loss products

On the other hand, there are still some people who think that weight loss products are very useful in losing fat. In the survey, there are 47 women interviewees who give 5 to 7 marks (when 7 is full mark) to weight loss products. Therefore, although most people discredit the effectiveness of weight loss products, some people still believe that it is helpful in losing fat.

Effectiveness of weight loss products

As mentioned before, people's attitude towards weight loss products can affect they purchase weight products or not. Therefore, in this part, it will concentrate on how perception and attitudes affect women's actual behaviors. In the questionnaire, women were asked to comment on how effective of taking weight loss products. The hypothesis is that if women give a high mark to weight loss products, they will buy much more weight loss products than those who give a low mark to weight loss products. ANOVA is used and the results are as follow:

Weight loss Ways	Average mark of giving the effectiveness of weight loss products (7 is full mark)	F-value	Sig.
Pill	Buyers=4.38, Non-buyers=3.58	3.064	0.007
Tea	Buyers=4.36, Non-buyers=3.58	3.857	0.001
Food	Buyers=4.17, Non-buyers=3.61	1.259	0.279

(TABLE 17 – The results of the attitudes towards weight loss products VS actual behavior)

People buy more weight loss products if they have a positive perception of the effectiveness of weight loss products. Weight loss pills always contain chemical / medical ingredients. Taking pill is risky. Therefore, if people do not have a positive perception of weight loss pills, they will not try it. Concerning weight loss tea, it is unbelievable that drinking tea can help losing fat since most people drink tea every day. Although weight loss tea is different to Chinese tea, the style is similar. Therefore, if people do not have a positive perception of weight loss tea, they will perform as a “risk taker” and buy the products although weight loss tea is not expensive.

Weight loss pills and tea also have significant level, weight loss food does not. One reason is that the style of weight loss food is natural. For example, Japan has a product which is weight loss candies. People just need to eat it and it has weight loss benefit. However, maybe the buyers do not intend to lose fat, they just treat it as a snack. And, most producers define weight loss food as “health food” as most weight loss foods are made by 100% natural ingredients although it may not be true. Therefore, it is not surprise that this point is out of the prediction.

Health issue

People commonly know that most weight loss products have side effects. It is better to take less. This concept is come from people’s educational background and the mass media. As the information of Hong Kong is very intensive, the mass media always reports much about the unreal weight loss benefits of weight loss products. Although the weight loss producers always

emphasize that their products are without side effect, it may not be true. Therefore, it is predicted that the one who concerns about health, she will buy less weight loss products than those who do not concern about health. This hypothesis was tested by ANOVA. The results are as follow:

Weight loss Ways	Average mark (7 is full mark)	F-value	Sig.
Pill	Buyers=4.73, Non-buyers=5.10	1.066	0.383
Tea	Buyers=4.92, Non-buyers=5.07	1.966	0.071
Food	Buyers=5.17, Non-buyers=5.03	1.070	0.381

(TABLE 18 – The results of attitudes towards health issue VS buying weight loss products)

All are without significant level. That means even people concern about their health, it will not affect whether they buy weight loss products or not. The result is very surprised. However, the possible reasons are, people may think that thinner is healthy, therefore, they take weight loss products to lose fat. Some of them want to avoid heart disease, hypertension and diabetics, etc, and they choose to take weight loss products.

And, some weight loss products are really without side effect and it can help us healthier.

Taking weight loss products does not mean that people do not care about their health.

The advertisements' contents of weight loss products

The promotions of weight loss products are very intensive. However, maybe the competition is too keen, the weight loss product producers always overstate the real benefit of their products.

The producers try to make their advertisements to be the most attractive one among the

competitors. Unfortunately, most contents of the advertisements are not totally true. And not all customers are vulnerable. Therefore, the hypothesis suggests that people who do not trust the advertisements of weight loss products will rarely buy weight loss products than those who trust the advertisements. Crosstab (Chi-square) is employed to test the hypothesis.

Products	No. of people using the weight loss products*	Pearson Chi-square	Sig. (2-sided)
Pills	A=21/134 (16%), B=0/3 (0%), C=12/58 (21%)	1.346	0.510
Tea	A=21/134 (16%) B=0/3 (0%), C=14/58 (24%)	2.637	0.268
Food	A=24/134 (18%), B=0/3 (0%), C=14/58 (24%)	1.738	0.085

(TABLE 19 – The results of attitudes towards advertisements VS buying weight loss products)

**A = Do not trust the advertisements, B = Trust the advertisements*

C = Trust the advertisements, but they feel doubtful.

The above results reject the hypothesis. Although there are 134 people who do not trust weight loss products' advertisements, about 17% of them still buy weight loss products. When people who less trust the advertisements, about 24% of them tried weight loss products before. On the other hand, people have never tried weight loss products before when they totally trust the advertisements. But the result may not be true since there are only 3 people who trust the advertisements, it may not be representative.

One explanation of the above result is cause-effect relationship. That is, people have tried weight loss products. After taking the products, they may find that the weight loss benefit is not

the same as the sayings of the advertisements. Finally, they do not trust the advertisements anymore. Since the previous theory is that people do not trust the advertisement saying, then they do not buy weight loss products.

Brand Loyalty

There are 99 women interviewees who tried to use weight loss products before. They were asked if they buy the same brand every time. There are 16 people who have brand loyalty and they buy the same brand every time. There are 49 people who do not usually buy the same brand. And there are 34 people who buy different brand of weight loss products every time. In the questionnaire, they were asked what were their opinions of the weight loss benefits after taking the products. Crosstab (Chi-square test) were employed to test the relation of brand loyalty and weight loss benefits.

Products' effectiveness	No. of people who have brand loyalty*	Pearson Chi-sq.	Sig.
Can help losing fat	A=15/16 (94%), B=13/47 (28%), C=1/34 (3%)	44.375	0.000
Cannot help losing fat	A=1/16 (6%), B=36/47 (63%), C=33/34 (97%)		

(TABLE 20 – The results of brand loyalty VS the weight loss benefits of the products)

**A= Have brand loyalty (buy the same brand every time)*

B= Sometimes have brand loyalty (sometimes buy the same brand)

C= Do not have brand loyalty (Every time buy different kinds of weight loss products)

The above results show that people will tend to have brand loyalty if they think that the

products have good weight loss benefits, vice versa. Therefore, if the producers want the customers to repeat purchasing, the products must be effective at losing fat.

One implication of the results is that most weight loss products do not have good weight loss benefit. Only 16% (16/99) of the interviewees have brand loyalty and all of them think that the products' benefits are good. And the others think that the products they use which are not good at losing fat. Therefore, they change the brands all the time. This means that most weight loss products do not have weight loss benefit. That is why most people tend to choose other kinds of weight loss methods to lose fat when they are not sure which weight loss products have a good weight loss benefit.

Drug addict

It is important to know whether people over take weight loss products or not. By virtue of that it will give an instruction to know the seriousness of improper use of weight loss products. There are only 4 women interviewees who take the products more than the prescription. At the same time, These 4 people buy weight loss products more than 7 times within a year. It is about 2% of the interviewees. That means every 50 people will have one person who is drug addict, they over-purchase weight loss products. However, as there is only 2% of the interviewees have this problem, it is therefore not a serious condition.

