Global Brands in the Context of China: Insights into Chinese Consumer Decision Making

Al Rosenbloom
Dominican University

James Haefner
University of St. Francis

Joong-won Lee
California State University

This paper explores Chinese consumer decision making in relation to ten global brands. The paper uses four constructs (brand familiarity, brand liking, brand trust and knowing a brand's country of origin) to predict brand purchase intent within a sample of Chinese consumers. This research also explores how Chinese consumer self-perceptions of cosmopolitanism, ethnocentrism, global-local identity and identification with a global consumer culture might also influence global brand purchase intent. Regression models were built for all ten global brands, with the hierarchy model providing the strongest evidence. Familiarity, trust and liking generally explained a significant portion of the variance.

INTRODUCTION

The economy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) continues to fascinate and to draw world attention on an almost daily basis. The powerful combination of overall market size, dramatic increases in disposable income (especially in first and second-tier urban cities) and the long-term growth potential of the Chinese economy, make the PRC an exceptionally attractive market for many global firms and their brands (Sheng & Yan, 2011; Yau & Steele, 2000). According to the *Wall Street Journal* (Batson, 2010), China has achieved a gross domestic product (GDP) amounting to $4.758 trillion (estimated by the IMF for 2009). The WSJ expected that China would soon surpass Japan, the world's second largest economy ($5.049 trillion). The IMF also estimated that shift would occur in 2010 since China, they forecasted, would generate $5.745 trillion in 2010 (International Monetary Fund, 2010).

The success of McDonalds (Eckhardt & Houston, 2002; Watson, 2006) and KFC (Liu, 2008) in China have been well documented. Similarly, the significant increase in the number of high net worth individuals within China, when coupled with the cultural tradition that status products support an individual's *mianzi* (or prestige face) and hence become valued expressions of "success," has led many luxury brands to target the PRC as a "must win" market (Degen, 2012). However, as most western commentators note, successful marketing in China demands significant resources, skills and adaptations (Tian & Borges, 2011) – perhaps even a brand new mindset. The recent complicated story of Danone-Wahaha provides a cautionary tale for any business strategist and/or global marketer who thinks that market entry into the PRC is or will be easy.

The research reported here explores Chinese consumer behavior through a focus on ten global brands. The research, part of a three-year global branding project, extended into Asia interests which heretofore targeted consumers living in Central and Eastern Europe (Deli-Grey, Haefner & Rosenbloom, 2012; Rosenblooom & Haefner, 2009). The global branding research sought to identify the strength of global brand trust, global brand familiarity, global brand liking and knowledge of a global brand's country-of-origin (COO) in predicting global brand purchase intent. The research also included five scales measuring consumer attitudes toward (1) global consumer culture, (2) cosmopolitanism, (3) multinational advertising, (4) global-local identities, and (5) ethnocentrism. All five scales were drawn from the extant literature on global brands and have had research supporting their influence on consumer decision-making in a global context. Regression models were built for all ten brands inclusive of the five attitudinal scales to gain insight into the relative contributions of each of these items as independent predictors of global brand purchase intent in Chinese consumers. Regression models are presented that were built for each global brand along with a discussion of the most surprising insights. There were some unexpected findings about Chinese consumer decision making in the data.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN CHINA

As befits the growth of China itself, China-focused consumer behavior research published in English has increased dramatically over the years. Sin & Ho (2001) conducted an early meta-analysis of published consumer research. These researchers reviewed 75 studies on Chinese consumerism and concluded that a wide variety of consumer issues were being researched. Kaigler-Walker, Gilbert & Hu (2010) noted, specifically, that there was extant research on Chinese consumers relative to purchasing motivation (Zhou & Wong, 2008), consumer values (Lee et al., 2004; Tai, 2008), decision making (Fan & Xiao 1998; Hui et al., 2001) and generational and regional differences (Cui & Lui, 2000).

Garner (2005) summarized one of the few large-scale studies published as a book. Garner, a senior strategist at Credit Suisse First Boston, managed a proprietary Chinese consumer lifestyle and spending pattern survey. The survey was conducted in four tier one cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen) and four tier two cities (Shenyang, Chengdu, Xi'an, Wuhan) and included 10 product categories, ranging from automobiles, beverages, electronic and luxury goods through tobacco products and travel services. Garner provides not only category data but also competitive market share data for each product category by city and consumer income levels. Wang (2008) provides a more recent macro-level of view of Chinese consumer behavior, with her focus on key national brands as experienced through the social construction of meaning that domestic advertising firms use to position brands as "local."

The global consulting firm, McKinsey, has been conducting an annual survey of Chinese consumers since 2005. McKinsey uses a stratified sampling plan, which includes approximately 600 cities in which 82% of all urban Chinese consumers live. Furthermore, these same cities are forecast to account for 92% of China's urban GDP by 2015 (Atsmon et. al, 2009). In its most recent Annual Survey (Atsmon, Dixit, Magni & St. Maurice, 2010), McKinsey noted that while the global recession has had some effect on consumer purchasing patterns in China, the combination of government and private-sector incentives has led to very robust retail sales. McKinsey stated that, arguably, the Chinese consumer sector was "the healthiest of any major economy in the world" (Atsmon, Dixit, Magni & St. Maurice, p. 7). Nonetheless, Chinese consumers still continue to embody their own unique mix of characteristics: They are still fundamentally conservative, although there is some behavioral convergence towards behaviors of consumers in more developed economies such as evaluating products beyond mere functionality and trading up for products that deliver greater value and quality. There may even be an emerging hedonic, global youth segment, which McKinsey terms the 'what fits me' group (Annual Survey, 2010).

