

The Effect of Culture, Product Self-Image Congruence, and Brand Attitudes on the Propensity to be Brand Loyal

ABSTRACT

There is evidence that consumers from dissimilar cultures deal with brands differently. Consequently, this study tests a model of brand loyalty proneness with data from 22 countries. This study is unique in that it includes a large cross-section of countries reflective of both developed and emerging economies. In addition, it is rare in focusing on a gestalt phenomena of interest (i.e., brand loyalty proneness) rather than brand behaviors associated with specific brands. Also this study measures specific aspects of culture (collectivism and uncertainty avoidance) in contrast to the predominant approach in cross-national research on branding focused on specific brands. Finally, the tested conceptual is unique by including three key factors (i.e., culture, product self-image congruency, and brand attitudes) rarely, if ever, included in a solitary empirical work on branding. Results show culture is an important determinant of product self-image congruency which, in turn, positively affects brand attitudes. Finally, brand attitudes positively affect the propensity to be brand loyal.

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While there is extensive research concerning the importance of specific brands in consumer decision making, there is significantly less research on the propensity of consumers to rely on brands in general. Another gap in the literature is that there is very limited cross-cultural research regarding important branding topics (Jung and Sung 2008; Lam 2007) despite the importance of brands and the trend of branding becoming increasingly conducted on a global landscape (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Even though there is a trend toward homogenization of brands across cultures (Ger and Belk 1996) there is still evidence that brand usage and loyalty differs across cultures (Hoover, Green, and Saegert 1978; Shim and Gehrt 1996). In support Maxwell (2001) notes that consumption is still heterogeneous because the importance of brands and the perception of brand quality are interpreted and acted upon differently in different cultures. In support, a recent study on brand quality revealed that consumers in different countries view brand quality in significantly different ways (Krutulyte, Costa, and Grunert 2009). Consequently, this study attempts to extend our understanding of the propensity of consumers to rely on brands, in general, across cultures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of recent cross-national literature on brands (see Table 1) reveals that only three studies actually measure specific dimensions of culture and the impact of these cultural dimensions on brand choice. The first study examines cultural dimensions of collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance (Erdem, Swait, and Valenzuela 2006). Second, Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price (2008b) examine cultural facets of consumer ethnocentrism and cultural openness. Similar to cultural openness, the final study measures openness to foreign cultures (d'Astous, Voss, Colbert, Caru, Caldwell, and Courvoisier 2008) As a

result of the shortage of direct measures of culture, this study includes specific culture dimensions in the conceptual model in an effort to add to this shortage of research.

<Insert Table 1 here>

Another gap in the cross-national research is that there is no recognition of the relationship between brands and self-identity. This is an important omission because there is a considerable amount of domestic research that shows that consumers tend to purchase products that are in alignment with their perceived identities. Consequently, this study adds product self-identity to the conceptual model tested.

Additionally, the cross-national branding research reveals that two of the most important dimensions of brand equity are brand loyalty and perception of quality and this guided the inclusion both of these two constructs in this study. For example, some studies find brand loyalty is the most important dimension of brand equity in certain countries (Hoover, Green, Saegert 1978; Jung and Sung 2008; Yoo and Donthu 2002). Alternatively, some studies show that consumers' perception of quality may be the most important dimension of brand equity. In support, a study across twelve countries consumers' perceived quality of brands accounted for largest amount of variation (44% out of a total variance explained of 64%) in brand preferences (Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004). Similarly, perceived quality was the most important branded meaning among both developed and developing countries (Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price 2008b). Problematic in this research stream is the use specific brands, while ignoring the specific executional antecedents (e.g., pricing, advertising, distribution, and product). These executional antecedents of specific brands are beyond the scope here.

A few researchers have recognized and begun to develop research on a more holistic level – specifically the tendency of consumers to be brand loyal (Lam 2007; Shim and Gehrt 1996; Raju 1980; Sproles and Kendall 1986). Brand loyalty proneness is likely to have a

direct affect on companies' brand management strategy. For example, if consumers are more prone to be brand loyal it eases the job of developing and maintaining brand loyalty. This study begins to address this gap in the literature by specifically examining cultural and other effects on brand loyalty proneness at the holistic level.

Brand loyalty proneness (i.e., a tendency or general orientation to be brand loyal) should be distinguished from behavioral brand loyalty which is typically measured as specific repeat purchases. Thus, brand loyalty proneness will affect brand loyalty for specific brands but not necessarily all brands. Holistic measures of this type tend to be used in cross-cultural research when measuring general attitudes (e.g., attitude toward advertising) rather than specific attitudes or actions (e.g., attitude toward the advertisement) where it is cumbersome or beyond the scope of the research. Because this study is concerned with the impact of culture on important branding topics generalized constructs are used in the conceptual model.

Brand loyalty proneness was most recently described as a general orientation of a consumer to purchase brands (Lam 2007). Lam (2007) found that sub-cultures within the U.S. had varying impacts on brand loyalty proneness. Lam largely drew from Shim and Gehrt (1996) and Sproles and Kendall (1986) to develop his logic. Shim and Gehrt (1996) defined brand-loyal orientation as the degree to which a consumer repetitively chooses the same brands and stores. They found that that in the U.S. Hispanic adolescents scored highest on brand-loyal orientation, followed by White adolescents and Native Americans adolescents. A decade earlier, Sproles and Kendall (1986) found that one consumer decision-making profile is a 'habitual brand loyal orientation'. They indicate that some cultures have the tendency to buy brands and develop a habit of choosing brands as a general characteristic.