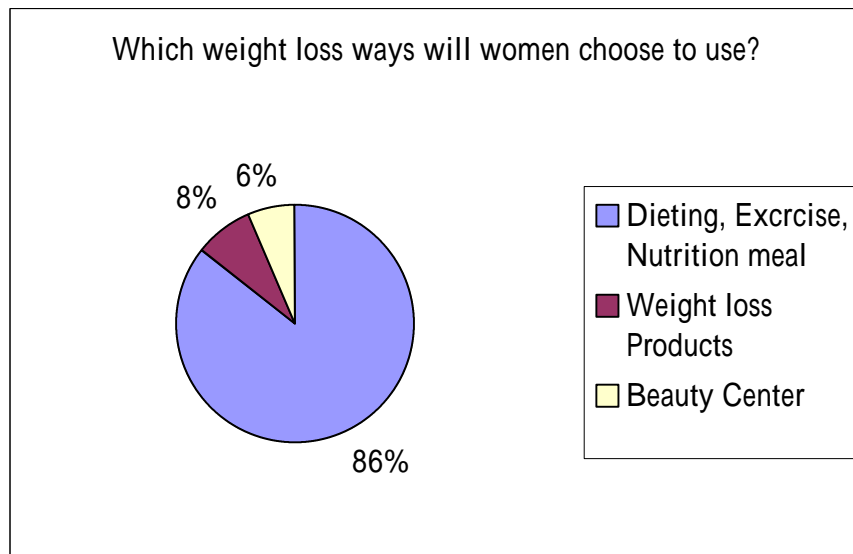
The comparison of weight loss products and other kinds of weight loss ways

People's perception and attitudes are not always consistent with their actual behavior. There are still many factors which can affect their actual behavior of purchasing weight loss products. For example, the salesperson, if she / he can have a good sales technique, he /she can affect people buy the products. If the salesperson is unfriendly, even fat losers want to buy the products, they may not buy it eventually. Another factor is pricing. If people believe that the weight loss product is effective, but the products' price is extremely high, they are less willing to buy it. They may choose other kinds of weight loss ways instead of buying weight loss products.

The third point is that people may feel embarrassing in purchasing weight loss products. Finally, they choose dieting or doing exercise at home. In the survey, women were asked if they feel embarrassing of buying weight loss products, one forth of them mind being known by the others. Some people feel that weight loss products can help losing fat, but they worry about the side effects. Those who are not "risk taker" will not buy the products. Another issue is that people may feel troublesome to follow the prescription to take the weight loss products. If they forget to take it, the weight loss benefit may not be good. Some case is that if people stop taking the products, they may be much fatter than before, it is a terrible result. However, if people use other kinds of methods, the weight loss schedule can be designed by their own. It is much more convenient.

Based on the above reasons, people may not be willing to buy weight loss products even they believe that it can help losing weight. In the survey, women were asked which weight loss ways

would they choose if they want to lose fat. The results are as follow:



(FIGURE 6 – Which weight loss ways will women choose to lose fat?)

From the diagram (Figure 6), it clearly indicates that women tend to use those weight loss ways without spending money and those “natural” ways. In order to know why there are 86% women who choose dieting, doing exercise or having nutrition meal, reasons were asked at the same time.

Dieting

Some interviewees said that dieting is the most convenient way to lose weight. They need not have a full plan or buy anything else, they simply do not eat or eat less. They can then lose fat within a few days. People especially pointed out that dieting is to eat less fat food. They control what they eat in their daily life. For example, people all know that eating too many snacks, night food, ice cream, etc will gain fat. So, they do not eat these kinds of food in order to control weight. One important factor is, fat losers need not spend money although dieting is only effective in the short term. If people do not want to spend money and they are lazy with doing exercise, they only choose dieting.

Doing exercise

Most people think that doing exercise is the only way which do not damage their health. People concern about the safe problem. Doing exercise is safety without harmful to their health. At the same time, they can be more healthier and reduce fat, it can also enrich blood circulation. Respondents pointed out that doing exercise does not have any side effect, it is very important. Doing exercise can let you have a more perfect body figure. For example, if your waist is fat, you can simply concentrate on doing waist exercise. However, taking weight loss products can only help losing weight, it is rather difficult to have a perfect and balance body figure.

People's perception is that doing exercise is the most reasonable and natural way to lose fat. Therefore, most people choose to do exercise without deeply thinking. As the education of Hong Kong always emphasizes that doing exercise can benefit to our health. Losing fat is a long-term commitment, it is impossible to obtain a good result if they are not hard working in doing exercises.

Additionally, people think that doing exercise is long lasting. It has long term benefit, people cannot be on diet, taking weight loss products, losing fat in beauty center all the times. However, doing exercise can do all the time and the result can be very effective. Some interviewees especially pointed out that all weight loss products are useless. The advertisements of weight loss products are totally untrue, that is why they choose to do exercise rather than buying weight loss products.

Taking weight loss products

Females are less willing to choose weight loss products, but some interviewees think that weight loss products is the most easiest way to lose weight. By virtue of that they just need to take the products, they need not waste time in doing exercise or get pain on dieting. They can then get a satisfied result within a short period, also, the result can be clearly seen and observed. It is very suitable for those who are lazy with doing exercise. Some people believe that taking weight loss products is the only ways to regulate the balance of body fluid.

Another important reason is the attractive advertisements. People find that the advertisements are very attractive, they are motivated to buy weight loss products then. Although they may not believe the effectiveness, “risk takers” are willing to try and see whether it is effective or not.

Losing fat in beauty center

Interviewees are less willing to choose losing fat in beauty center. Undoubtedly, the main reason is that people need to spend much which is much more expensive than buying weight loss products. Normally, fat losers are required to spend at least \$2,000* per month. If they want to get the services of full course in the beauty centers, normally, they need to spend more than \$10,000*.

**The price is through the observation from the biggest beauty centers in Hong Kong such as Model Beauty Solon, Marie France Bodyline, etc*

However, interviewees comment that beauty centers do not only help losing fat, it helps them to be more beautiful at the same time because they help customers improve their skin quality. Beauty centers have many beauty consultants who provide professional knowledge to customers. The one to one (one customer, one beauty consultant) service can let customers feel comfortable and get the best service, also, it can stay safe.

The selling points of beauty center are without dieting doing exercise or injecting. Therefore, fat losers will not get pain in the process of losing fat.