As a counterpoint to the above, Uncles and He (n.d.) systematically searched for consumer behavior research written in Mandarin between 1985-2004. Their search found over 700 articles on various aspects of Chinese consumer behavior. Their conclusions were: (1) There was a significant body of indigenous literature not recognized by scholars in the West; (2) most research was concerned with consumer economics and understanding consumption functions; and (3) the focus on consumption functions fit well with the rise in disposal consumer income most Chinese have experienced.

BRANDS

Strong brands help firms succeed (Aaker, 1996; de Chernatony & McDonald, 2003). While having a strong consumer franchise is not the only thing firms need for success in their markets, strong brands are often linked with strong brand equity. The global financial crisis of 2008 is an apt reminder that firms with strong brands are buffered from, but not immune from, unexpected market shocks. "Brands have never been more important than they are today. The accelerating rate of turbulent change, the volatility of economics and markets, the relentless progress of technologies and innovation, and increasing market fragmentation have caused the destruction of many companies and products that have failed to develop the lifeline of a strong brand" (Temporal, 2010, p. xiii).

Eckhardt and Bengtsson's (2010) article summarized the 4,000 year-old-history of branding in China, and its long association with Imperial dynasties. This recent article is a strong counterpart to Holt's (2006) history of branding in the late nineteenth century in the United States. Marketers, like every other business professional, must understand and appreciate China's history if they hope to be successful. Ambler and Witzel's (2004) words are well chosen: "The point cannot be emphasized too strongly. In China, history is important if for no other reason, *because the Chinese themselves believe it is*" (p. 39, emphasis in original). "The phenomenon of foreign brands in China appears somewhat different from what is often addressed in research in marketing, because of the complexity of the market situation and cultural characteristics of today's Chinese society and consumer behaviour, closely related to the combined experience of generations of Chinese" (Li, 2007, p.11).

There is ongoing academic debate, though, about what constitutes a "global brand." Roberts and Cayla (2009) note that "definitions of global brands are mostly supply side" (p. 350) in that the brand's globalness is defined in terms of number of markets served, size of markets served and the extent to which the brand shares consistent technical specifications across these markets.

This mirrors the standard, textbook definition of a global brand (Ghuari & Cateroa, 2010). Roberts and Cayla (2009) also note that while a consumer-centric view of global brands (that is, the process by which consumers categorize brands as “global”) is desirable, such a view is still underdeveloped in the marketing literature. This view was supported by Rosenbloom & Haefner (2009), who analyzed multiple, global brand definitions. Their literature review found only one global brand definition that integrated both consumer and producer orientations. In this definition, a global brand was defined as “the multi-market reach of products that are perceived as the same by both consumers and internal constituents” (Johansson and Ronkainen, 2005, p. 340). Steenkamp, Batra and Alden (2003) were very clear that “a brand benefits from consumer perceptions that it is 'global'…only if consumers believe the brand is marketed in multiple countries and is generally recognized as global in these countries” (p. 54).

Country of Origin

All brands have a country-of-origin (COO), yet for global brands, COO is always an issue of marketing strategy concerning whether to highlight it or not. As such, COO has been extensively investigated (Pharr, 2005). Marketing scholars have variously tried to understand how COO affects perceived product value (Cervino, Sanchez & Cubillo, 2005; Hui & Zhou, 2002); brand image and brand equity (Lin & Kao, 2004; Pappu, Quester & Cooksey, 2007). Okechuku (1994) used conjoint analysis to study the effect of COO on product choice in consumers living in Holland, Germany, Canada and the United States and found that COO was one of the two most important attributes in purchase evaluation. Okechuku (1994) found that consumers had a distinct preference for domestic products over foreign ones, especially when the COO was from countries with developing or emerging economies. This finding seems consistent across much of the COO literature—there is a strong domestic preference for many product categories when consumers in developed countries evaluate COO (Watson & Wright, 2000).

Research on Chinese consumers finds a similar pattern: There is a predisposed, strong preference toward domestic products (Cui and Liu, 2001; Li and Gallup, 1995) and foreign products, except for those in luxury product categories, may suffer from the “liability of foreignness” (Peng, 2009; Zaheer, 1995).

H1: The greater the importance of knowing a brand’s COO, the greater will be its effect on brand purchase likelihood.

Brand Familiarity

To know a product’s COO (Samiee, Shimp, Sharma, 2005), presumes some level of brand familiarity. Brand familiarity creates a feeling in consumers that the brand is “known.” This feeling of knowing something about the product begins the transformation process of turning undifferentiated products into brands (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Indeed, “familiarity, trust and liking are the three most important drivers of brand loyalty” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, pp.310-311).

Brand familiarity reflects “the extent of the consumer’s direct and indirect experiences with the brand” (Campbell & Keller, 2003) and directly affects consumer knowledge structures. Consumers who are familiar with a brand have more elaborate, sophisticated brand schemas stored in memory than consumers who are unfamiliar with the brand (Heckler & Childers, 1992; Kent & Allen, 1994; Low & Lamb, 2000). Research has demonstrated that brand familiarity yields more favorable brand evaluation (Janiszewski, 1993; Holden & Vanhuele, 1999).

Increased brand familiarity means that consumers will process advertising messages quicker and with less effort because they already "know things" about the brand (Chattopadhyay, 1998).

