

The Relationship between Global Brand and Face in the Chinese Market: A Comparative Study of Chinese and American Global Cell Phone Brands

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of global brands, and the relationship between global brands and face on purchase intention using two brand origin countries, namely, China and America. For this, data from a sample of 759 consumers were collected using questionnaires from three major cities of China-, Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. The results reveal that the construct of global brand factors is positively related to both perceived face and purchase intention, and perceived face has a positive impact on purchase intention. Face consciousness has positive impacts on both global brand factors and perceived face. Furthermore, the effect of global brand factors on both the perceived face and purchase intention of global brands of Chinese origin is not significantly different from similar brands of American origin. Due to the heavy effects of face, Chinese consumers prefer to consume global brands. However, the effects of global brands do not vary from country to country.

Keywords: Global brand, Face consciousness, Perceived face, Purchase intention, Chinese consumers

1. Introduction

Global brands are recognized as assets that have sustainable competitive advantage in the global market, and companies know that strong global brands are crucial in attracting international consumers. However, creating effective brands across the complex barriers of nationality, tradition, and culture is often a daunting task, because the same brand or product could be perceived in a completely different manner by consumers from different nations, or even from the same nation but with different backgrounds or experiences. Thus, a deep understanding and use of the contexts of local markets is a vital global business strategy (Kawabata, 2009). However, most companies attempt to analyze brands from a global perspective without analyzing consumers or their behaviors from a global perspective as a priority (Barron & Hollingshead, 2004).

Asian consumers possess strong desire for foreign-sounding brands, even if they may not have secured adequate food, clothing, and shelter. Some researchers tried to explain this

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phenomenon by conceptualizing it as a globalized, western-style materialism (Li & Su, 2007). However, materialism alone can hardly explain why Asian consumers desire luxury products even when they earn a relatively low income (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998).

The concept of face¹ holds an important cultural value that influences human behaviors, particularly in collectivist cultures (Ting-Toomey, 1988). It provides a significant perspective in explaining why consumers in developing countries seem to be obsessed by possessing luxury brands. In recent years, various studies have addressed face and face-related issues; however, little attention has been given to the influence of face on consumer behaviors (Li & Su, 2007; Jiang, 2009; Song, 2012).

This study contributes to the literature by attempting to provide a deeper understanding of how face influences purchase intention of global brands in the Chinese market. It particularly focuses on the strong power of global brands that have the property of multidimensionality². Due to differences in cultural values, consumers in different countries may purchase the same products but for different reasons or brand dimensions (Li & Su, 2007). First, the present study focuses on extracting the essential dimensions of global brands that make consumers in developing countries to purchase them. The essential dimensions are named as global brand factors in this paper. Then, I study the impacts of global brand factors on both perceived face and purchase intention to identify the relationship between global brands and perceived face. Furthermore, face consumption effects of global brands are elucidated by testing the relationships of face consciousness with perceived face and global brand factors.

According to previous researches, global brands have strong impacts on consumer's purchase intention. In other words, if consumers can recognize brand's globalness, they may be willing to purchase the brands. Due to the strong power of global brands, I propose the promoting effect of globalness³ will not vary according to the brand's country of origin. To demonstrate the propositions, I do a comparative analysis of two countries of brand origin, namely, China and America.

¹ The concept of face in this study refers to the process concerned by which an individual evaluates whether his image, which includes moral and social aspects is approved by the public. If the individual believes that others approved his image, he may feel that he has kept up appearances or saved face. To the contrary, if this was not the case, he may feel that he has lost face. Face is an important concept for Chinese, and purchasing luxury brands is considered a way of keeping face. In other words, Chinese consumers do their best to build themselves' images that will help them to obtain psychological satisfaction.

² Brand can be seen as summary of information. It provides functional and emotional information various dimensions such as quality, value, self-identity, prestige, and status. Different consumers pay attention to different dimensions to purchase the same products.

³ According to Steenkamp et al. (2003), a brand with globalness means that it sells all over the world.