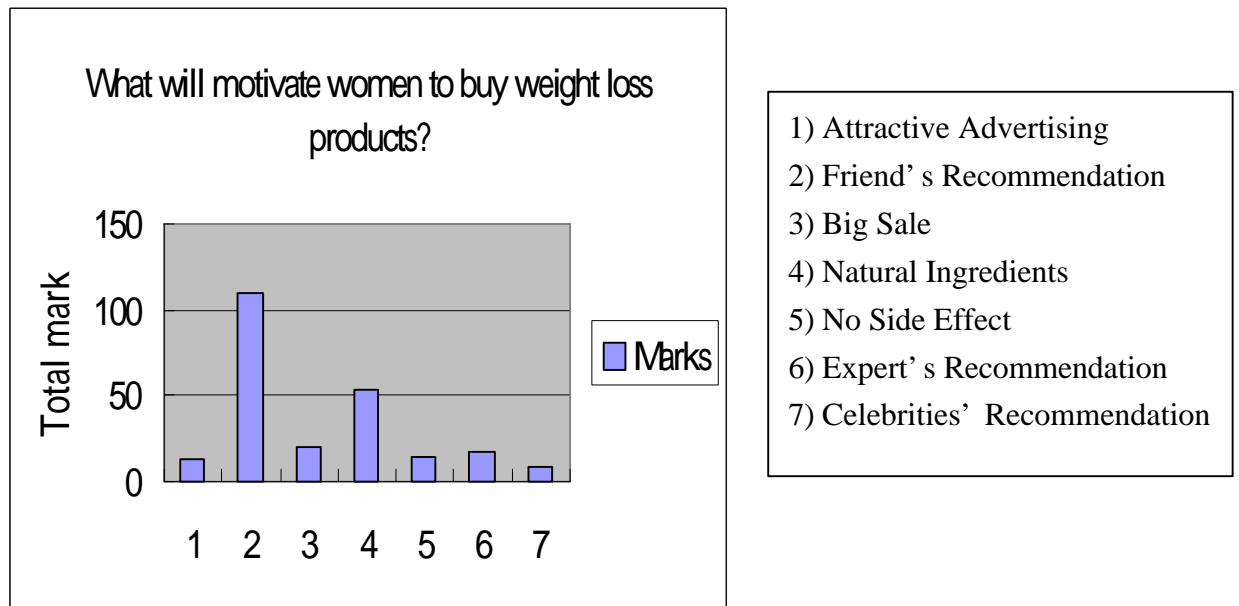
Having nutrition meal

Some interviewees choose to have nutrition meal, because they think that it can maintain a good eating habit during losing fat. Also, skin quality will not be affected. The most important point is that they still can have enough nutrition during losing fat. When they have nutrition meal, they need not stop eating, but they can eat those foods with low calories. Another reason is that the nutrition meals are designed by medical professionals, it can guarantee that it is not be harmful to health. Recently, there are many magazines to report which kinds of nutrition meals were adopted by the super stars and how many pounds did they lose. People will then have more confidence of the nutrition meal.

In conclusion, the main constrain for people not choosing weight loss products is that they fear that its side effect and they feel doubtful with the effectiveness. But since taking weight loss products is very convenient and can help people losing fat quickly, taking weight loss products still is the first choice of some people. When people choose dieting, doing exercise and having nutrition meal, it is because they think that these ways need not spend money. Also, these are the most reasonable and normal ways to lose fat and these kinds of methods rarely have side effect. The main reason for people not losing fat in beauty center is because of the pricing. However, most beauty centers can provide full set of beauty services to their customers, some people are still willing to spend on beauty centers on account of that it is worth spending.

The factors of motivating people to buy weight loss products

The previous findings suggested that most people have negative perceptions of weight loss products. Therefore, in order to know in what extent people will buy weight loss products, all interviewees (both females and males) were asked what will motivate them to buy weight loss products. The results are as follow:



(FIGURE 7 – What will motivate women to buy weight loss products)

Figure 7 indicates clearly that people will be motivated to buy weight loss products if the products are recommended by their friends. People are not willing to spend money on weight loss products if they are not sure effectiveness. However, if their friends tried the products before, it can ensure that the products are without side effect. Most advertisements of weight loss products are untrue. Even the producers ask experts and celebrities to prove that the products are effective and without side effect, most customers do not believe at all. As the experts and the celebrities get paid from the producers, they will definitely highly promote the products. However, since fat

losers' friends do not get paid from the producers, so they are more believable than the experts and celebrities.

In the research process, about 15% (about 30 interviewees) women interviewees were asked the opinion of the advertisements by the researchers at the same time during they fill the questionnaires. Most of them pointed out that although the advertisements of weight loss products are very attractive, they do not believe the weight loss benefits at all. By virtue of that the super stars have been very slim already. The super stars may have never taken the weight loss products before. The advertisers just use the image of super stars and cheat the customers that if they take the weight loss products, they can be as slim as the super star.

About 2 years ago, one of the famous actresses, Mui Siu-wai, she is very thin. Therefore, one of the weight loss product producers asked her to help promoting the products. And the producers asked Miss Mui to cheat the public. She was required to tell the public that she was thin because of taking the weight loss products. Finally, she rejected it since it was unethical. In this case, it indicated that some producers are unethical, they cheat the customers. Even the celebrities promote the weight loss products, people do not know that the real reasons of why they are so thin. Is it because the weight loss products? Are they thin because of in-born? Do they do exercise every day? Do they eat very less? Definitely, customers cannot know the real reasons. Therefore, customers do not believe the benefit of weight loss products until they get recommendations from their friends.

Case study of Herbalife

When there are about 110 interviewees (out of 197) motivated to buy weight loss products if they get recommendations from their friends, the statistic results show that about 11% of these women have tried to use the weight loss product – Herbalife (康寶萊) before. The other 87 interviewees, only one person tried Herbalife before. In order to test whether it has relation or not, Crosstab (Chi-square) is used.

Weight loss products	No of people	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Herbalife (康寶萊)	<p>Will buy weight loss products if they get friends' recommendation : 10/110 (9%)</p> <p>Will not buy weight loss products even they get friends' recommendation : 1/87 (1%)</p>	0.025

(TABLE 21 – The results of buying Herbalife VS friend' s recommendation)

The above result shows that the one who use Herbalife will be motivated to buy weight loss products if they get recommendations from their friends. So, it is suggested that if people do not buy weight loss products even they are recommended by their friends, they will never not Herbalife then.

Herbalife is an USA company. They are famous in producing health products. Their products include skin care products, health food, etc. They are especially famous in weight loss products. However, their products cannot be bought in supermarkets, health food stores, etc. All products are sold in their offices. The distribution of Herbalife is direct marketing instead of using

wholesalers or retailers.

Herbalife runs very successful in Hong Kong. One of the reasons is that their promotion strategy is to ask the salesperson to recommend to their friends. According to the company policy, it is better for the salesperson to buy the products from Herbalife first. After trying the products, the salesperson can understand how good are the products. After that, they will to promote the products to their friends or relatives. When people get the recommendations from their friends and see their friends are much more slim than before, they are willing to buy the products from Herbalife.

Some Herbalife's salesperson searches customers in the commercial zones such as Tsim Sha Tsui. The salesperson first asks the target customers to fill a short questionnaire which is about weight issue. After that, the salesperson will try to ask the interviewees if they want to lose weight. If the answer is yes, the salesperson does not promote Herbalife's products immediately, but they will try to develop a good relationship with the potential customers first. The salesperson becomes a friend with the potential customers then. The salesperson will then tell the potential customers about his / her weight loss experience by using Herbalife. Finally, even those the potential customers do not buy the products, the salesperson still try to keep a friendship with them. If the customers are willing to buy their products, the salesperson will follow the case until the customers feel satisfied with the weight loss result.