Consumer familiarity with product categories and brands also may influence COO evaluations. So far, though, this research is inconclusive. Lambert and Jaffe (1998) suggested that consumers already familiar with products from a country used COO marginally in forming brand judgments. Johansson (1989), in contrast, found consumers already familiar with a brand in a product category used COO more fully in their decision making. Phau and Suntornnond (2006) found that while COO does have an effect: "There are only weak associations between product dimensions and country of origin cues particularly for evaluations of unfamiliar brands" (p. 39). Most recently, Ahmed and d'Astous (2008) studied the effect that COO familiarity had on a wide variety of products whose COOs were from 14 different nations. Ahmed and d'Astous (2008) concluded that for their sample of male consumers living in Canada, Morocco and Taiwan "familiarity has a significant and substantial impact on COO evaluations" (p. 96).

H2: Greater familiarity with a global brand increases the likelihood of global brand purchase.

Brand Liking

While brand familiarity is predominantly a cognitive process, brand liking invokes an affective response within consumers. de Houwer (2008) stated, "A core assumption in marketing research is that consumers tend to buy brands and products that they like" (p. 151). Anselmsson, Johansson & Persson (2008) defined brand liking as the "evaluative and global measurement capturing how positive and strong the perceived brand assets are from a consumer perspective" (p. 66). Boutie (1994) extended the concept by noting that brand liking "seeks to build consumers' positive attitude toward a brand based on the belief that it cares about them (or addresses them) as individuals" (p. 4). While intuitively attractive, global brand liking is an underdeveloped area of market research. Few studies of both the general construct of brand trust and/or its relationship to global brands exist. The research reported here contributes to the extant literature on brand liking.

H3: Stronger global brand liking increases the likelihood of global brand purchase intent.

Brand Trust

Trust is an elusive concept (Elliot & Percy, 2007) and can be thought of as an individual characteristic, as a characteristic of interpersonal relations and/or as an institutional attribute (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995). Rotter (1971) defined trust as "a generalized expectancy held by an individual or group that a word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied on" (p.1). Barney and Hansen (1994) added the idea of hurt and harm when they defined trust as "The mutual confidence that no party to an exchange will exploit another's vulnerabilities" (p. 176). Finally, Bhattacharya, Devinney & Pilluta (1998) highlighted the protective nature of trust when they defined trust as "an expectancy of positive (or nonnegative) outcomes that one can receive based on the expected action of another party in an interaction characterized by uncertainty" (p. 462). Trust thus involves commitment, risk and mutuality. Trust is also a dynamic concept that is always contingent. "The amount of knowledge necessary for trust is somewhere between total knowledge and total ignorance. Given total knowledge there is no need for trust and given total ignorance there is no basis upon which to rationally trust" (McAllister, 1995, p.26).

Delgado-Ballester, Munera-Alemain and Yague-Gullien (2003) defined brand trust as "The confident expectations of the brand's reliability and intentions in situations entailing risk to the consumer" (p. 37). Brand trust has also been defined as "the confidence a consumer develops in the brand's reliability and integrity" (Chatterjee & Chaudhuri, 2005, p.2). Brand trust has been linked with brand loyalty (Lau & Lee, 1999) as well as increased market share and advertising efficiency (Chatterjee & Chaudhuri, 2005).

Of recent interest has been the question of whether brands vary in terms of trust. Romaniuk and Bogomolova (2005) studied this question by controlling for brand size effects when they assessed trust scores of 110 local brands in 13 markets in subjects living in the United Kingdom and Australia. They found little variation in brand trust scores when controlling for market share. They concluded that "trust is more like a 'hygiene' factor in that all brands have to have a certain level of trust to be competitive in the market" (Romaniuk & Bogomolova, 2005, p. 371). If brands do not vary greatly in terms of trust, would the same hold true when consumers were asked to evaluate specifically their trust in a global brand?

H4: Global brand trust increases the likelihood to purchase a global brand.

Ethnocentrism

There is an extensive literature on ethnocentrism primarily because it's a pervasive aspect of all global transactions – not just marketing transactions. Furthermore, consumer ethnocentrism can act as a mediating variable in any COO and global brand evaluation. Ethnocentrism is defined as "the local proclivity of people to view their own group as the center of the universe, to interpret other social units from the perspective of their own group, and to reject persons who are culturally dissimilar while blindingly accepting those what are culturally like themselves" (Shimp & Sharma, 1987, p. 280). Ethnocentrism works unconsciously within individuals, thus making it a powerful, yet unacknowledged, influencer in decision making. Shimp and Sharma (1987) developed the CET scale to measure consumer ethnocentrism and described the psychological and sociological roots of the phenomenon in succeeding research (Sharma, Shimp & Shin, 1995). Consumer ethnocentrism has been more recently termed "domestic country bias" (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2004, p. 80).

Empirical research has identified differences in domestic country bias between consumers living in developed versus developing countries (Batra et al., 2000; Upadhyay & Singh, 2006). The former clearly favored domestic over foreign products, while the latter favored the opposite. Research by Bawa (2004) indicated that contrary to earlier findings that consumers from developing countries were biased toward imported over domestic products, "the label 'made in India' is not a liability. The Indian consumer will not lap up foreign goods merely because of their 'made in' tags" (p.43).

H5: Individuals with strongly held ethnocentric beliefs prefer to buy domestic brands over global brands.

Cosmopolitanism

Another consumer characteristic closely linked with global brands is cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism has its origin in sociology and cultural studies and refers to the fact that some individuals perceive themselves to be more "worldly" and less provincial than others. Skrbis, Kendall and Woodward (2004) suggested that cosmopolitanism is "a conscious openness to the world and to cultural differences" (p. 117). Cleveland and Laroche (2007) included cosmopolitanism as a subscale in their research aimed at developing a composite scale assessing acculturation to global consumer culture. In their confirmation study, their 11-item subscale had a very robust, Cronbach alpha of .906. In their six-country study, cosmopolitanism was a positive predictor of owning a personal portable stereo, CD and DVD players, a television set, a digital camera, a computer, a mobile phone, ATM and computer usage, Web surfing and e-mail, and DVD purchasing. Additionally, cosmopolitanism influenced purchase of a washing machine, a hair dryer, a vacuum, a refrigerator, and a microwave oven (Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2009).