The following sections of this paper cover the conceptual model and hypotheses. Next, the methodology and results are presented. Finally, a discussion of the results and limitations/future research are offered.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

The developed model is derived from the aggregated logic from three theories/models: Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Azjen 1980), Dick and Basu's (1994) customer loyalty framework, and Kressmann, Sirgy, Herrmann, Huber, Huber, and Lee's (2006) model of self-congruity and branding. In the amalgamation of these models culture is included as an antecedent. The model is shown in Figure 1 below and described as follows.

<Insert Figure 1 here>

First, Fishbein and Azjen's model of reasoned action (1980) is the most widely used approach for studying general attitude-behavioral variables and the model includes the impact of interpersonal social effects on attitudes. In other words, the theory of reasoned action asserts that an individual's behavior is determined by his/her attitude toward the outcome of that behavior and by his/her social environment. One key element of the social environment includes culture. Support for this model has been extensive in the consumer behavior literature (Lee and Green 1991). Consequently, this conceptual model presented in this study positions culture as an antecedent to attitudes which, in turn, affect behaviors.

Second, Dick and Basu (1994) developed a generalized framework of customer loyalty which suggests a direct link between relative attitudes and repeat patronage. Social norms moderate this effect, which are at least partially determined by culture as well as situational influences. In addition, they suggest that cognitive, affective and conative variables are antecedents to customer loyalty. In contrast to the transitory antecedents used in this research (e.g., accessibility, mood, switching costs) relative to specific brands this study uses attitudes that are more general or gestalt in nature.

Finally, Kressmann et al. (2006) build on the work of Sirgy (1982) to suggest that self-image congruity plays a central part in brand loyalty development – both directly and

moderated by quality, involvement, and functional issues. Consequently, this study includes self-image congruence as a precursor to important brand attitudes.

Cultural Dimensions – Individualism/Collectivism and Uncertainty Avoidance

According to Aaker, Benet-Martinez, and Garolera (2001) brands have significance beyond their physical and utility properties; they also have the ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning. The most widely utilized concept of culture is Hofstede's research (1980; 2001). Most research in cross-cultural settings has focused on Hofstede's individualism-collectivism construct (Ge and Thomas 2008; Schimmack, Oishi, and Diener 2005). This is because of considerable findings that show this dimension of culture is related to numerous important outcomes including a significant share of cross-national variance in consumers' purchase behavior (Hofstede 2001, p. 243; de Mooij and Hofstede 2002; de Mooij 2003).

Hofstede (2001) refers to individualism and collectivism as two poles of the same dimension. He defines individualism as "a society in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and her/his immediate family only" (Hofstede 2001, p. 225). And he defines collectivism as "a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" (Hofstede 2001, p. 225).

In addition to individualism/collectivism, Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance appears to be a relevant construct in cross-national research. In support, Lam (2007) found that both individualism/collectivism and uncertainty avoidance have an effect on brand loyalty proneness but the cultural dimensions of power distance and masculinity did not (Lam 2007). Uncertainty avoidance is described as "The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations" (Hofstede 2001,

p. 161). Individuals that have a high level of uncertainty avoidance seek stability, predictability, and low risk rather than change and new experiences (Hofstede 1984).

Individualism/Collectivism and Self-Identity with Products. Collectivists are more influenced by external variables outside of themselves because of the value they place on group consensus (Roth 1995). Collectivists also view the self in the context of the collective (Jain, Desai, and Mao 2007). “The greater the social commitment one has to a group, the more one perceives it to be an important part of who one is (e.g., Bright 2000; Venkatesh 2006),” (Shannon and Mandhachitara 2008, p. 328). Because collectivists consider close others an integral part of the self (Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier 2002) it is likely that they will identify with products that reinforce their concept of self (in alignment with group). Oliver (1997) suggests that loyalty is, in part, determined by the social environment because it is consistent with and supports his or her self identity.

H1a: Collectivism will have positive effect on consumers’ product self-image congruence.

Uncertainty Avoidance and Product Self-Image Congruence. Consumers in high uncertainty avoidance cultures will deal with brands as a symbolic sign that they will not be making a mistake (Dawar and Parker 1994; Robinson 1996). Brands that are congruent with consumers’ self-image will be viewed as less risky. In partial support, Lam (2007) found that consumers who scored high in uncertainty avoidance view brands as less risky than unbranded products. It is also likely that if a brand is congruent with consumers’ self-image it will be viewed as even less risky than the brand by itself. A brand that is not congruent with a consumers’ self-image will pose a psychological risk for the consumer, something that a consumer with high uncertainty avoidance wants to sidestep. In sum, consumers that have a high degree of uncertainty avoidance are drawn toward the lower perceived risk they attribute to brands that are congruent with their self-image.

H1b: Uncertainty Avoidance will have positive effect on consumers’ product self-

image congruence.

Product Self-Image Congruence

Levy (1959) first suggested that branded products are symbolic of those who possess them. In support, Sirgy (1982) suggests consumers buy brands that have values and personality associations that are congruent with their self-concepts. Hence, brand relationships can be viewed as expressions of consumers' identities (Escalas and Bettman 2005). Most recently, Kressmann et al. (2006, p. 955) define self-image congruence as "the match between consumer' self-concept... and the user image (or personality) of a given product..." The consumer behavior literature has increasingly shown that brand attitude or evaluation is not only determined by functional facets of the brand but also by symbolic criteria.