Herbalife does not use any celebrities, advertisements to promote their products. As people

tend to believe their friends rather than those celebrities. Herbalife uses a good promotion strategy to promote their products – friend's recommendation. That is why they are more successful than the other competitors. Up to the present, there are more than 100,000 Hong Kong people who used Herbalife before. Herbalife always holds different kinds of seminars to let people know more about their products. They have group discussion and the salespeople tell their actual experiences of using Herbalife. The seminars have friendly atmosphere. Every person can get new friends in the seminars including the salesperson. It prepares a road for them to promote their products in the future.

**In sight analysis of the
promotions of weight loss
products**

The competition of weight loss industry is very keen. The main original countries of weight loss products are USA, Japan and China. How do they get the best sell among the competitors? It depends on its weight loss benefits, have side effects or not. But the most important thing is the promotion strategy.

In 1999, the best seller of weight loss products is “American Beauty”, they have a set of product line, they are “Maga Chitosan Plus” (纖美健), “Herbal Cellulless” (纖姿草) and “Colon Cleaning Slim” (纖腸樂). In order to know why they can be the best seller in 1999. In depth research of their products will be done.

Case Study: “American Beauty”

From the previous findings, besides friend’s recommendation, more than one forth of the interviewees will be motivated to buy weight loss products if the products are natural ingredients. American Beauty strongly emphasizes that their products are 100% made by natural ingredients. In their printing advertisements, they said “*Only the pure all natural ingredients can be found in our products. We had never added and will never add any preservatives, chemical ingredients, or artificial coloring to our products*”. American Beauty has a full explanation of the point 100% natural, they list all the ingredients of their products. They also give a full explanation and state the weight loss benefits of each ingredient with famous medical professional. For example:

“Chormium Picolinate”

Research studies indicate that chormium picolinate can stabilize blood sugar and may reduce cholesterol triglyceride levels. It may also increase the body’s ability to burn extra fat (adipose tissue) and stimulate the formation of lean Muscle”

- *The sixth European Congress on Obesity, University of Texas*

The above example shows that their products are reliable although it may not be true. However, other producers rarely indicate clear the ingredients of their products. However, American Beauty does. It is one of the main reasons why people have confidence with their products.

Effectiveness

In their advertisements, some fat losers were asked to tell their real experiences of using American Beauty. It is wise for American Beauty to do so. By virtue of that the third parties are more reliable, they can prove the weight loss benefits. At the same time, American Beauty emphasizes that *“only ingredients with maximum potency are used in our products to ensure the effectiveness.”* Their wordings are very strong. With the above factors, it can help build the confidence to the customers.

A variety of choices

Different people have different needs of losing weight. Some people want to lose the fat of arms, some want to lose the fat of belly, etc. Generally, other weight loss products mainly help reduce overall weight. However, American Beauty has three kinds of products. These products can formulate for people's needs. "Maga Chitosan Plus" can ultimate fat binder, "Herbal Cellulless" is anti-cellulite formula and "Colon Cleaning Slim" is natural roughage formula. Different kinds of products can satisfy customer's needs.

Brand Name

The product names (both Chinese and English name) are excellent because the product names can be easily implied to 100% natural ingredients.

Celebrities effect

It is wise for American Beauty to ask the super star – Winnie Lau to promote the products. When Miss Lau had given birth, she became fat then. It is very true. However, she is very slim now. People will then easily link it with the weight loss benefits of American Beauty. People will not be doubtful of the effectiveness.

Government provided

Another key successful factor of American Beauty is that all of their products are produced in U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) registered manufacturing facilities. And they got a Certificate of Free Sale, Health and Sanitation by U.S. State Government. When the customers find the products are proved by the government, it can increase customers' confidence. As the government is a third party with authority, the information from the government is reliable.

**In sight analysis of the
salesperson of weight loss
products**

There are salesgirls employed to promote weight loss products in chain stores such as Watson's. In order to see how do they promote the products, the project researcher went to Watson's to have a better understanding, the details are as follow:

Date : 3 March 2001 Time : 13:50 P.M.

Venue : Watson's, Pacific place, Admiralty

The researcher is 21 years old, 168cm tall, 115 ponds and her Body Mass Index is 18.4. Therefore, she is under weight since standard weight should be more than 19.

When the researcher entered the shop, she found that there was a salesgirl (she held some leaflets of weight loss products) in the shop. The researcher tried to go near the counter of weight loss products and started to see the products. The salesgirl then contacted the researcher to promote their products.

In the mean time, the researcher told the salesgirl that she did not need to lose fat. However, the salesgirl still continued to promote their products. She promoted several kinds of weight loss products to the researchers. The researcher then re-emphasized that she did not need to lose fat. However, the salesgirl emphasized that it was better to be slimmer. Finally, the researcher did not buy the products, but the salesgirl left the leaflets to the researcher and she was willing to help if the researcher had any further question of the products.

In the observation process, the researcher found that the sales technique of the salesgirl was quite good. She was very friendly and explained the products in detailed. However, since the

researcher was not over weight, it was rather difficult for the salesgirl to promote the products. Therefore, the researchers continued to walk around the shop, and waited to see how the salesgirl promoted the products to over weight people.

After 10 minutes, the researchers saw the salesgirl promoted the products to a fat woman. The woman was about 160cm tall with 130 ponds. If the observation was correct, the BMI of the women was about 23. This time, the salesgirl especially emphasized the benefit of losing fat. She also told the woman that she was fat, she needed to lose fat, otherwise, she would lose confidence. If the woman was willing to take the weight loss products, she could gain confidence then. Finally, the woman did not buy the product and she said that she needed to consider it.

In this case, although the salesgirl used fear appeal to promote the products, it may not be useful all the time. In the questionnaire, all women interviewees were asked whether they will buy weight loss product if a salesperson strongly promotes it. But only 9.7% of them will buy the products if the salesperson strongly promotes it.

People are not easily persuaded to buy weight loss products. The possible reasons are, first, the salesgirl always gives negative comments on people's body figure, the customers feel unhappy about it. The second point is that some customers rather to choose the products by their own, they do not want the salesperson comments so much. Since some salesperson always says "Can I help you?" "What would you like to search?" People may find that the salesperson is a "trouble-maker" and they feel very annoying. Another reason is that people may not want to lose

fat. Therefore, no matter how good are the sales techniques of the salesperson, it is completely useless. Also, some people totally do not believe the effectiveness of weight loss products, they will not buy the products even the salesperson states how good are the products.

Salesperson can help the weight loss products have better sales. However, it may not be useful all the time. It depends on the salesperson, consumer behavior and the natures of the product, etc.

**In sight analysis of business
ethic of selling weight loss
products**

Generally, if the weight loss product producers give wrong product information to the public such as weight loss benefits, no side effect, etc. It can be claimed that they are unethical then. But definitely, not all producers are unethical.