H6: Individuals with strongly held cosmopolitan values prefer to buy global brands over domestic brands.

Global-Local Identity

As the above discussion of cosmopolitanism indicates, consumers hold many beliefs about themselves. Global-local identity extends the concepts of consumer self-identity. Zhang & Khare (2009) stated that individuals with local identities "have faith in and respect for local traditions and customs, are interested in local events, and recognize the uniqueness of local communities" (p. 525). Individuals with a global identity, in contrast, "believe in the positive effects of globalization, recognize the commonalities rather than dissimilarities among people around the world, and are interested in global events; broadly, being global means identifying with people around the world" (Zhang & Khare, 2009, p. 525). Global-local identities are complex, since individuals can maintain both local and global identities without much cognitive dissonance. In the context of global brands, individuals with local identities would/should prefer local brands; while consumers with global identities would/should prefer global brands.

H7: Individuals with strong local identities prefer to buy local brands over global brands.

Global Consumer Culture

Robertson (1987) defined globalization as "the crystallization of the world as a single space" (p. 38). Robertson's definition fits well within the established conceptualization of globalization as a series of "flows," across transnational boundaries, "of virtually everything that characterizes modern life: flows of capital, commodities, people, knowledge, information, ideas, crime, pollution, diseases, fashions, beliefs, images and so forth" (Tomlinson, 2007, p. 352). These "flows" enable brands to travel the world. Corporate marketing practice supports consumer experiences that "global brands [are] on the center stage. The evidence is everywhere: on the streets, in stores, in the media. Global brands are exerting their power and influence within various domains" (Özsomer & Altaras, 2008, p.1).

This tendency to homogenize markets has resulted in a global consumer culture. A global consumer culture emerges because not only consumers' needs are convergent across national boundaries but also because firms intentionally maintain a consistent global consumer culture positioning strategy in all markets (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999). Further, a global consumer culture positioning strategy can have either a local emphasis or a foreign emphasis. A local emphasis is “a strategy that associates the brand with local cultural meanings, reflects the local culture's norms and identities, is portrayed as consumed by local people in the national culture” (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999, p.77). A foreign consumer culture position, in contrast, stresses “the brand as symbolic of a specific foreign consumer culture; that is, a brand whose personality, use occasion, and/or user group are associated with a foreign culture” (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999, p.77). These two global consumer culture-positioning strategies dovetail with global-local identity discussed above.

> *H8: Individuals who strongly identify with a global consumer culture will prefer to buy the global brand over the domestic brand.*

Exposure to Multinational Advertising

Closely linked with global consumer culture is exposure to multinational advertising. Consumers must be exposed not only to the global product but also to the global values which the product expresses. Frequently, but not exclusively, this exposure is through advertising (Arnould, 2011). Mertz, He and Alden (2008) note that “advertising cross-culturally creates desires for the advertised products or services – whether affordable or not – and, as such, becomes associated with the inherent symbolism of those offerings” (p. 172) – thereby simultaneously creating and reinforcing a global consumer culture.

> *H9: Individuals exposed to multinational advertising will be more likely to identify with and buy global brands over domestic brands.*