Drawing on research from social psychology, positive self-identity (or value-congruence) with an object or person is associated with intention to stay (Zhang and Bloemer 2008); an outcome that is similar to the intention to purchase or repurchase a brand. Because consumers with high self-image congruence with brands tend to attach greater value to brands, they are also more likely to reflect greater brand loyalty (Sprott, Czellar, and Spangenberg 2009). However, the process by which this happens is not well understood.

In contrast to early works that measure the relationship between self-identity and with specific brands (e.g., Ball and Tasaki 1992, Escalas 2004; Escalas and Bettman 2003), Sprott et al. (2009) argue that brand self-identity should be measured as a generalized view because there are multiple brands that are integrated into a consumer's self concept. They suggest that this brand self-identity is a predisposition or generalized tendency to include brands as a part of the self-concept. They found that the general tendency to self-identity with brands predicts consumer's preference for branded products.

Product Self-Image Congruence and Attitude toward Brands. Scholars and practitioners alike have widely recognized that individuals self-identify with products (Ball and Tasaki

1992, Escalas 2004; Escalas and Bettman 2003). Graeff (1996) found that self-identity with a product is positively associated with consumers' product evaluations. In this sense, if consumers self-identify with products they will be more likely to make evaluations in the form of positive attitude toward brands.

H2a: The degree to which consumers self-identify with products positively affects their attitude toward brands.

Product Self-Image Congruence and Perception of Quality. Escalas and Bettman (2005, p. 380) state "...some brands are better able than others to communicate something about the consumer using them." These authors suggest that consumers will be more likely to form self-brand connections to symbolic brands, or those that are able to communicate something about the individual using the brand. For example, high symbolic brands can include brands high in conspicuousness such as luxury brands (Escalas and Bettman 2005) and presumably high quality brands. Kressman et al. (2006) found that self-identity with products is positively associated with functional characteristics of brands such as quality.

H2b: The degree to which consumers self-identify with products positively affects their perception of quality of brands.

Attitudes toward Brands and Brand Quality

Some researchers have pointed out that brand attitudes should be essential components of brand models (Ambler, Bhattacharya, Edell, Keller, Lemon, and Mittal 2002; Keller 2008; Rust, Lemon, and Narayandas 2005). For example, Keller (2008) notes that brand attitudes often form the basis for brand choice. In addition, Lutz (1991) notes that attitude reflects predispositions toward brands which may lead to overt behavior.

Beyond a holistic attitude toward brands, Keller (2008) indicates the most important attitude is the perception of brand quality. A well-accepted definition of perception of quality is "the consumer's judgment about a brand's overall excellence or superiority (Zeithaml

1993, p.3).” As noted by Yoo and Donthu (2001), it is consumers’ subjective overall evaluation of product quality rather than an assessment of the individual elements of quality.

Attitude toward Brands and Brand Loyalty Proneness. Brand attitude represent summary judgments and the consumer’s overall evaluation of a brand (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer and Exler 2008). It seems self evident that consumers that have a positive attitude toward brands are more likely to purchase brands – which is a basic tenet of the theory of reasoned action and most other attitudinal models.

H3a: Consumers’ attitude toward brands has a positive effect on brand loyalty proneness.

Perception of Quality and Brand Loyalty Proneness. Similar to the importance of brand loyalty, cross-national research also shows that consumers’ perceived quality represents another important dimension of brand equity (Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004; Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price 2008a). There is also evidence that the consumers’ perceived quality of a brand is positively associated with brand loyalty (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, and Zeithaml 1993; Kwak and Khan 2009; Tsiotso 2006).

A substantial amount of research focuses on the consumer’s perceived quality of the product or brand because it is the consumer’s perspective of quality that lead to brand preference and consequently brand loyalty (Kwak and Khan 2009). Some studies have found a direct positive effect of perceived quality on purchase intentions (Boulding, et al. 1993; Kwak and Khan 2009). And there are consistent findings about a relationship between perceived product quality and purchase decision (Tsiotso 2006). Finally, in a hierarchy of effects model suggests perceived quality precedes brand loyalty (Levidge and Steiner 1961) because it is the basis of consumer satisfaction (Oliver 1997).

H3b: Consumers’ perception of the quality of brands has a positive effect on brand loyalty proneness.

METHODOLOGY

The sample consisted of 6017 respondents from 10 major language groups in countries with a PPP per capita range of 2,600 to 45,700 in U.S. dollars (see Table 2). Douglas and Craig (2006) suggest obtaining a diverse set of countries to achieve “purposive selection” to ensure variance on characteristics of interest. With this list in mind twenty-two nations were selected for this study. A conscious effort was taken to include a variety of emerging economies because their role in international trade is rapidly expanding in importance and because the inclusion of emerging countries in branding research is limited (Burgess and Steenkamp 2006).

<Insert Table 2 here>

College students were chosen as subjects, based on several factors including their relative homogeneity of extraneous variables (Burgess and Steenkamp 2006, Coulter, Price, Feick, and Micu 2005 and Strizhakova et al. 2008b), their relatively high exposure to global commerce (Gidley, 2002; Kjeldgaard and Askegaard 2006) and relatively high exposure to multiple languages/cultures. In addition, many of the countries are transitional (previously communist) and this group is much more likely than their elders to have been exposed to globalization in one form or another.

Measures were developed/validated utilizing Churchill’s (1979) suggestions and tested for validity. A sample of items was derived/adapted from previous studies. The measures were purified/pretested in the United States (N=247), China (N=118), and Belgium (N=86) based on a convenience sample. In the process of translation and cross-cultural adaptation of the research stimuli and questionnaire (scale items), this study followed the guidelines for conducting international consumer research by Craig and Douglas (1999) and Douglas and Craig (2006). Exploratory factor, reliability, and invariance analysis were used to determine the final scales. Table 3 outlines the final scales used for this study along with reported composite reliabilities. All of the reliabilities are acceptable (DeVellis 2003).