First of all, as mentioned before, some weight loss products are defined as “health food”. However, if the product contains medical and chemical ingredients, the products will be totally not a health food. On a contrary, they are drugs. Therefore, these producers do not have social responsibility. They should protect the health of customers instead of just earning profit. However, it is rather difficult to know which brands of weight loss products are ethical and which are not since it does not have any token.

Recently, one of the famous weight loss products was found that their ingredients contained medical and chemical ingredients. However, in their promotion process, they strongly emphasized that their products are 100% natural. When some customers took it and found that there was a serious side effect. Department of Health then tested the products, it was found that their ingredients are harmful to people’s health (Apple Daily, 2001).

In the above case, the producers are unethical. However, there are too many kinds of weight loss products in the market. It is impossible to know which products are reliable. But, it can be concluded that many producers are not exactly ethical since they always overstate the benefit of their products.

Chapter 6

Discussion

Learning from the study

Doing this kind of study is a good experience since it is a good practice of the course marketing research. First of all, one of the benefits of doing the study is to learn deeply of statistic with the software of SPSS.

The hypothesis must be set logically and carefully. Otherwise, a wrong and meaningless result would be created finally. In fact, the theories are true all the time. Sometimes, the results are totally opposite to the prediction. One implication is that the sample size is not representative. Another implication is that people's actual behaviors are very complicated. Their actual behaviors are caused by other factors. It clearly states that other factors cannot be ignored.

Another benefit of conducting the survey is that a better understanding of the stakeholders of weight loss products market can be achieved. It includes the public, customers, producers, advertisers, the government, salesperson, etc, It will be useful in the future if a similar study will be done.

In addition, the communication skill can be improved when asking people to fill the questionnaires. The researcher must be cheerful and look professional. Otherwise, the refuse rate can be very high. When people rejected to fill the questionnaire, the researcher must be skillful to persuade them to fill the questionnaires.

Limitations of the study

Losing fat is a hot topic in the society. Therefore, there were a lot of similar studies done before. It is easy to get relevant information from previous studies. But the secondary data is not enough at all, some are out-dated, some do not fit to the research objectives. So, there is still a lot of information which should be found in primary data.

In the questionnaires, on account of lacking resources, only 270 (females and males) questionnaires could be done. Can the 270 samples represent to all Hong Kong people? It is worried that the results from this survey may have some differences with the actual situation.

Questionnaires can only get the general information from the interviewees, a better understanding of interviewees' thinking cannot be achieved. At the beginning of the research, two focus groups and in-depth interviews were planned to hold in order to understand more about their perception, attitudes and behaviors. However, it is rather difficult when lacking resource. People are given a cash coupon when they perform as an interviewee in research firms such as AC Nielsen, AMI, and Acorn. Otherwise, people are not willing to spend time on answering the questions. Therefore, it is totally impossible to hold a focus group in this study when lacking resources. While conducting the questionnaires, the researcher tried to make a short in depth interview with the respondents. However, most of them rejected to do so. The results may not be representative then.

One trouble of the survey is the missing data. Especially for those personal information,

people were less willing to answer it. It makes the analysis much more difficult. For example, people were asked their age to see whether age has relation with purchasing weight loss products. Analysis cannot be made if they do not provide age even they said that they bought weight loss products before. The respondents were asked to provide their exact age, the refuse rate was much higher than simply ask them to give a range. However, if they the respondents provide their exact age, the analysis will become easily.

Another trouble is the refusing problem. When people saw the questionnaire, they commonly thought that the questionnaire was too long. Some of them filled half only and left, the questionnaires were totally useless then. Additionally, people asked what was the topic of the questionnaires first. When the researcher told them that the topic is “the market of weight loss products”, women generally felt embarrassing with the topic and rejected it. The researcher finally cheated the interviewees that the topic was “the market of **health** products”, then the refuse rate was decreasing although they found that the topic was not health products finally.

The survey will become more perfect if it includes several interviews of weight loss product producers, but most of them rejected the interview. Some of them said that it was a sensible topic. Some of them did not accept any interview. Therefore, it is rather difficult to understand deeply the social responsibility and business ethic of the producers. We do not know the real benefits, side effects and ingredients of the weight loss products. A conclusion of their promotional strategy and the contents of their advertisements cannot be made. That are the reason why only some

general comments can be included in part of business ethic.

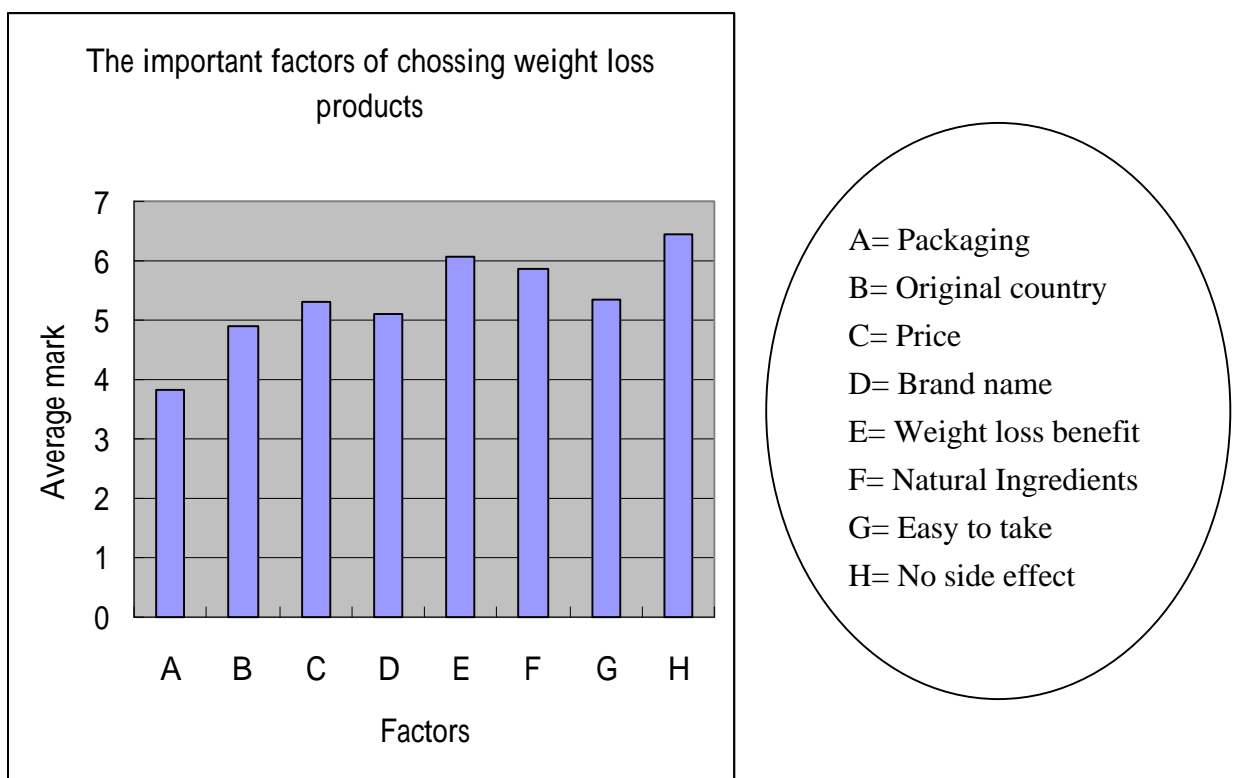
The main theme of doing this study is not to earn money, several constrains of the study must be included of course. Lack of enough experience of conducting research is another problem. Some problems were not considered before. For example, it was not predicted that buying Herbalife's products relates to friend's recommendation. Therefore, asking the reasons why they buy the products (or other brands of products) is very important. However, the questionnaire did not include this question. It increases the difficulty of analysis.