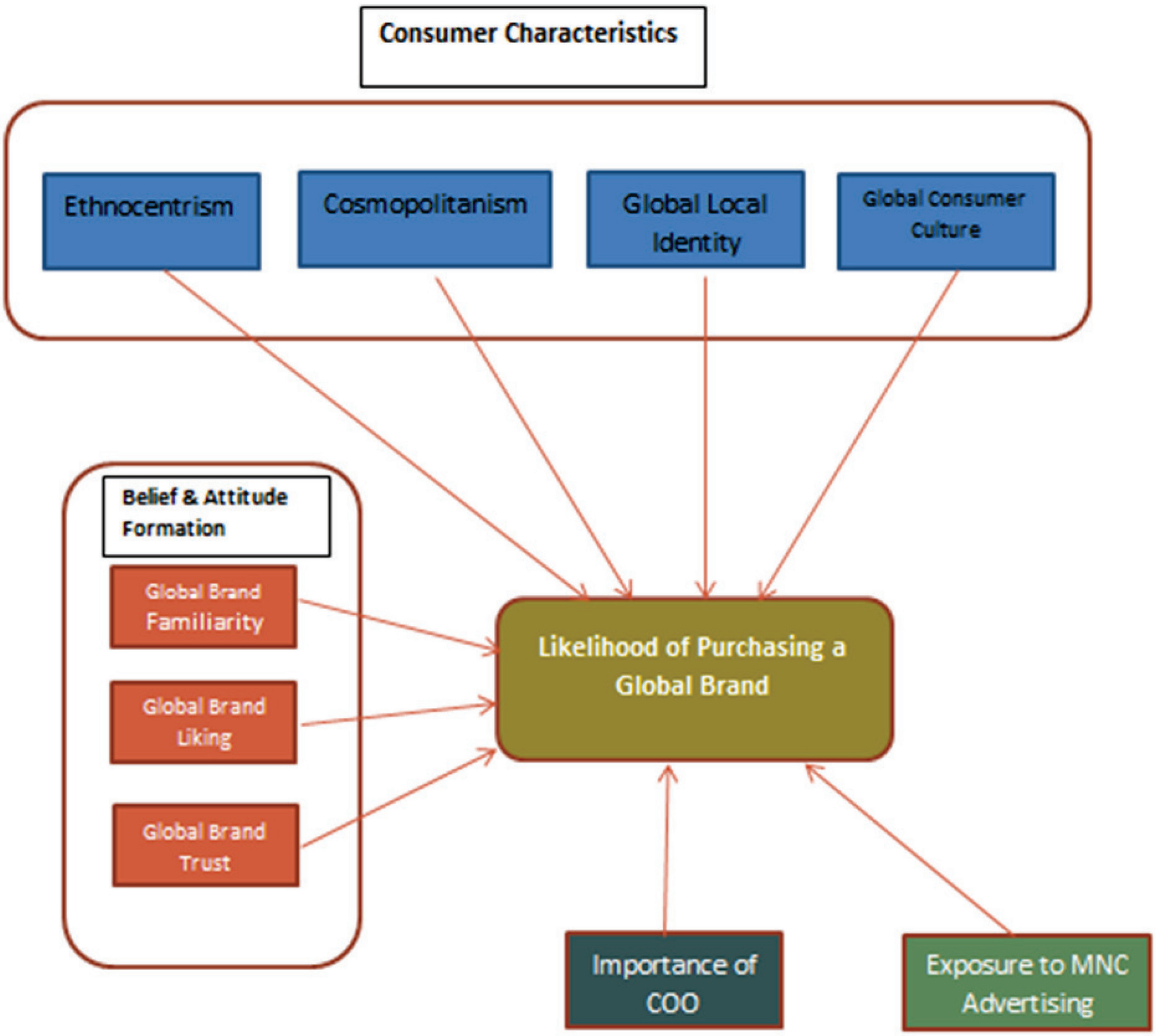
GLOBAL BRAND PURCHASE MODEL

Models of consumer behavior suggest that consumer decision making is very complex (Lavidge-Steiner, 1961; Engel, Kollat & Blackwell, 1973). Hierarchy-of-effects models help simplify information processing as a sequence of perceptual and cognitive processes. AIDA (awareness-interest-desire-action) is one well-known model. As a more specific and nuanced application, Percy and Elliot (2005) have summarized the brand communication process in terms of four stages: Category need-brand awareness-brand attitude-brand purchase intent. To date, though, few researchers have developed a hierarchical model specifically for global brands. The model outlined in Figure 1 attempts to fill that gap. Figure 1 also summarizes the relational influence of the attitudinal constructs described above (ethnocentrism, cosmopolitanism, global-local identify, global consumer culture and multinational advertising) on global brand purchase intent.

Research Methodology

The objective of this empirical study was to evaluate the relative contribution of each construct presented in Figure 1 (country COO, global brand familiarity, global brand liking, global brand trust) as an independent predictor of global brand purchase intent and to determine whether ethnocentrism, cosmopolitanism, global-local identify, global consumer culture and multinational advertising influenced purchase intent as well.

FIGURE 1
MODEL SUMMARY



Ten global brands were chosen for this research. Table 1 presents the global brands tested. These global brands were chosen to cover a wide variety of product categories (consumer electronics, fashion, banking, personal care products and automobiles). In addition, the global brands chosen included low involvement (Colgate) and high involvement (BMW, Prada) products. Four brands were specifically chosen for their clear COO associations: BMW (Germany), Chanel (France), Haier (China) and Levi's (United States). All global brands were available in the PRC when the research was conducted (March-May 2010).

TABLE 1
GLOBAL BRANDS TESTED

Avon	雅芳
BMW	宝马
Chanel	香奈儿
Colgate	高露洁
Haier	海尔
HSBC	汇丰银行
Levi's	李维斯
Prada	Prada 普拉达
Samsung	三星
Zara	Zara

Five point Likert-scales measured each construct. Importance of knowing a brand's COO ranged from "not at all important" to "very important." Global brand familiarity ranged from "not at all familiar" to "very familiar" on a 5-point scale. Global brand trust was scaled "no trust at all" to "total trust." Similarly, liking the brand ranged from "like nothing about the brand" to "like everything about the brand" on a 5-point scale. Finally, likelihood to purchase was a 5-point scale that ranged from "never purchase" to "always purchase." It should be noted that these questions about the brands were phrased with a caveat, "if you were able" to purchase the brand.

Five attitudinal scales were designed to tap various aspects of consumer decision making: ethnocentrism, cosmopolitanism, global-local identity, global consumer culture and awareness of multinational advertising. All the scales used were subsets of previously published and validated survey instruments. Table 2 presents the attitudinal items used, and each scale's source, Cronbach alphas, and the factor loading for each item.

TABLE 2
SCALES UTILIZED AND ITEM FACTOR LOADINGS

Scales		Item Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Global Local Identity (Adapted from Zhang & Khare, 2009)			.685
I believe that the local way of life is harmed by globalization.[1]	我觉得本土化的生活正在被全球化所破坏。	.419	
I respect my local traditions.	我尊重自己当地的传统。	.834	
I believe parents should pass along local customs to their children.	我觉得家长们应该把当地民风民俗传承给他们的孩子。	.850	
Cosmopolitanism (Adapted from Cleveland, Laroche, Papadopolous, 2009)			.698