<Insert Table 3 here>

In addition, the validity of each of the scales was tested with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) [Joreskog and Sorbom 1993]. Two CFA's were computed, one for cultural variables and one for the branding model variables. The fit of both were good (RMSEA 0.050, GFI .98 for the cultural variables and RMSEA 0.052, GFI .96 for the branding variables).

Discriminant validity was tested by setting the individual paths of the Phi Matrix to one and testing the resultant model against the original (Gerbing and Anderson 1988), using the D-Squared statistic (Joreskog and Sorbom 1993). The D-Squared statistics were all highly significant indicating high unidimensionality and discriminant validity. In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) exceeded the shared variance between constructs (the highest being 0.4225) (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The AVE (see Table 3) exceeded 0.50 for all six constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

Convergent validity was tested by examining the factor loadings. The corresponding numerical results are summarized in Table 4, where all the estimated factor-loading measures are bounded within the range between 0.57 and 0.86 and all are significant with t values ranging from 35.08 to 67.10 indicating acceptable convergent validity (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black 1998; Bagozzi 1981). Face/content validity was established by comparing Hofstede's measures and ones obtained from this sample ($r = .51$ and $.52$ for Uncertainty avoidance and Collectivism, respectively). Considering they are on different scales and the difference in sample compositions, the measures are appropriately close.

<Insert Table 4 here>

In all countries, the CFA loadings are significant and of similar magnitude. Thus, configural invariance is established. Full metric invariance was not established, nor expected, in a model of this magnitude (Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998). Since the object

of this research is not to compare means of measures across countries, scalar invariance assessment was not assessed (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998 p. 80).

RESULTS

As could be expected given the sample size, the Chi-Squared statistic was significant. The other performance measures suggest that our model fits well. The RMSEA (0.043) was well below the 0.08 cutoff values suggested by Browne and Cudeck (1993) and significantly below the 0.05 test value. In addition, the GFI (0.96) and CFI (0.98) are both above the commonly recommended 0.90 limit (Lichtenstein, Ridgway and Netemeyer, 1992). In addition, the squared multiple correlation is 21% for brand loyalty proneness. The hypotheses are tested by examining the individual structural paths of the model (see Table 5) and all hypotheses are supported.

<Insert Table 5 here>

POST HOC ANALYSIS

Analysis on a pooled sample was necessary to test the hypotheses. Since culture is both theoretically and practically internally homogeneous, group analysis with cultural variables does not make sense (it would conceptually be analogous to treating constants as antecedents). However, a group analysis on the brand loyalty proneness model can be enlightening because pooled analysis tends to obfuscate country level differences. Thus, a twenty-two country multi-group SEM model was computed (see Table 4). The post-hoc analysis indicates that the model is generally stable within countries. However, the link between perception of brand quality and brand loyalty proneness is weak within most countries.

DISCUSSION

This study makes several contributions to the literature. First, in contrast to the majority of brand equity research which focuses on specific brands, this study uses a more gestalt a

phenomena of interest relevant to the scope of this study – brand loyalty proneness. The majority of branding studies that measure behavioral brand loyalty (i.e., repeat purchases) focus on specific brand level (or on specific brands). This level of analysis raises questions about situational, consumer experiential, and idiosyncratic marketing executional characteristics of specific brands. These issues are outside the realm of this study because its goal is to assess the impact of culture, product self-image congruence, and brand attitudes on the propensity of consumers to be brand loyal (a tendency or general orientation).

Second, this study includes a broad cross-section of 22 countries that are reflective of both developed and emerging countries. A review of the cross national literature on branding literature use databases that are not nearly this comprehensive. A conscious effort was taken to include a variety of emerging economies because their role in international trade is rapidly expanding in importance and because the inclusion of emerging countries in branding research is limited (Burgess and Steenkamp 2006).

Third, the literature reveals that rarely are specific aspects of culture actually included in these studies. Thus, this study is unique in showing that two key aspects of culture (collectivism and uncertainty avoidance) are positively associated with product self-image congruency. The results here validate the view of some researchers that consumption is still heterogeneous (Ger and Belk 1996; Maxwell 2001), although the world is becoming global, because culture does have a significant impact on important branding constructs.

Fourth, the conceptual model presented and tested in this study is unique in that it includes three key factors (i.e., culture, product self-image congruency, and brand attitudes) rarely, if ever included in a solitary empirical work on branding. The branding literature shows that these three factors are usually studied in separate research genres. Results of this study show that all three factors (culture, generalized self meaning, and generalized attitudes) are important to brand loyalty proneness. Beyond the impact of culture described above, this

study shows that product self-image congruency is positively associated with both brand attitudes (i.e. attitudes toward brands and perception of quality of brands). Results also show these two brand attitudes are positively associated with brand loyalty proneness.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The developed model indicates a relatively high conformance to the data, suggesting reasonable specification and support for the theories. Since the model is meant to test the effects of culture on a model of brand loyalty proneness, it may not be efficient at fully explaining the effects of brand loyalty within cultures. The post-hoc analysis indicates that the model is generally stable within countries. However, the link between perception of brand quality and brand loyalty proneness is weak within most countries. This issue needs further exploration.