In the further study, the hypothesis must be set carefully. Otherwise, fatal errors will be made easily. This study was done by one researcher only, therefore, it is suggested that the study can be done by a group. Different group members can provide different opinions, so that the ideas of the study can be more objective.

Recommendations of weight loss products

(Based on consumer behavior)

There are many kinds of weight loss products in Hong Kong. If they want to be successful, besides their promotion strategy, there are still some other factors which can affect whether the consumers will choose the products or not. They are packaging, original country, pricing, brand name, weight loss benefit, ingredients, easy to take, no side effect. In the questionnaires, both females and males are asked which of the above factors are important when they choose weight loss products. The following diagram (Figure. E1) shows the factors of choosing weight loss products.



(FIGURE 8 – The important factors of choosing weight loss products)

No side effects

The customers concern most is whether the weight loss products have side effect or not. Therefore, if the products have side effects, or the products do not state clearly that they have no side effect. Most probably, the products will become failure. The factor is the prerequisite to succeed in the market. It is unethical for the weight loss product producers to state that their products are without side effect when it is untrue. But the main point is, their behavior is not illegal. As mentioned in the literature review, most weight loss products defined themselves as “health food”. That’s why the weight loss products are out of the control from the government.

Weight loss benefits

Weight loss benefit is also extremely important to customers. However, friend’s recommendation is very important if they have never tried the products before. Therefore, successful weight loss products should have good word of mouth, their image is very important too. And, the weight loss benefit cannot be hidden if the products are totally ineffective. After trying the products, the customers will probably tell the others whether the products are useful or not. Even if the customers do not do so, they will not repeat purchasing if they find that the products are without weight loss benefits. If the products are tested by the third parties such as the government or testing companies, people will have confidence to the products.

Products ingredients

Product ingredient is also a main indicator for customers to choose a good weight loss product. People pay much more attention on their health than before. They are not willing to buy a weight loss product if it contains chemical ingredients. Nowadays, weight loss food is much more popular than weight loss pills. By virtue of that people's perception is, pills must contain medical ingredients, but food is not. It is true that most weight loss food strongly state that they are 100% natural ingredients. However, most weight loss pills do not have such statement. That is why "American Beauty" can have an excellent sale since they are 100% natural ingredient (weight loss food).

It is suggested that if the products are pills, the producers should try to produce the products in another form which is food, but not pills. People will tend to have more confidence on food. Understanding customers' needs can help them continue to survive in the market.

Easy to take

Customers are less willing to buy the weight loss products if it is not easy to take. Since Hong Kong people are very busy, some of them even do not have time to have lunch or dinner. If the ways of taking the products are too troublesome, people are difficult to follow it. Therefore, the weight loss products should also be "users friendly". It will be excellent if people just need to take the products once per day. However, if they eat less of them, customers will discredit the

effectiveness.

Product Price

People also concern much about the price of weight loss products. As losing weight has become part of most women's life, women need to stay thin all the time. If the marketers want the customers to keep buying their products in the long-term, the price cannot be too high. However, the price cannot be too low, as low price can imply low quality and with side effect. Customers' value is also an indication of setting price. In weight loss products market, weight loss tea is especially cheap in price, but weight loss food and pills are much more expensive. Since the perception of people is that tea bag is cheap. If the price of weight loss tea is too expensive, people will think that it is not worth. Therefore, most weight loss tea is less than \$200. However, weight loss pills and food contain different kinds of ingredients, the price can be higher. This is the belief of the customers.

In order to set a "reasonable" price, the marketers should understand their target customers well. If the target customers have the following characteristics, the products can be set in a higher price.

- 1) Middle to High-income groups
- 2) People who have an urgent need to lose fat / have a negative attitude towards their body figure
- 3) Have a unrealistic perception on body weight (thinner is better)

4) People who are easily influenced by others such as the mass media, peers, etc.

If the target customers are without the above traits, it is better for the marketers to set the products in a lower price. Definitely, product quality has a positive relation with target consumers and the price.

Original country & Package

Interviewees' responds indicate that the original country of weight loss products is not the prerequisite of success. However, people commonly have a negative perception of Chinese products, they will rather use the products which are made in Japan, USA, etc. However, the main original country of weight loss tea is China, but their sale is still quite good. The evidence shown that the interviewees' response on which kind of weight loss products they used before. About 20% of these products are made in China.

Most people do not care about the package of weight loss products. However, it is suggested that the package still cannot be too bad. Since a terrible package will stop the interest of buying. However, the package need not be very beautiful. The suggestions are, the package should contain English instructions even the products are made in China. English wordings can imply a better quality of the products. On the other hand, it is also not good to only contain English language, instructions and reminders should contain Chinese translation even the products are made in USA. It helps the customers having a better understanding on the products when some people do not

know English.

To sum up, the successful factor of weight loss products is the product natures. It should be 100% natural ingredients and without side effect, but with a good weight loss benefit. That's what customers are looking for. Although customers do not pay much attention to package and the original countries of the products, it is better to give a good image to the customers. By virtue of that taking weight loss product needs to take the risk – they can damage to health, people will definitely buy a weight loss product with a good image rather than the one with bad image (or no image at all).

The market of male weight loss products (future trend)

Most males do not care that the weight loss products mainly focus on women. In the survey, only 10% of males feel unhappy with the target groups of weight loss products. Therefore, it is quite doubtful that whether males market can be opened or not since males seem do not have intention to purchase weight loss products. However, it does represent that they will not buy weight loss products.

In the research, it shows that near to 50% of male have tried to lose fat before. Although males do not pay much attention to their body figure, they want to have a better body figure. Usually, they go to fitness center (gymnasium) to do exercise. This is definitely because they concern about their health. Doing exercise in gymnasium also helps them to be more muscular. Therefore, they rarely use other kinds of ways to lose fat except having serious weight trouble.

Males rarely search weight loss products when the mass media and weight loss product producers do not stress on the importance for males to lose fat. Therefore, males rarely feel the pressure of losing fat. However, more than 72% of male interviewees told that they were persuaded to lose fat before. Since they were only persuaded by their friends, parents, etc, this kind of pressure was not strong enough. If weight loss producers can successfully emphasize on the importance of losing fat for male, some male will probably try to buy weight loss products.