I enjoy exchanging ideas with people from other cultures or countries.	我喜欢与来自异乡不同文化的人们交流意见想法。	.860	
I enjoy being with people from other countries to learn about their views and approaches.	我喜欢从来自异乡的人们那里学习他们的观点和方式。	.712	
I like to observe people from other countries to see what I can learn from them.	我喜欢通过观察来自异乡的人们来看我能从他们那里学到些什么。	.818	
Ethnocentrism (Adapted from Cleveland, Laroche, Papadopolous, 2009)			.819
I do not buy foreign products because it hurts local business and causes unemployment.	我不买外国生产的产品因为这样会伤害当地经济以及导致失业。	.807	
I do not purchase foreign products because it puts people in my home country out of work.	我不买外国生产的产品因为这会使得我国家的人们没有工作。	.859	
I purchase domestic products to prevent other countries from getting rich off of me.	我购买本国国内产品以防止其他国家比我国富裕。	.815	
I buy foreign-made products only when I cannot get a domestically-made product.	我只有当买不到本国国内产品时才会买国外生产的产品。	.742	
Openness and desire to emulate GCC (Adapted from Cleveland & Laroche, 2007)			.740
I would like to live like people in the United States do.[2]	我想像在美国生活的人们一样生活。	.353	
I think people my age are basically the same around the world. For example, someone who is 20 years old in Russia is basically the same as someone who is 20 years old in the US, Sweden or anywhere else.	我想与我同龄的人们基本上全世界都一样。例如，在俄罗斯一个 20 岁的人基本应该和在美国或瑞典一个 20 岁的人差不多。	.833	
I think that my lifestyle is almost the same as that of people in my age-group in other countries.	我认为我的生活方式应该和与我同龄的其他国家的人们的生活方式差不多。	.817	

I think my lifestyle is almost the same as that of people in my social class in other countries.	我认为我的生活方式应该和与我一样社会阶层的其他国家的人们的生活方式差不多。	.805	
Exposure to MNC advertising (Adapted from Cleveland & Laroche, 2007)			.702
When watching TV, I often see ads for brands that are outside my home country.	当在看电视的时候，我经常收看非我国品牌的广告。	.578	
It is quite common to see ads for global brands in the local newspaper.	在当地报纸上经常有全球品牌的广告。	.802	
It is quite common to hear ads for global brands on the local radio.	在当地广播里经常可以听到全球品牌的广告。	.814	
Ads for global brands seem to be everywhere.	好像到处都是全球品牌的广告。	.814	

Note. A Principle Components Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation was utilized for all the scales.
[1]Item was not included in the final scale due to low factor loading.
[2]Item was not included in the final scale due to low factor loading.

Recruitment of Respondents

A four-phase recruitment procedure was utilized for this study.

Phase 1: Selection of Key Distributors

A personally addressed email was sent to key distributors who have ability to understand both Chinese and English. The key distributors agreed to cooperate in an ongoing global brand study. The key distributors were composed of the Dean of Shanghai Normal University, Shanghai; a faculty member of Jishou University, Hunan; and 10 Chinese for whom researchers have contact information previously. After receiving confirmation from the key distributors, researchers made phone contact with them. During the conversation, researchers explained the purpose of this study and encouraged them to disseminate this information to their acquaintances in China. When researchers sent an English email to the key distributors, it was translated into Chinese and was then distributed to the participants.

Phase 2: Invitation

Two ways of approaching the participants were used: (1) personal invitation by email (in Chinese) from key distributors and (2) a discussion board in the Chinese social network (online community). In terms of personal invitation, each participant received an email inviting him or her to participate in a confidential Global Brand Survey via the web. The message was distributed from the key distributors in order to avoid having it viewed as a junk email. The email included a brief introduction to the survey and a hypertext link contained within the message. When participants clicked the link, their computer's default web browser was directed to surveymonkey.com, an online survey research site, where the complete questionnaire was accessible in Chinese. The email also included additional instructions on how to access the survey by typing in a URL when the browser was not able to launch the survey site appropriately. In the invitation message, participants were assured that the data they provided were transmitted to a secured site, remained confidential, and would be used only for the purposes of this study. The hypertext link could be used only once to access the questionnaire. When the participants attempted to access the site again, a message was provided that they already completed the survey and it was no longer available for access.

The second approach to participants was through Chinese social networks (Online community) that key distributors were engaged in. The members of communities were mainly those who graduated from their college and employed in the various companies. The purpose of the online community is to keep their social network after they graduated from their schools. Within the online community, each key distributor can send a message to every member. The key distributors posted a brief introduction to the survey and a hypertext link in the message. In addition, the key distributors encouraged their friend's family member to participate in this study.

Phase 3: First Reminders

Four weeks after the first e-mail message was sent to the participants and after the survey database was checked for the number of participants, a reminder e-mail message was sent to those participants who had not yet responded. This message includes the same information as the first email (short introduction and hypertext link to the web questionnaire) in case the previous e-mail message had not been delivered to the person. The same information was provided in the online community.

Phase 4: Second Reminders

Four weeks after the first reminder e-mail, a second reminder message was sent, after the survey database was again checked. Key distributors sent an email reminder to the participants to encourage them to complete the survey. The same information was provided in the online community.

RESULTS

Respondent Profiles

The study sample consisted of 296 Chinese aged 19–60 years, who currently hold Chinese citizenship and reside in the People's Republic of China (See Table 3). The majority of the sample was female, 63.2%. Almost 41% had some college or university work, while 55.2% had a bachelor's degree or better. The majority of the sample was not married at 83.8%. Almost 47% were unemployed while 52.7 % were employed part-time or full- time. The average age of the respondents was 24.8 years.

Respondents indicated they did not particularly feel a part of the global consumer culture with an average of 7.9 out of a possible 15 (See Table 4). Chinese respondents definitely felt more cosmopolitan and saw global advertising. In terms of their global-local identities, respondents felt more bound by local traditions and felt the local way of life was harmed by globalization. However, they were more ethnocentric having a mean of 7.7 out of 20. There was a disparity between their cosmopolitan views and their more inward leanings in terms of appreciating the local way of life and their more ethnocentric world view.