This research presupposes, by connected logic and definition, that brand loyalty proneness has an important impact on brand loyalty. However, it is beyond the scope of this research to examine this linkage and the conditions of this linkage. It is important for future research to examine the conditions under which proneness transfers to loyalty. Obviously, it is not suggested that the effect is universal or without conditions. For example, one could logically infer no linkage under conditions of inappropriate brand match between culture and brand personality (e.g., an inexpensive, disposable brand in some Asian cultures).

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Table 1**Representative List of Recent Cross-National Journal Studies on Brands**

Citation	Sample	Constructs Measured	Findings
Aaker, Benet-Martinez, and Garolera (2001)	U.S., Japan, and Spain (consumers)	Brand personality dimensions across countries	Brand personality dimensions are common to both Japan and the U.S. (sincerity, excitement, competence, and sophistication), as well as culture-specific Japanese (peacefulness) and U.S. (ruggedness). Brand personality dimensions are common to both Spain and the U.S. (sincerity, excitement, and sophistication), plus non-shared Spanish (passion) and U.S. (competence and excitement).
Agarwal and Teas (2002)	U.S., Belgium, and Sweden (university students)	Price, brand, store, <i>perceived quality</i> , perceived sacrifice, perceived value, and <i>willingness-to-buy</i> .	The results that are consistent across the three countries support a hypothesized positive linkage between consumers' perceptions of value and their willingness-to-buy and hypothesized positive linkages between consumers' perceptions of quality and value and between sacrifice and value. Additionally, the findings for all three countries strongly support the conclusion that price is positively related to both perceived value and perceived sacrifice. The remaining findings varied across countries. For example, the findings suggested brand name and store name are linked to perceived quality in the U.S and Sweden but not in Belgium.
Aiello et al. (2009)	U.S., Italy, France, Germany, Russia, India, China HK, and Japan (undergraduate management students)	Semi-structured interviews and surveys whereby the students talked about different categories of products (i.e., luxury/specialty, shopping, and convenience) and were asked about country of origin effects (including how it relates to country of design and country of manufacture) and brand concepts.	In regard to purchase decisions, for luxury products design of the product is the most important determinant followed by the brand. For both shopping and convenience products price is the most important determinant. Brand is the least important for purchase decisions of convenience goods. The key country product images are innovativeness for Japan and the U.S., design for Italy, prestige for Italy and France, and workmanship for Germany. Brands are more important than country of origin in purchase decisions. Although it appears that country of origin does have an impact. The perceptions about the importance of country of design and country of manufacture differ between respondents from different countries.
Buil, de Chernatony, and Martinez (2008)	U.K. and Spain (consumers)	Brand equity as a multi-dimensional concept consisting of brand awareness, <i>perceived quality</i> , brand associations, and <i>brand loyalty</i>	Brand equity was invariant across the two countries. The authors refer to cultural differences ala Hofstede (1984). The U. K. has a lower power distance and uncertainty avoidance than Spain, although it is more individualistic and masculine.
Coulter, Price, and Feick (2003)	Hungary and Romania (adult women)	Product involvement, <i>brand commitment</i> , brand experimentation	Based on in-depth interviews, political-cultural discourses, cultural intermediaries, social influences, and life themes/projects collectively prompt product involvement. Survey data show a strong relationship between product involvement and brand commitment and an even stronger relationship between product involvement and brand experimentation. Although, consumers with little interest in either the product category or idea of branded products may be committed to particular brands.
d'Astous et al. (2008)	U.S. Australia, Canada, Italy, and Switzerland (adult consumers).	Product familiarity, country familiarity, <i>openness to foreign cultures</i> , product-country evaluations, country proximity, and evaluative relevance for the arts.	The results indicate that product-country images in the arts are affected by country and product familiarity as well as consumers' openness to foreign cultures and home country bias. Countries more proximate to the participants' home country were also better evaluated, especially when the proximity factor played a significant role in the consumption of cultural products.
Erdem, Swait, and Valenzuela (2006)	Brazil, Germany, India, Japan, Spain, Turkey, and the U.S. (undergraduate	Brand credibility, <i>quality</i> , perceived risk, information costs, <i>culture</i> (uncertainty avoidance,	The positive effect of brand credibility on choice is greater for consumers who rate high on either collectivism or uncertainty avoidance. Credible brands provide more value to collectivist consumers because such consumers perceive these brands as being of higher quality (i.e.,