The above situation does not mean that males do not want to buy weight loss products. Indeed, males were asked if they have curiosity to understand weight loss products in the

questionnaires. There are more than 31% of men who are interested in knowing more weight loss products. When they have interest to know the products, they are the potential customers then. At the same time, more than 16% of men will plan to buy weight loss products within one year. These results strongly suggested that the market of male weight loss products will become more popular in the future although there are about 40% of male interviewees who emphasized that they will never buy weight loss products. The marketers can focus on the other 60% although some of them are not exactly the potential / real buyers.

Up to the present, there is still no weight loss product producer who concentrates on male weight loss products. It is suggested that it is a prime time to enter the market when there are few competitors on the market now.

Concerning the price of male weight loss products, most male interviewees suggested that it is better to set a low price which is less than \$200 per package. Although men put less attention to their body figure than women, the traits of male are noble, open-handed, public-spirited, they rarely bargain the price when purchasing. So, the unit price of weight loss products can be higher than \$200, it is suggested that about \$300 per package is a reasonable price. Definitely, the price also depends on target customers, products quantity, etc.

Recommendations to the government

The government can do much on the seriousness of losing weight. The government can do by changing the unrealistic weight perception of people and monitoring the weight loss products.

Most women have a unrealistic perception on weight issue. The sources of the unrealistic perception are come from the mass media, peers and social pressure. However, it is a sickly situation. Therefore, it is suggested that the government should educate the citizens on reasonable weight and how to calculate it. In fact, the government has educated the citizens what is a good body figure, however, they just concentrate on the education of obesity. And they just teach people how to lose fat and the hazards of being obesity. Therefore, the government should start to educate people the right thinking of weight issue since it is a big problem in Hong Kong as people over-losing fat, it can cause anorexia nervosa. The government then need to spend much medical resources on them.

In order to let people have a reasonable perception on weight issue and reduce the spending on medical resources, the government should educate the people. For the group of students, the government can hold seminars to all schools in Hong Kong and reinforce the correct thinking of losing weight. For the working group, the government can hold some activities or exhibition on weight issue and try to eliminate the unrealistic perception of weight issue and losing weight.

The government should also put more effort on monitoring weight loss products, more than 90% female interviewees think that the regulation of weight loss products is not enough at all.

That means people would hope that the weight loss products could be monitored more, so that they can have more protection.

The government should monitor the weight loss products although the products were marked as “health food”. The law is imperfect. Therefore, it is suggested that the government should ask all weight loss products to register with Department of Health. Although weight loss products were marked as “health food”, they have weight loss benefit. Therefore, they should register with Department of Health. Health food need not be registered if they are not weight loss products. When the weight loss products are required to register, the government can have a better understanding on their ingredients and the products can be ensured without ingredients which are harmful to people’s health. If the products are discredited with their benefit are untrue, the Consumer Council should test the weight loss products. If there is a weight loss product with harmful ingredients, the Consumer Council should give to the public in order to protect all customers.

Conclusion

To sum up, the market of weight loss products still can be explored if consumer behaviors remain the same. The above findings show that most women want to be slimmer. That is why most of them tried to lose weight before.

People's weight perception is affected by gender and their BMI. Different attitudes of body figure are affected by gender, weight perception and BMI. From the findings, gender, education and BMI are the factors to determine whether people buy weight loss products or not. However, the main factor should be how people view weight loss products. If they have good attitudes towards these products, they tend to buy more.

People commonly think that doing exercise is the best way to lose fat. Most people are less willing to buy weight loss products unless the products are recommended by their friends. It explains why Herbalife succeeds in Hong Kong. The main factors for people choosing weight loss products are to see whether the products have side effect or not. The ingredients and weight loss benefits are also very important to achieve success in the market.

Male market can be explored if the producers can strongly emphasize the importance of losing fat to males. In the future, it is predicted that male weight loss products will be much more popular than now. However, one threat must be pointed out, the market of weight loss products (both females and males) will face a seriously keen competition in the future. Nowadays, there are a lot of methods (will spend money) to lose fat.

Besides losing fat in beauty center, it is very popular to use acromotherapy (香薰治療), Chinese medicine, green tea, weight loss massage cream, etc to lose fat. These kinds of methods are very new in Hong Kong. Although the weight loss benefits of these methods have not yet been proved, they have fewer side effects than weight loss products. Since weight loss products are taken by oral route, it has significant impact on health if the products are harmful. However, Acromotherapy and massage cream are not in-take. Chinese medicine is under the instructions of Chinese medical professionals. People will less worry about the side effects. People commonly know that green tea is a natural drink and without side effect. If weight loss product producers want to keep the existing customers and find new customers, the products should have weight loss benefit and without side effect.

Owing to the keen competition of weight loss product, the producers are much more difficult to survive in the market. Therefore, the producers must understand well what are customers' needs and wants. Obviously speaking, having a good business strategy is the most important issue.

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Appendices

Female questionnaire

Male questionnaire

Questionnaire

(Female)

I am a university student, I am now doing my final year project, and the topic is weight loss products market. It is extremely grateful if you can help me to fill the questionnaire. All the information in the questionnaire will be kept CONFIDENTIAL, just for analysis use. Thank you very much.

1) In Hong Kong, the average height of women is about 155cm. What do you think of the ideal weight of this height then?

Less than 80 ponds	80-89 ponds	90-97 ponds
98-105 ponds	106-109 ponds	110-119 ponds
120-129 ponds	130 ponds or above	

2) Kwok Ho Ying, a famous actress in Hong Kong. She is 167.5cm tall and 97 ponds, what do you think of her body figure?

Excellent, your ideal figure	Good, slim enough
Average, not too thin, not too fat	A little bit thin, she should gain fat
Too thin, you don't feel it beautiful at all	Too fat, she should lose fat

Please circle the answer.

Strongly agree > Neutral < strongly disagree

3) Losing weight becomes part of your important dairy life.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
4) Your body figure is much more important than your health.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
5) Losing fat can help you gain confidence.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
6) A fat woman will be discriminated or laughed.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
7) A slim figure is very important for you.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
8) You always feel sad because of your body shape.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
9) Weight loss products can't help lose fat, but it helps lose nutrition.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
10) You concern your health very much	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

11) Have you tried to lose weight?

Yes No

12) What do you think of your body shape?

Too thin A little bit thin Normal, suitable size
A little bit fat Too fat

13) Which of the following way(s) have you used to lose weight? (Can choose more than 1 answer)

- Dieting Doing exercise Taking weight loss pills
Taking weight loss tea Taking weight loss food (eg: fruit juice)
Losing fat in beauty center Having nutrition meal Get advice from doctor
Others, please specify: _____

14) Have you sought advice from your doctors or professional because of over losing weight or over taking weight loss products?

- No Yes, please specify: _____

15) If you want to lose fat this time, which of the following weight loss ways will you choose? Why?

- Dieting, reason: _____ Doing exercise, reason: _____
Taking weight loss products such as diet pills, tea, reason: _____
Losing fat in beauty center, reason: _____
Having nutrition meal, reason: _____
Others, please specify: _____, reason: _____

Which of the following weight loss ways do you think that is effective?