If the propositions are supported by the data, global brand factors can be considered as valid factors for persuading consumers in developing countries to purchase the brands with those properties. Related to the discussion above, if the positive relationships among face consciousness, perceived face, and global brand factors are also proved to be true, it becomes clear why consumers in collectivist cultures have a preference for global brands. The findings are more important to firms conducting marketing planning strategies in countries with collectivist cultures.

2. Literature Review

2.1.1 Face study before 1940s

A British missionary, Medhurst (1873) is the first author who came-up with an idea similar with the concept of face. He wrote, “the Chinese people seem to have no notion of honor. This estimate is erroneous, and needs to be corrected” (p.167). “Their sense of honor is nevertheless very keen, and the educated classes especially are painfully sensitive to insult or indignity” (p.169). Although Medhurst didn’t directly use the term “face” to explain Chinese’s characteristics, what he wants to stress in the expression “honor” is just the same as the concept of face which we discuss here (Zhai, 2011).

In contrast to Medhurst, Smith(1894) provided a picturesque description of face and let westerners have an in-depth understanding of face. He stated, “At first sight nothing can be more irrational than to call that which is shared with the whole human race a ‘characteristic’ of the Chinese. But the word ‘face’ does not in China signify simply the front part of the head, is literally a compound noun of multitude, with more meanings than we shall be able to describe, or perhaps to comprehend. In order to understand, however imperfectly, what is meant by ‘face’, we must take account of the fact that as a race the Chinese have a strongly dramatic instinct” (p.16).

Lu (1934) and Lin (1935) are representatives of face studies in China. Lu emphasized, “But what is this thing called face? It is very well if you don’t stop to think, but the more you think the more confused you grow (p.129).” Lin said, “It is more powerful than fate and favor, and more respected than the constitution” (p.191), and “it is yet the most delicate standard by which Chinese social intercourse is regulated” (p.190). However it is “abstract and intangible, cannot be translated or defined” (p.190).

Based on prior researches, we can recognize that although every Chinese appears to have some notion of what face entails, providing a precise definition of it is a very difficult task. Because the studies of face before 1940s were mostly conducted by thinkers, philosophers, or writers, and the recognition of face was limited to feelings of experience or was strongly criticized (Zhai, 2011).

2.1.2 Face study after the 1940s

Hu (1944) was the first academic researcher who gave face definitions from a theoretical perspective. She made an important distinction between two Chinese concepts of face, *lien* and *mien-tzu*, based on two distinct sets of criteria for judging conduct. *lien* represents “the confidence of society in the integrity of ego’s moral character, the loss of which makes it impossible for him to function properly within the community. *Lien* is both a social sanction for enforcing moral standards and an internalized sanction” (p.45). On the other hand, *Mien-tzu* stands for “the kind of prestige that is emphasized in this country: a reputation achieved through getting on in life, through success and ostentation” (p.45).

However, Ho (1976) pointed out “the concept of *mien-tzu* is not altogether devoid of moral content (p.868).” Further, “the meanings of *lien* and *mien-tzu* vary according to verbal context and in addition are not completely differentiated from each other in that the terms are interchangeable in some contexts. Consequently, it cannot be anchored to a linguistic distinction between the two terms” (p.868).

Zhai (2011) supports Hu’s two distinct sets of criteria – moral and social criteria – of face, while he suggests that *Mien-tzu* is a continuum of *Lien*, and *Lien* refers to, “using a series of techniques or effort which will benefit oneself or related people in a certain social context to perform an image meeting other’s expectation, the purpose of image performance is to meet the common requirements of a social circle (p.92).” Whereas, *Mien-tzu* refers to, “psychological process and its results of judging the conformity between other’s evaluation and self-expectation by an individual (or collective) keeping certain image. The basic purpose is to obtain or maintain their position sequence, for short, psychological status in other’s mind. And the external effects are reflected in the degree of social approval” (p.93).

As previously discussed, we can conclude that face is composed of two factors – *lien* and *mien-tzu*. However, the discussions on whether we can or how to differentiate one from the other still continue. Based on various discussions in the literature, the framework of face related to global brand consumption is defined as the psychological satisfaction obtained from the results of individual’s image management. The purpose of image management is to extract the desired response or evaluation from others, and can be achieved through consumption.