	business students)	individualism/collectivism, and power avoidance), consumer expected utility, and brand choice .	reinforcing group identity). Credible brands provide more value to high-uncertainty avoidance consumers because such brands have lower perceived risk and information costs.
Hsieh (2004)	Australia, Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, The Netherlands, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, Turkey, UK, and U.S. (consumers that had purchased a car in the recent past).	NBE or national brand equity (consists of both MBE and UMBE). MBE or measured brand equity (Brand associations on brand purchase intentions), UMBE or unmeasured brand equity (Brand's added value on brand purchase intention when the evaluation of brand associations is held constant). and GBE or global brand equity (an index of weighted aggregated NBE across countries)	Global brand equity provides a good indicator of a brand's relative value in the global market. Comparing NBE with GBE shows that Ford and General Motors remained among the top five brands. However, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, and Volkswagen were replaced by Honda, Nissan, and Toyota in terms of GBE measures. This could be due to the larger size of the U.S. and Japanese markets. Brands that had relatively lower levels of availability and market size in the global marketplace (e.g., Suzuki, Saab, Peugeot, and Porsche) were ranked at the bottom.
Hsieh and Lindridge (2005)	Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, UK, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, The Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, U.S.A. (consumers that had purchased a car in the recent past).	The dimensionality of global images of specific automobile brands (i.e., sensory, utilitarian, symbolic, and economic)	Five underlying factors were found underlying brand image for the aggregated global sample: symbolic, sensory, economic, utilitarian, and futuristic (i.e., latest technology, and good styling). Overall, the correspondence of associations underlying each brand image dimension was weaker for less developed countries.
Holt, Quelch, and Taylor (2004)	U.S., U.K., Brazil, China, Egypt, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Poland, South Africa, and Turkey (urban consumers between 20 and 35 years old)	The extent that 4 dimensions of global brands (quality signal , global myth, social responsibilities, and American values) impact consumers' brand preferences .	Quality signal, global myth, and social responsibility are highly significant, while American values are not. The three significant dimensions explained more than 60% of the variance in brand preferences. Quality signal alone accounts for 44% of the variance in brand preferences.
Hoover, Green, and Saegert (1978)	Mexico and the U.S. (upper-middle and upper class females)	Perceived risk and brand loyalty	Perceived risk is a less important determinant of purchase behavior in Mexico versus the U. S. Brand loyalty is higher in Mexico than the U.S.
Jung and Sung (2008)	U.S., South Koreans in the U.S., and South Koreans in Korea (students)	Brand equity as a multi-dimensional concept consisting of brand loyalty , brand awareness, and perceived quality	Perceived brand quality and brand awareness reported by American students were significantly greater than those reported by South Koreans in the U. S. and Korea. For both South Korean Groups, brand loyalty was the most important element of brand equity. Brand loyalty showed positive correlation with purchase intention across all three groups.
Krytulyte, Costa, and Grunert (2009)	Danish, Lithuanian, and Portuguese consumers (staff and students of universities).	The extrinsic and intrinsic cues and attributes important when evaluating quality of cereal-based products (i.e., bread, cookies, breakfast cereals, pasta, and vodka).	Portuguese and Lithuanians consistently gave a significantly higher average importance than did their Danish counterparts to all the cues and quality dimensions considered for all cereal-based products. Nevertheless, respondents in all three samples found expected quality dimensions to be much more important than both extrinsic and intrinsic cues across almost all cereal-based products. Dimensions and cues like taste and country of origin were the most relevant to Lithuanians, whereas taste, label information and price were the most important for

			Danes. The Portuguese found that cues like store type for bread, brand for breakfast cereals, pasta, and vodka, country of origin for vodka, and price for cookies, pasta, and vodka were more often considered relevant for purchase decisions.
Lee, Knight, and Kim (2008)	Mexico, Korea, and Japan (university students)	Brand specific associations (emotional value and <i>perceived quality</i>), general brand impressions (brand awareness and brand image), and brand commitment (<i>brand loyalty and purchase intentions</i>)	Results revealed significant main effects of country and brand type (global v. domestic) on brand specific associations, brand impressions, and brand commitment. All three student groups had higher purchase intentions toward the domestic brand than Polo. Among consumers in the three countries, Mexico gave the highest ratings to Polo for brand specific associations and brand impressions. South Korea was rated in the middle among the three countries for perceived quality of both the global and domestic brands. Japanese consumers had the highest level of brand commitment toward the domestic brand among the three countries.
Lim and Ang (2008)	Shanghai, China and Singapore (tertiary students)	Attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the brand, brand personality.	The use of hedonic benefit claims enhances consumer attitudes towards utilitarian products; the use of such benefit claims has no effect on attitudes toward hedonic products. Shanghai consumers were likely to hold more favorable attitudes towards ads promoting utilitarian (vs. hedonic) products. While the less culturally conditioned (Singaporean) consumers rated hedonic and utilitarian brands as being similar in terms of brand personality perceptions, the more culturally conditioned (Shanghai) consumers reported brand personality differences between hedonic and utilitarian products.
Limon, Kahle, and Orth (2009)	Turkey and Germany (students)	Package evoked brand values, consumer values, <i>purchase intentions</i>	Personal values exert a significant influence on the formation and downstream effects of package-inferred brand values and consequently purchase intentions.
Maxwell (2001)	U.S. and India (Middle class university students)	Objective price (low vs. high), <i>perceived quality</i> of brand, perceived acceptability of price, attitude toward economizing, perceived acceptability of other costs, perceived value, and <i>probability of purchase</i> .	Indians have a lower perception of brand quality and a more positive view about economizing than Americans. The Indian is a much tougher consumer to whom to sell. Consumption, while it is becoming global, is still heterogeneous.
Mikhailitchenko et al. (2009)	U.S and Russia (university students)	Visual imagery, brand familiarity, brand claim recall and brand attitude.	The main effects of imagery and brand familiarity on brand recall were significant even after removing the covariate's effect (of brand attitude). While in the U.S. imagery has a much higher contribution to brand recall on low levels of brand familiarity, in Russia the difference of this contributions is much less substantial.
Nye, Roth, and Shimp (2008)	France, the Netherlands, and the U.S. (university students)	Comparative ads as novel or non-novel, brand novelty, comparison format (direct vs indirect), and <i>brand loyalty</i> .	Whereas consumer attitudes are likely to be lower when comparative advertising is used in novel markets and for novel brands, such skepticism can be moderated through effective ad execution (e.g., direct vs indirect comparative ad formats and factual vs evaluative message content). An indirect ad with evaluative content effective in the U.S. is likely to yield sub-optimal results in France or the Netherlands, where comparative advertising is much less common.
Rosenbloom and Haefner (2009)	U.S, Nepal, India, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Bulgaria (student consumers)	Perceived globalness, country of origin, and brand trust.	Brands perceived as global function as quality surrogates for consumers. Across a wide variety of categories, trust in a perceived to be global brand helped reduce the uncertainty and risk associated with high involvement products, many of which are durable. Brands associated with the U.S. were most trusted (70% of the categories trusted U.S. brands the most while Japan was mentioned for 27% of the categories).