TABLE 3
SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic	Percentage (Mean)	Frequency
Gender:		
Male	36.8	89
Female	63.2	153
Education:		
High school diploma	3.9	9
Some college/university	40.9	94
work	28.3	65
Bachelor's degree	14.3	33
Some graduate work	12.6	29
Master's degree		
Marital status:		
Never married	83.8	201
Married	15.4	38
Widow/widower	.4	1
Current Employment		
Situation:	46.9	113
Unemployed	37.8	91
Employed part time	14.9	36
Fully employed	.4	1
Retired		
Age (mean)	24.8	

TABLE 4
SCALE MEANS

Scale	Means
Global Consumer Culture	7.9
Cosmopolitanism	12.5
Multinational Advertising	15.3
Global-Local	8.9
Ethnocentrism	7.7

Note. For global consumer culture, scores can range from 3 to 15. For cosmopolitanism, scores can range from 3 to 15. For multinational advertising, scores can range from 4 to 20. For global-local, scores can range from 2 to 10. For ethnocentrism, scores can range from 4 to 20

Means for Familiarity, Trust, Liking, COO, and Purchase Intent

For familiarity, Chinese respondents indicated the least familiarity with Prada (2.92), Zara (3.04), Avon (3.15), and Levi's (3.21). The greatest level of familiarity was for Haier (4.23), Colgate (4.22), and Samsung (4.10) [See Table 5].

Concerning trust, the least trusted global brand was Zara at 2.59. The most trusted global brands were BMW (4.34), Chanel (4.16), Haier (4.08), and Levi's (3.99). For liking, the least liked global brand was Avon at 2.50. The most liked global brands were BMW (4.0), Chanel (3.88), Haier (3.66), and Prada (3.66). For knowing the country-of-origin, respondents felt it was most important for the brands BMW and Haier both at 3.38 and for Chanel at 3.13. The least need-to-know country-of-origin was Avon at 2.26. Finally for purchase intent, the brand most likely to be purchased was Colgate at 4.11. The least likely brand to be purchased was HSBC at 2.23.

TABLE 5
MEANS FOR FAMILIARITY, TRUST, LIKING, COO, AND PURCHASE INTENT

Brands	Means				
	Familiarity	Trust	Liking	COO	Purchase Intent
Avon	3.15	3.00	2.50	2.26	2.79
BMW	3.73	4.34	4.00	3.38	3.18
Chanel	3.55	4.16	3.88	3.13	3.39
Colgate	4.22	3.83	3.46	2.72	4.11
Haier	4.23	4.08	3.66	3.38	3.66
HSBC	3.36	3.79	3.38	2.78	2.23
Levi's	3.21	3.99	3.56	2.72	3.55
Prada	2.92	3.44	3.66	2.90	3.24
Samsung	4.10	3.49	3.15	2.95	3.16
Zara	3.04	2.59	3.36	2.61	3.44

Note. Based on Tukey Kramer multiple comparisons, difference between means greater than .30 were significant $p \leq .05$ for familiarity (See Table 5). For trust mean differences greater than .36 were significant $p \leq .05$. For liking, mean differences greater than .37 were significant $p \leq .05$. For strong-weak, mean differences greater than .33 were significant at $p \leq .05$. For COO mean differences greater than .41 was significant at $p \leq .05$. For purchase intent, mean differences greater than .36 were significant at $p \leq .05$.

Regressions

Separate stepwise multiple regressions were run for the ten brands. The dependent variable was likelihood of purchase of the brand while the independent variables included familiarity with the brand, degree of trust in the brand, degree of liking the brand, and importance of knowing the county-of-origin of the brand. The highest VIF value was 2.3 for trust in Haier with all the remaining VIF values across all the models being below 2.1. All values indicate that multicollinearity was not a problem for any of the models (See Table 6).

Most of the models were robust in their predictive ability. The exceptions were BMW with an adjusted R^2 of .122 and HSBC with an adjusted R^2 of .213. The most frequently occurring significant predictor across the ten models was global brand liking (7 times). This confirms H3 that global brand liking increases the likelihood of purchasing global brands. The only brands where brand liking did not occur were BMW, HSBC and Levi's.

TABLE 6
CHINESE RESPONDENT REGRESSIONS (FAMILIARITY, TRUST, LIKING, IMPORTANCE OF COO, GLOBAL CONSUMER CULTURE, COSMOPOLITANISM, MULTINATIONAL ADVERTISING, GLOBAL-LOCAL, ETHNOCENTRISM, GENDER, EDUCATION, AND MARTIAL STATUS REGRESSED AGAINST LIKELIHOOD TO BUY)

Model/Brand	Model Summary				Coefficients (Standardized Betas)			
	F	Significance	R	Adjusted R^2	Variable(s)	t	Significance	Weight
Avon	32.0	.00	.712	.492	Liking COO Familiarity	6.9 2.6 2.4	.00 .00 .01	.548 .208 .178
BMW	8.3	.00	.373	.122	Familiarity Global-Local	3.1 -2.8	.00 .01	.288 -.257
Chanel	12.7	.00	.520	.250	Liking Familiarity Global-Local	3.6 2.8 -2.2	.00 .00 .02	.340 .259 -.191
Colgate	20.8	.00	.669	.426	Trust Liking Familiarity Cosmo	4.1 3.4 -2.0 2.0	.00 .03 .04 .04	.437 .346 -.165 .149
Haier	46.4	.00	.755	.558	Liking Global-Local Trust	5.5 -3.0 2.1	.00 .02 .03	.546 -.199 .214
HSBC	10.1	.00	.486	.213	Trust Global-Local Male	4.4 -2.2 2.1	.00 .03 .03	.391 -.194 .194
Levi's	20.9	.00	.571	.310	Trust Familiarity	4.4 2.0	.00 .04	.443 .206
Prada	21.3	.00	.658	.412	Liking Familiarity Global-Local	5.2 3.4 -2.1	.00 .00 .03	.461 .303 -.174
Samsung	69.0	.00	.754	.560	Liking Trust	5.4 3.3	.00 .00	.500 .310
Zara	33.3	.00	.778	.587	Liking Familiarity Trust Male	4.2 3.7 2.2 -2.0	.00 .00 .02 .03	.406 .276 .214 -.147