2.2 Face study related to consumer behavior

The Chinese pay special attention to face, and their actions mostly depend on the views of others. The Chinese possess and consume famous brands to gain a good reputation among their peer group (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Thus, they perceive a lot of face, which is a kind of imagination through consumption (Jiang, 2009). For example, Nike shoes are considered as symbols of success, and the company opens an average of 1.5 new stores a

day there in China (Solomon, 2015). College students are thrifty in their purchase of food and clothes so that they can buy Nike shoes and obtain or maintain their face among their classmates. Face consumption culture has formed in the Chinese market (Jiang, 2009).

Although the concept of face is universal, Wong & Ahuvia (1998) argue that the greater concern for face leads Southeast Asian consumers to place more emphasis on publicly visible possessions than Western consumers. Bao et al. (2003) defined face consciousness as “people’s desire to enhance, to maintain, and to avoid losing face in relation to significant others in social activities” (pp.736-737), and he pointed out that Chinese people tend to have strong face consciousness. After exploring the effects of face consciousness related to consumer decision-making style, it was found that face consciousness positively affects consumers’ “brand-conscious and price-equals-quality” orientation, and negatively impacts their “price-conscious and value-for-money” orientation. The results show that Chinese consumers are more face conscious than their American counterparts.

Li & Su (2007) developed the concept of face consumption and argued that it has three unique characteristics, namely, conformity, distinctiveness, and other-orientation. The results of a cross-cultural survey supported the existence of these three sub-dimensions and showed that Chinese consumers are more likely to be influenced by their reference groups than American consumers. Furthermore, they tend to relate product brands and prices to face more heavily than Americans do. Chinese consumers are also more likely to consider the prestige of the products in other-oriented consumption than are American consumers.

Jiang (2009) focused on different social classes, and conducted a comparative study on the effect of face on purchase intention. The results support that high social class consumers show strong face consciousness, and have positive actions for high-level consumption. Song (2012, p.4) defined perceived face as “consumers evaluate the degree that a certain purchase behavior can bring them or their group social image which is approved by the public.” The results of a cross-cultural survey support that perceived face positively impacts purchase intention, and Chinese consumers tend to relate perceived face to purchase intention more strongly than their American counterparts.

As previously discussed, face culture can influence consumer behavior in a variety of ways, and the effect in collectivist societies is greater than in individualistic ones. However, there is little research related to face effect on consumer behavior (Jiang, 2009; Li & Su, 2007; Song, 2012). No studies focus on the comparison of the effects of global brands originating from different countries in face culture contexts.

2.3 Global brand studies

The concept of “global brand” in this study refers to “a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination that is employed to identify goods or services of one seller and to

differentiate them from those of other global competitors, and local consumers who use or may use the brands have perceived brand globalness” (Li, 2013, p.15).

According to Whitelock and Fastoso’s (2007) review of the literature on international branding, there are only 40 articles on brand from 1975 to 2005. While global branding is thought to be essential to a firm’s overall global marketing strategy, there are limited studies on global brands, especially compared to studies on domestic brands.

Barron & Hollingshead (2004) and Kapferer (2005) have indicated that the local population’s perceptions are important factors when implementing a brand strategy over the global market. Due to complicated factors of history, tradition, and culture, consumers in different markets or contexts may interpret the same product as having different meanings and values (Kawabata, 2009). Likewise, despite perceived standardized global brand platforms, consumers develop divergent brand meanings based on their locations (Bengtsson et al., 2010). Thus, the number of studies on the meanings of branded products is increasing recently.

Consumers in developed countries who wish to express themselves are more willing to use the self-identity factor, and prefer the quality factor when purchasing global brands. Meanwhile, consumers in developing countries like China and India consider American brands as a means for obtaining social prestige (Batra et al., 2000). Chinese consumers consume luxury brands as a display of status (Sai, 2006).