Ross, Broyles, and Leingpibul (2008)	U.S. and China (university students)	Meets expectations, feelings state, <i>purchase intention</i>	Meets expectations and purchase intention for Coca-Cola is somewhat stronger for Chinese than for Americans. In contrast, for KFC the relationship path between meets expectations and purchase intent is stronger for Americans than for Chinese. Feeling state has a stronger influence on purchase intent with Americans than Chinese for Coca-Cola. Feeling state has a <u>stronger influence on purchase intent for KFC with Chinese than Americans.</u>
Setiono et al. (2006)	Five Western European countries of: Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain (car owners and potential car buyers).	Brand attributes, corporate image of the car makers.	Knowledge which distinguishes between German and Japanese cars based on their individual brand and corporate associations can be acquired using neural networks. This knowledge is transferable to a second country. The transferred knowledge can be revised and adapted for the second country.
Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden (2003)	U.S. and Korean consumers	Perceived globalness, brand's local icon value, consumer ethnocentrism, brand prestige, <i>perceived quality, purchase likelihood</i>	Perceived brand globalness is positively related to both perceived brand quality and prestige and, through them, to purchase likelihood. The effect through perceived quality is strongest. Perceived brand globalness effects are weaker for more ethnocentric consumers.
Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price (2008a)	U.S., Romania, Ukraine, and Russia (young adults recruited from universities)	7 meanings of branded products (<i>quality</i> , self-identity, group-identity, status, personal values, family traditions, national traditions)	Quality is the most important branded product meaning among all countries and is especially important to U.S. and Romanian versus Russian and Ukrainian participants. Participants in the U.S. reported significantly greater salience for personal identity than the other countries. Values were second only to the meaning category of quality in importance for all 4 countries. Finally traditions had the least prominent meaning across all four countries).
Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price (2008b)	Youth market in the developing countries of Romania, Ukraine, and Russia and the developed U.S. market.	<i>Cultural facets</i> (consumer ethnocentrism and cultural openness), belief in global citizenship, and branded product importance.	A majority (85.8%) in both developed and developing countries expressed strong preferences for global brands. Young U.S. consumers have a stronger belief in global citizenship. Young consumers in the developing countries are more ethnocentric and more culturally open than their peers in the U.S.
Yoo and Donthu (2001)	U.S., Korean American, and Korea (university students)	A multi-dimensional measure of consumer-based brand equity was developed. The dimensions include <i>perceived product quality, brand loyalty</i> , and brand awareness/associations.	The measure of brand equity passed reliability and validity tests that were applied in this study. The hierarchy of effects model suggest that brand awareness and associations precede perceived quality and perceived quality precedes brand loyalty. Different cultures place different levels of importance on the dimensions of brand equity. Perceived quality is the most important factor among Americans and Korean Americans, whereas brand loyalty is the most important among Koreans.
Yoo and Donthu (2002)	U.S. and Korea (university students)	Marketing mix elements (price, store image, distribution intensity, advertising spending, and price deals), brand equity dimensions (<i>perceived product quality, brand loyalty</i> , and brand awareness/associations), and overall brand equity	First, there are invariant causal paths from marketing efforts to product quality for both countries. Second, the most important brand equity dimension in both markets was brand loyalty. Third, price promotions consistently had a negative impact on brand equity dimensions in both markets. Fourth, perceived quality had a greater impact on brand equity in the Korean sample than in the U.S. sample. Fifth, advertising had greater impact on brand equity formation in the U.S. sample than the Korean sample.

Table 2
Sample Country Description

Country	N	Language Root	PPP per Capita	Hofstede's Measures	
				Individualism	Uncertainty Avoidance
EUROPE					
Belgium (BEL)	248	Germanic	35,388	75	94
Croatia (CRO)	207	Slavic	16,754		
Estonia (EST)	291	Baltic	20,584	60	60
Finland (FIN)	223	Finno-Ugric	35,349	63	59
France(FRA)	323	Romance	33,509	71	86
Germany(GER)	196	Germanic	34,212	67	65
Italy(ITA)	408	Romance	30,365	76	75
Latvia (LAT)	123	Baltic	17,488		
Lithuania(LIT)	196	Baltic	17,733		
Russia (RUS)	340	Slavic	14,705	39	95
Serbia (SER)	244	Slavic	10,071		
Slovenia (SLO)	290	Slavic	27,227		
United Kingdom (UK)	204	Germanic	35,634		35
AMERICAS					
Guatemala(GUA)	241	Romance			
Mexico (MEX)	215	Romance	14,120	30	82
United States (US)	426	Germanic	45,725	91	46
ASIA					
China (PRC)	206	Sinitic	5,325	20	30
India (IND)	183	Indo-Iranian	2,563	48	40
Japan (JAP)	278	Japanese	33,596	46	92
Kazakhstan (KAZ)	310	Slavic/Turkic	10,837		
Philippines (PHI)	354	Indonesian	3,383	32	44
Turkey (TUR)	222	Turkic	12,858	37	85
TOTALS/RANGE	5728	10 groups	2.6-45.7K	20-91	30-104