Global brand familiarity was a predictor for seven brands, including Avon, BMW, Chanel, Colgate, Levi's, Prada, and Zara. This data would confirm H2, that familiarity with a global brand increases the likelihood of purchase intention. Trust was a significant predictor six times with the exceptions being Avon, BMW, Chanel, and Prada thus giving confirmatory evidence that greater global brand trust increases the likelihood of purchase (H4). COO was a significant predictor for only Avon. Thus, COO did not have an effect on purchase intent. H1 was not confirmed.

For the most part, the attitudinal scales that were used as predictors in the models had limited predictive ability. They appeared in five of the models. Ethnocentrism, desire to emulate global consumer culture, and multinational advertising did not appear as a predictor in any of the models. H5, H8, and H9 were not confirmed. Cosmopolitanism appeared in one model, Colgate, thus not confirming H6.

Global-Local Identity appeared in four models: Chanel, Haier, HSBC, and Prada. When the construct was significant, all weights for Global-Local were negative weight. For Global-Local Identity, the negative loadings indicated that respondents tended to disagree with the three statements in the scale:

- I believe that the local way of life is harmed by globalization.
- I respect my local traditions.
- I believe parents should pass along local customs to their children.

There was limited support for H7.

The only demographic to appear in the models was gender. Males were more likely than females to have higher purchase intent for HSBC while males were less likely to be interested in the purchase of Zara.

DISCUSSION

As noted above (Table 5), Colgate, Haier and Samsung had the highest mean score for global brand familiarity. This is not surprising, since Chinese consumers view all three brands favorably. Colgate, for example, has had a huge impact on Chinese life. Since the brand was introduced in China, it has achieved high penetration rates in Chinese market. The Chinese believe that Colgate was very successful in creating various flavors (such as green tea and honey) and introducing new product design (such as a tub design for children) that helps meet the needs of such domestic products in the Chinese market. In addition, Colgate is positioned as being of high quality and an inexpensive brand. Advertising expenditures are strong for the brand.

Haier is a very interesting brand in that it scored higher on all of the variables (familiarity, trust, liking, COO, and purchase intention). This brand projects a unique image to the Chinese. They see Haier as a representation of China because it is the first global brand from China. In addition, Chinese view Haier as a high quality company.

Samsung is a brand that is seen by most Chinese as limited to the electronics market. For example, many Chinese attributed the image of Samsung mainly to cell phone products, even though Samsung produces various products such as TV, monitors, printer, semi-conductors, etc. Despite of the limited view point of the brand, Chinese see the Samsung brand as user friendly because they find it simpler to input text message in the cell phone. The innovative design of the phone is also more up to date with advanced features.

Table 6 supports earlier research (Deli-Grey, Haefner, & Rosenbloom, 2012) that brand liking is the strongest overall predictor of global brand purchase intent. In this regard, these respondents appeared similar to respondents in Hungary and Bulgaria, where similar research was conducted (Rosenbloom, Marcheva, & Haefner, 2011).

For Colgate, HSBC and Levi's, trust was the strongest predictor. One possible explanation for this finding is the hedonic-utilitarian classification of products. Products that emphasize pleasure and affective emotions are hedonic while products that stress functional attributes are utilitarian. Trust can be linked with utilitarian product benefits, while liking is more associated with hedonic products. It seems reasonable to speculate that toothpaste is most valued for its many utilitarian benefits (fresh breath, white teeth, etc.) and that HSBC is a similarly valued for its utilitarian benefits (safety of deposits, security of ATM machines, etc.). Similarly, Levi's, a quintessential American brand, might be valued for its utilitarian benefits as well. In this case, trust equals quality. While more expensive than domestic, Chinese jeans brands, Levi's are noted for their stringent quality control in manufacturing.

Lastly and perhaps the most interesting finding is the absence of most of the attitudinal scales as independent predictors of global brand purchase intent. While the research described in the literature review suggests many interesting conceptual ideas, by and large, respondent orientation towards ethnocentrism (the desire to emulate global consumer culture) and exposure to multinational advertising were not predictors of purchasing these global brands.

Only global-local identity had limited predictive power. Since the loadings in all cases were negative, this finding seems to suggest that this respondent group moderated both traditional Chinese values (many of which are Confucian) and the collective often associated with Chinese culture (Hofstede, 2001).

For the most part, the hierarchy model seemed to have evidence of support with Chinese consumers. Although not every construct appeared in every model as a significant predictor, familiarity, trust and liking generally explained a significant portion of the variance. The sense of the authors is that the Chinese consumers of this study tend to conform with other international consumers more than they differed in the elements that this project reviewed. Familiarity, trust, and liking are the key predictors of purchase intention. It is possible that this merging of consumer decision making is part of the larger notion of a global consumer culture (Lury, 1996) which tends to create more similarities than differences among global consumers. Thus instead of looking for variances between consumers, marketers should be looking for more of the common linkages among them in their strategy development.

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