In consequence, the same brand plays an entirely different role between developing and developed countries. Understanding how a certain brand is perceived by local consumers in the target markets or a particular signal of the brand that is most significant to local consumers is crucial for developing a successful local strategy to support the global strategy.

3. Research hypotheses

By comparing data on global brands that originate from China and America, this study aims at identifying the impacts of globalness and face effects on Chinese consumers’ global brands consumption. Most researches in the field of international marketing argue that Chinese consumers are more likely to purchase foreign branded products for social status or prestige. However there are no studies focusing on the power of Chinese origin global brands.

Consumers in India and China prefer foreign products, and tend to pay stronger loyalty to them because they perceive foreign products as being of higher quality than local ones (Bhardwaj et al., 2010). Since foreign brands symbolize social status or prestige, high quality, and fashion, consumers in developing countries hold favorable impressions about them, which result in more purchase (Batra et al., 2000; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). Based on a survey of Chinese consumer’s intention of purchasing brands, 43% of the

respondents who purchase high-class brands do so for status (Sai, 2006). Furthermore, Steenkamp et al.(2003) have proved a positive relationship of perceived brand globalness with both perceived brand quality and prestige.

Based on the discussions above, we can get insight on the dimensions of global brands, which motivate consumers to purchase brands. Globalness, high quality, high class, and prestige are essential dimensions for global brands. These dimensions can be assembled as a construct called global brand factors. We hypothesize,

H1: global brand factors has a positive impact on purchase intention.

As explained earlier, Chinese consumers who hold stronger face consciousness are more likely to extract the desired response from others, and that is just psychological estimation or status perceiving by themselves. Through this process, consumers may perceive themselves that they can maintain or enhance face. According to existing researches, a developing country's consumers believe that global brands have properties such as high quality, class, or prestige, which are seen as important tools for managing self-impression. It can be argued that they prefer global brands to other brands for image performance, and finally to achieve the goal of extracting desired evaluation from others. Thus, people with stronger face consciousness may give global brands higher evaluation.

Perceived face refers to psychological evaluation or satisfaction when a certain purchase behavior brings a social image approved by the public. In other words, when an individual evaluates whether a brand brings him social image, he is judging whether it let him obtain perceived face. As stated above, Chinese consumers confirm that consuming global brands can bring them great perceived face, therefore, those consumers with stronger face consciousness may perceive more face from global brands, which will make them more likely to purchase global brands. Therefore,

H2a: face consciousness affects global brand factors positively.

H2b: face consciousness affects perceived face positively.

H3: global brand factors affects perceived face positively.

H4: perceived face has a positive impact on purchase intention.

As Steenkamp et al. (2003)'s study has shown, consumers enjoy a brand's quality and prestige by perceiving the brand globalness. Thus, globalness is seen as an important factor for consumers in judging a product's quality or prestige. Li (2013) also proved strong power of globalness as an informational cue to drive purchase intention. According to the discussion conducted earlier, and results from Steenkamp et al. (2003)'s and Li (2013),

global brands can be observed as a crucial informational cue for judging quality, class, and prestige. If consumers consider a brand as possessing globalness, an association of globalness with high quality, class, and prestige occurs in their minds. Subsequently, the relationship between global brand factors and face perception is activated, and that enables them to perceive stronger face from global brands, and encourages them to make purchases. This tendency will not vary according to the brand's country of origin. Thus, the following hypotheses can be considered;

H5a: the effects on perceived face of global brand factors do not significantly differ whether the brands originate from China or America.

H5b: the effects on purchase intention of global brand factors do not significantly differ whether the brands originate from China and America.

Figure 1 shows the analytical framework of this study.