PPP per capita figures from International

Table 3
Measures

Construct/Items	Composite Reliability (Average Variance Extracted)
Collectivism/Individualism (COL) (Adapted from Dorfman and Howell 1988; House et al. 2004; Miller et al., 2006) 1. Group welfare is more important than individual rewards. 2. Individuals should pursue their goals only after considering the welfare of the group 3. I focus on achieving societal goals more than individual accomplishments 4. Group rewards should take priority over individual rewards	0.7688 (.5528)
Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) 1. I avoid taking gambles in life 2. I would rather be safe than sorry 3. I avoid taking chances if possible 4. I like situations that are safe	0.8050 (.5917)
Product Self-Image Congruence (Concept from Escalas and Bettman 2005) 1. I identify with the products I own 2. I feel personal connections to my belongings 3. I express myself with my possessions 4. The things that I buy are an extension of my personality	0.8023 (.5890)
Attitude toward Branded Products (Adapted from Moschis 1981) 1. When choosing a product, I first look at brand names 2. Brands are important to me 3. I judge products by their brand name 4. I care about the brands of most products that I buy	0.8987 (.7277)
Perception of Quality of Branded Products (Adapted from Strizhakova et al. 2008a) 1. Branded items have higher quality 2. I trust the quality of the brands I buy 3. Brands represent the quality of the product 4. Branded items are more satisfying than non-branded	0.8040 (.5909)
Brand Loyalty Proneness (Adapted from Raju 1980, Lichtenstein et al. 1990) 1. I purchase my usual brands, even when competing brands are on sale 2. I rarely switch from my preferred brands 3. I rarely feel the urge to buy something different from the brands I usually buy 4. I never get bored buying the same brands	0.8520 (.6522)

Table 4

Factor Scores and Twenty-two Country Multi-Group SEM Model

Country	Factor Scores (without decimal)		Estimated Effects (* = Not Significant)			
	UA	COL	SelfID → BImport (+)	SelfID → BQual (+)	BImport → BLoyal (+)	BQual → BLoyal (+)
BEL	3	42	.56	.44	.46	.02*
CRO	42	41	.50	.48	.43	.07*
EST	0	-33	.47	.32	.23	.16
FIN	-10	25	.59	.47	.50	-.02*
FRA	25	-20	.46	.42	.31	.07*
GER	-3	-108	.44	.43	.35	.10*
GUAT	0	-17	.45	.50	.34	.06*
IND	-2	59	.43	.39	.30	.10*
ITA	19	-33	.46	.47	.41	.13
JAP	48	12	.47	.39	.27	.09*
KAZ	-16	-7	.48	.50	.38	.16
LAT	26	-21	.42	.44	.33	.18
LIT	-80	-26	.44	.43	.35	.10*
MEX	-26	70	.57	.48	.45	.05*
PHIL	-17	37	.50	.53	.32	.13
PRC	22	37	.43	.43	.36	.09*
RUS	16	-11	.50	.47	.33	.12*
SERB	50	13	.44	.46	.38	.02*
SLO	42	-36	.47	.48	.38	.11*
TURK	79	71	.41	.52	.31	.10*
UK	-35	-7	.42	.42	.35	.09*
US	-28	-5	.38	.39	.54	.00*
Pooled Model Estimates			.29	.42	.38	.14

Table 5

SEM and Hypotheses Results

Hypotheses	Linkage	Estimate	t/p-value	Result
H1a:	COLLECTIVISM → PRODUCT SELF IDENTITY CONGRUENCE (+)	0.07	3.70/ p < .039	Supported
H1b:	UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE → PRODUCT SELF-IDENTITY CONGRUENCE (+)	0.07	3.75/ p < .001	Supported
H2a:	PRODUCT SELF-IDENTITY CONGRUENCE → ATTITUDE TOWARD BRANDS (+)	0.38	16.68/ p < .001	Supported
H2b:	PRODUCT SELF-IDENTITY CONGRUENCE → BRAND QUALITY (+)	0.43	7.28/ p < .001	Supported
H3a:	ATTITUDE TOWARD BRANDS → BRAND LOYALTY PRONENESS (+)	0.39	15.28/p < .001	Supported
H3b:	BRAND QUALITY → BRAND LOYALTY PRONENESS (+)	0.13	4.25/ p < .001	Supported

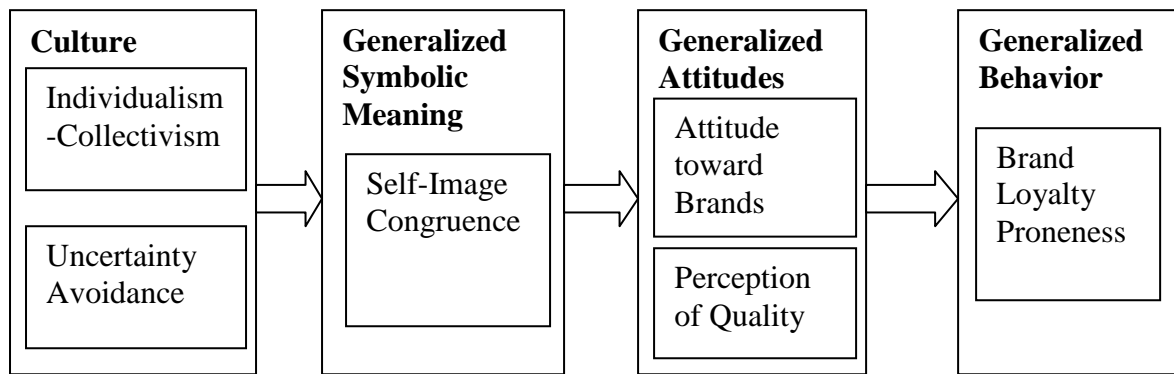


Figure 1
Conceptual Model