Please circle the answers (7 represents very effective, 1 represents very ineffective)

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16) Dieting | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 17) Doing exercise | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18) Taking weight loss products (diet pills, tea, food) | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19) Losing fat in beauty center | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19) Having nutrition meal | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

20) The weight loss product producers always said that they are without side effect and with excellent weight loss benefits, do you believe it at all? Why?

- Yes No A little bit believe

21) What can motivate you to buy weight loss products?

- The advertisement is very attractive Friends' recommendation
Big sale Experts recommend the products in advertisements
The products are without side effect Their ingredients are natural
Celebrity' s recommendation You never buy any weight loss products
Others, please specify: _____

22) If you have tried to take weight loss before or you are taking now, do you think it can really help lose fat or just psychosomatic complaint only?

Can help you to lose fat Psychosomatic complaint

You have never taken

When you buy weight loss products, what is the most important factor?

Please circle the answers (7 represents very important, 1 represents very unimportant)

23) Package	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
24) The origin country	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
25) Price	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
26) Popular brand name	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
27) Weight loss benefit	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
28) Ingredients of the product	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
29) Easy to take	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
30) No side effect	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

31) Which brand(s) of weight loss products have you bought before? Please list the name(s).

32) The dosage of weight loss products has been printed in their package, will you follow it exactly?

Yes No, I take much more than the prescription

No, I take less than the prescription

33) Do you buy the same weight loss products every time?

Yes Sometimes No, every time is different

34) Do you follow the prescription of weight loss products?

Yes No, eat less than the prescription No, eat more than the prescription

35) When you buy weight loss products, would you mind being known by the others?

Yes No

36) Do you think the monitoring of weight loss products from the government is enough?

Yes No

37) When a salesgirl strongly recommend a weight loss products for you, will you easily be persuaded by her and buy the products finally?

Yes No

38) Do you plan to buy weight loss products within 6 months?

Yes No

39) What is your eating habit? (Can choose more than 1 answer)

Eat much vegetable than meat Eat much meat than vegetable

Like to eat night food Like to eat much snacks

Do not have *breakfast / lunch / dinner

Like to eat at outside than cooking / eating at home

Pay much attention on food energy when buying food

40) How tall are you? _____(CM)

41) How heavy are you?

Less than 80	80-90 ponds	91-100 ponds
101-110 ponds	111-120 ponds	121-130 ponds
131-140 ponds	141-150 ponds	151-160 ponds
161 ponds or above		

42) What is your ideal weight? _____ Ponds

43) Your martial status is

Single Married, with _____ children Divorce

44) How old are you? _____

45) What is your educational level?

Primary school Secondary school Tertiary or above

46) What is your occupation? _____ Job title: _____

34) What is your monthly income?

Less than \$5,000	\$5,000 to \$9,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999
\$15,000 to \$19,999	\$20,000 to \$39,999	\$40,000 to \$79,999
more than \$80,000	Students / Housewife / Unemployed, no income	

Questionnaire

(Male)

I am a university student, I am now doing my final year project, and the topic is weight loss products market. It is extremely grateful if you can help me to fill the questionnaire. Surely, all the information in the questionnaire will be kept CONFIDENTIAL, just for statistic use. Thank you very much.

1) In Hong Kong, the average height of men is about 165cm. What do you think of the ideal weight of this height then?

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Less than 120 ponds | 121-130 ponds | 131-140 ponds |
| 141-150 ponds | 151-160 ponds | 161-170 ponds |
| 171 ponds or above | | |

Please circle the answer.

Strongly agree > Neutral < strongly disagree

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2) Losing weight becomes part of your dairy life. | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3) Losing fat can help you gain confidence. | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4) A fat man will be laugh. | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5) A good body figure is very important for you. | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6) You always feel sad because of your body shape. | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7) Weight loss products can't help lose fat, but it help lose nutrition. | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8) You concern your health very much | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

8) Women are the main target customers in weight loss products market. Do you think it is unfair?

- Yes No

9) What do you think of your body shape?

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Too thin | A little bit thin | Normal, suitable size |
| A little bit fat | Too fat | |

10) Have you been persuaded by the others to lose fat?

- Yes No

11) Have you tried to lose fat?

- Yes No

12) Which of the following way(s) have you used to lose weight? (Can choose more than 1 answer)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Dieting | Doing exercise at home | Doing exercise at fitness center |
| Taking weight loss pills | | Taking weight loss tea |
| Taking weight loss food (eg: fruit juice) | | Losing fat in beauty center |
| Having nutrition meal | | Get advice from doctor |
| Others, please specify: _____ | | |

13) If there is a weight loss products (for men use only), will you have curiosity to have a look?
Yes No

15) Normally, the price of weight loss products (for women use) is about \$200-\$600 per pack. However, if the products are for men use, what do you think of the reasonable price?

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Less than \$200 | \$200-\$300 | \$300-\$400 | \$400-\$600 |
| \$600 or above | No idea | | |

When you buy weight loss products, what is the most important factor?

Please circle the answers (7 represents very important, 1 represents very unimportant)

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16) Package | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 17) The origin country | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18) Price | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19) Popular brand name | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20) Weight loss benefit | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 21) Ingredients of the product | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 22) Easy to take | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 23) No side effect | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

24) Which of the following factors will motivate you to buy weight loss products?
(Can choose more than 1 answer)

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| The advertisement is very attractive | Friend's recommendation | |
| Big sale | Natural ingredients | The products are without side effect |
| Experts recommend the products in advertisements | | |
| You will never buy any weight loss products | | |
| Other, please specify: _____ | | |

25) Do you plan to buy weight loss products within 1 year?
Yes No

26) Do you plan to lose fat within 6 months?

Yes No

27) When you buy weight loss products, would you mind being known by the others?

Yes No

28) What is your eating habit? (Can choose more than 1 answer)

Eat much vegetable than meat Eat much meat than vegetable
Like to eat night food Like to eat much snacks
Do not have *breakfast / lunch / dinner
Like to eat at outside than cooking / eating at home
Pay much attention on food energy when buying food

29) How tall are you? _____(CM)

30) How heavy are you?

Less than 80	80-90 ponds	91-100 ponds
101-110 ponds	111-120 ponds	121-130 ponds
131-140 ponds	141-150 ponds	151-160 ponds
161 ponds or above		

31) What is your ideal weight? _____ Ponds

32) Your martial status is

Single Married, with _____ children Divorce

33) How old are you? _____

34) What is your educational level?

Primary school Secondary school Tertiary or above

35) What is your occupation? _____ Job title: _____

36) What is your monthly income?

Less than \$5,000	\$5,000 to \$9,999	\$10,000 to \$14,999
\$15,000 to \$19,999	\$20,000 to \$39,999	\$40,000 to \$79,999
more than \$80,000	Students / Housewife / Unemployed, no income	

The End

If you have any comment concerning the contents of the study, please feel free to contact Jessica Ng by jessicaskng@ctimail.com.

Thank you for reading the project!

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