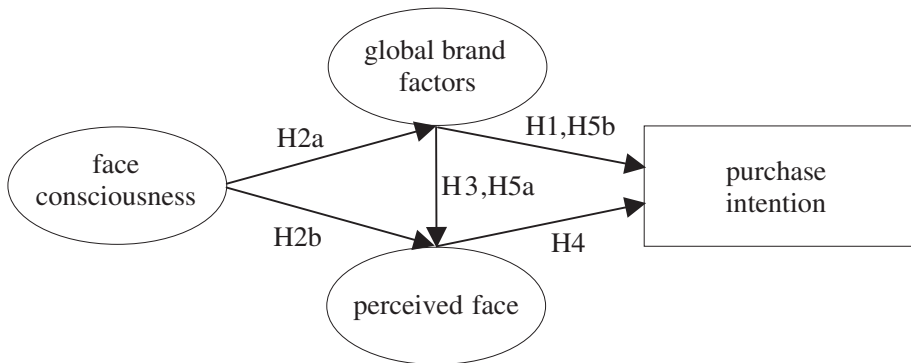


Figure 1. Analytical Framework

4. Analysis and Results

4.1 Measurement and Data Collection

In this study, I measure three kinds of construct, including face consciousness, perceived face, and global brand factors. Face consciousness measurement is based on the studies of Jiang (2009) and Song (2012), and perceived face measurement is adopted from Song (2012) following the practice of prior studies. Global brand factors measurement is based on the studies of Batra et al. (2000), Bhardwaj et al. (2010), Li (2013), Steenkamp (2003), and Verlegh & Steenkamp (1999). All measured variables are provided in a seven-point Likert scale.

Our hypotheses are tested using consumer data collected from three major Chinese cities: Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou; this cities enjoy a higher income per capita and a better

standard of living than other cities in China. Participants were asked to evaluate Chinese origin brands and American ones. The questions were related to face consciousness, perceived face, global brand factors, and purchase intention.

Cell phone industries in China (e.g. Huawei or Xiaomi) and America (e.g. Apple) are growing rapidly, and in China, cell phones have become such important status symbols that relatives at funeral rites burn paper cell phone effigies so that the dead will have their mobiles afterlife (Solomon, 2015). Not only is a cell phone an important tool for Chinese to do image performance, but as a commodity with high coverage ratio, it is also easy to evaluate. Thus, this research focuses on cell phone product category. In our definition of global brands, it is more important for consumers than firms to perceive a brand as a global brand. To confirm if the brand they evaluate holds globalness, instead of providing them with names of global brands, the participants were asked to write down a cell phone brand, which they considered as a global brand. These data were used to assess the effects of perceived globalness of a brand. The questionnaire survey in this study was conducted via the Internet in early September, 2015, and the effective answer rate was 57.41% (759/1322). Table 1 shows the sample characteristics.

4.2 Analysis and Results

All of the data are used to conduct exploratory factory analysis, and four factors were deleted due to low communality and factor loading. The reliability of each construct used was tested by using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Tables 2 and 3 show the details of measured items, the results of factor analysis, and coefficient alpha.

Hypotheses test adopted the structural equation modeling using Amos 23. The model fit was good: $n=759$, $CMIN=383.077$, $df=78$, $p=.000$, $GFI=.953$, $AGFI=.921$, $CFI=.969$, $RMSEA=.051$.

Table 4 shows the results of the analysis. Based on the results of analysis, the hypotheses were tested. The relationships between global brand factors and purchase intention are significant for Chinese ($SE=.259$, $p<.001$) and American ($SE=.083$, $p<.05$) global brands; thus, H1 is supported by the data. Then, face consciousness related to global brand factors (Chinese: $SE=.226$, $p<.001$, American: $SE=.230$, $p<.001$) and perceived face (Chinese: $SE=.074$, $p<.05$, American: $SE=.209$, $p<.001$) are positively related, that is, H2a and H2b are also supported by the data. The relationship between global brand factors and perceived face (Chinese: $SE=.631$, $p<.001$, American: $SE=.251$, $p<.001$) is also positive and hence H3 is supported. The data perceived face has a statistically significant effect on purchase intention (Chinese: $SE=.432$, $p<.001$, American: $SE=.574$, $p<.001$); H4 is supported.

Multiple group structural equation modeling was conducted to test H5a and H5b. As we proposed, the relationship between global brand factors and perceived face does not

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Variables	Sample size	Percentage
Area		
Beijing	248	32.67
Shanghai	255	33.60
Guangzhou	256	33.73
Gender		
Male	365	48.09
Female	394	51.91
Age		
Born before 1979	152	20.03
Born after 1980 and before 1990	349	45.98
Born between 1990 and 1995	258	33.99
Education		
High school graduate	42	5.53
University	582	76.68
Master and above	135	17.79
Occupation		
Student	150	19.76
Managerial staff	104	13.70
Profession or technical job	197	25.96
Sales and marketing	64	8.43
Office job	210	27.67
Others	34	4.48
Income per household(Yuan Renminbi)		
Less than 10 thousands	240	31.62
10 to 20 thousands	295	38.87
More than 20 thousands	224	29.51

significantly vary between Chinese and American origin brands ($p > .05$, n.s.). The same holds true for the effect of global brand factors on purchase intention ($p > .05$, n.s.). Thus, the data supports both H5a and H5b.

Table 2. Survey Items and Results of Factor Analysis (Chinese Origin Brand)

Questionnaire	Factors			Coefficient alpha
	1	2	3	
Using this brand make others look up to me	.937	-.051	-.010	0.944
Using this brand make me feel more confident	.917	-.013	.011	
Using this brand make me feel a better impression to others	.912	-.025	-.022	
Using this brand make me feel more face	.885	.001	.027	
This is a very prestigious brand	.049	.800	-.019	0.789
This brand is very high on quality	-.024	.781	.042	
This brand is very high on class	.265	.577	-.012	
This brand is sold all over the world	-.135	.553	-.019	
I very care about the attitude of others	-.014	-.008	.960	0.861
I very care about praise and criticism from others	.017	.003	.788	

Table 3. Survey Items and Results of Factor Analysis (American Origin Brand)

Questionnaire	Factors			Coefficient alpha
	1	2	3	
Using this brand make others look up to me	.907	-.041	-.034	0.932
Using this brand make me feel more confident	.886	.013	.017	
Using this brand make me feel a better impression to others	.882	-.019	.004	
Using this brand make me feel more face	.852	.017	.032	
This is a very prestigious brand	.004	.798	-.015	0.780
This brand is very high on quality	.027	.666	.004	
This brand is very high on class	.094	.729	-.012	
This brand is sold all over the world	-.148	.567	.018	
I very care about the attitude of others	-.036	.026	1.003	0.861
I very care about praise and criticism from others	.054	-.030	.751	

Table 4. Standardized Coefficient

Country	Parameter		Standardization estimate	Standard error	Test statistic	Probability
China	Global brand factors	<---	0.226	0.017	4.743	***
	Perceived face	<---	0.074	0.040	2.140	*
	Purchase intention	<---	-0.007	0.043	-0.223	n.s.
	Purchase intention	<---	0.432	0.048	10.048	***
	Perceived face	<---	0.631	0.206	10.102	***
	Purchase intention	<---	0.259	0.184	5.235	***
	Be praised or criticized	<---	0.864			
	Attitude	<---	0.875	0.124	8.071	***
	Feel impression	<---	0.888			
	Feel face	<---	0.897	0.026	36.758	***
	Look up to	<---	0.895	0.028	36.600	***
	Feel confidence	<---	0.919	0.027	38.874	***
	Sold around world	<---	0.434			
	High quality	<---	0.758	0.184	11.180	***
	High class	<---	0.758	0.184	11.180	***
	Prestige	<---	0.828	0.207	11.443	***
America	Global brand factors	<---	0.230	0.016	5.066	***
	Perceived face	<---	0.209	0.047	5.239	***
	Purchase intention	<---	-0.010	0.047	-0.303	n.s.
	Purchase intention	<---	0.574	0.042	16.313	***
	Perceived face	<---	0.251	0.149	5.638	***
	Purchase intention	<---	0.083	0.145	2.316	*
	Be praised or criticized	<---	0.817			
	Attitude	<---	0.926	0.112	9.978	***
	Feel impression	<---	0.872			
	Feel face	<---	0.872	0.029	32.797	***
	Look up to	<---	0.872	0.032	32.788	***
	Feel confidence	<---	0.904	0.028	35.121	***
	Sold around world	<---	0.512			
	High quality	<---	0.681	0.131	12.112	***
	High class	<---	0.759	0.143	12.659	***
	Prestige	<---	0.792	0.134	12.800	***

***p<.001, *p<.05, n.s. : not significant

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This study extends our understanding of why Chinese consumers prefer expensive global brands, even if they may not have secured adequate food, clothing and shelter. I examined the influence of global brands and face on consumer behavior by comparing Chinese and American origin brands. All of our hypotheses are supported by the data. Chinese consumers prefer global brands for their high quality, high class, and prestige; these characteristics are important factors and have strong power in inducing consumers to purchase such brands.

The relationships between face consciousness and global brand factors, global brand factors and perceived face, and face consciousness and perceived face, are all positive on both for Chinese and American origin brands. In other words, consumers who have strong face consciousness tend to purchase global brands, and through consuming global brands, they perceive stronger face. Therefore, my study provides a useful insight to understand why Chinese consumers are very thrifty in their daily life and consumption, but spend a large amount of money on global brands consumption; due to the heavy influence of face, Chinese consumers prefer to pay more money on consuming global brands. Because they confirm that global brands are effective tools to build their image, and let them enhance, maintain, or save themselves' face, which is more powerful than fate and favor and more respected than the constitution. It is important that my results have demonstrated the essential factors that determine consumers' purchase intentions on branded products in China, including globalness, high quality, high class, and prestige.

This study offers some implications for theory of international consumer research. Brand is a multidimensional concept, and different consumers may prefer different dimensions. When conducting research on international consumer behavior related to brand, brand should not be considered as one factor, it is necessary to break it down into more detail factors for analysis. For example, self-identity is one of the brand factors that may have crucial influence on consumer behavior in one country but not on consumers in another country. Chinese consumers prefer global brands to domestic ones, because they confirm global brands can bring them more face; therefore a brand's prestige can be considered as a strong promotional dimension to them. Due to the heavy effects of face, especially in countries with collectivist culture, the concept of face should be taken into consideration to better understand local consumers' motivation of behaviors (Li & Su, 2007).

My findings also have some implications for expanding businesses in China. A better understanding of the concept of face in Chinese society can help companies understand what products Chinese consumers prefer and why (Li & Su, 2007). It is important to consider face concept when programing promotional messages; for example, advertising messages such as "you obtain face while I earn money" can be used (Song, 2012).

Furthermore, because of the strong power of global brands, when companies plan communication strategies to expand business in developing countries, they should take in to account the tasks of how to let local consumers perceive their brand's dimensions related to globalness, high quality, class, and prestige.

Most studies showed that Chinese consumers prefer foreign-sounding brands to Chinese ones. This study introduced a construct of global brand factors to test the effects of Chinese global brands. Consequently, we verified that Chinese consumers also prefer Chinese origin brands with globalness. Thus, not only foreign companies, but also Chinese companies should create global brands or high premium brands for winning consumers in China's competitive market.

Similar to past researches, this study also has some limitations. First, it only employed one type of product category. For testing the generalizability of our results, it is necessary to use more categories of goods in future research. Second, this study only compared Chinese origin brands with American ones. Because Chinese consumers perceive European origin brands have the strongest globalness than others (Li, 2013), further research should take those brands into consideration for verifying the effects of Chinese origin brand's globalness.

Third, people's face consciousness may vary according to the situations they encounter; face effects may not be stable for people. Image can also be performed not only through self-purchasing, but also through gifts. In the context of gifting, there may be differences based on relationships with the persons; for example, when buying something for family members, people may not jog their face consciousness, but when they purchase something for colleagues or bosses, face consciousness may be recalled throughout all buying process. While common sense shows that the presents for significant other are also important tools for the present buyer to perform image, I should try to define different kinds of situations such as the example mentioned above, and conduct deeper discussions for enhancing our understanding in this area. This will have effective implications for academic research and business.

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