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## Social Comparison Information, Ethnocentrism, National Identity Associated with Purchase Intention in China

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of our study is to provide an understanding of the relationships among consumer attention to social comparison information (ATSCI), consumer ethnocentrism (CET), national identity (NI), and consumer purchase intention to domestic brands (PIDB). Drawing on the social comparison theory (SCT) and social identity theory (SIT), we developed a model that is empirically testable and explains consumer behavior of domestic brands and products.

**Research design, data, and methodology** – The conceptual framework was tested with primary data collected through a survey in China. Structural equation modeling was employed to test hypotheses.

**Results** – The results from empirical analyses indicated that the ATSCI positively influenced CET and NI, and CET and NI affect consumer PIDB. In addition, the mediating effects of CET and NI on the relationship between ATSCI and PIDB were identified. Nonetheless, little direct impact of ATSCI on PIDB was reported.

**Conclusions** – We suggested that international marketers use given information to attract consumer attention and develop appropriate promotions, especially for Chinese young generations that would pay much attention to social comparison information in their purchase decisions. Our study originally connected one socio-psychological antecedent, ATSCI, with CET and NI and estimated the relationships among the three antecedents and their effects on PIDB in order to predict consumer behavior in China.

**Keywords:** Attention to Social Comparison Information, China, Consumer Ethnocentrism, National Identity, Purchase Intention.

**JEL Classifications:** F23, M16, M31.

### 1. Introduction

International marketers are confronted by many environmental changes. One of them is changes in the global economic environment. In the next two decades,

another three billion people would be added to the middle class consumers exclusively from emerging markets (Ernst & Young, 2013). Responding to this profound trend in the 21 century, international marketers are preparing for this peerless market opportunity (Cavusgil et al., 2018).

In emerging markets, the middle-class is developing and becoming the fastest-growing consumer market, which contrasts with the situation of developed countries where the middle-class is maturing or shrinking. Kharas (2016) and the Pew Research Center (2016) reported that the total middle-class' consumption accounted for two-thirds of global spending, with only one-quarter of consumers from advanced economies. Meanwhile, international marketers are critically interested in these rapidly rising groups (Bang, Joshi, & Singh, 2016). Thomas (2018) agreed that economic reforms, worldwide liberalization of trade, aging advanced economies, and the emergence of the middle class were the main attributors to the growth of emerging markets (Sheth, 2011). KPMG (2014) reported that many Western firms are highly attracted to the middle class. Likewise, China has been

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evolving in this experience. Since 2000, the middle class of 54% of Chinese urban households had expanded two times more than the United States.

Some researchers concluded the characteristics of middle-class consumers are that they are equipped with disposable income, young, better educated, and have demands for wider products and services (Cavusgil et al., 2018; Guo, 2013; Swoboda, Pennemann, & Taube, 2012). Boisvert and Ashill (2018) suggested that the study of Millennials, especially those young generations in their 20s, worth to be investigated in the future.

Age, as one of the demographic antecedents, disparate researchers presented different relationships between age and consumer ethnocentrism (CET). On the one hand, Schooler (1971) and Bannister and Saunders (1978) reported a negative effect of age toward CET. On the other hand, some researchers presented a positive relationship between age and CET (Han, 1988; Good & Huddleston, 1995; Caruana, 1996; Klein & Ettenson, 1999). However, Festervand, Lumpkin, and Lundstrom (1985), Sharma (1995), and Balabanis et al. (2001) found no relationship between age and CET. <Table 1> summarizes these opinions.

**Table 1:** Previous different opinions of the relationship between CET and age

Key Issue Explored	Outcome	Studies
CET and age	Negative effect of age toward CET.	Schooler (1971); Bannister and Saunders (1978)
	Positive relationship between age and CET.	Han (1988); Good and Huddleston (1995); Caruana (1996); Klein and Ettenson (1999)
	No relationship between age and CET.	Festervand, Lumpkin, and Lundstrom (1985); Sharma (1995); Balabanis et al. (2001)

Based on the social identity theory (SIT), Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, and Diamantopoulos (2015) advanced extant research by examining the predictive power of CET as anti-out-group construct, different from national identity (NI) as one pro-in-group construct on the impact of socio-psychological traits of consumer behavior. Meanwhile, Festinger (1954) pointed out that, social comparison is an automatic psychological mechanism rooted in consumer’s mind (Haferkamp & Krämer, 2011), and consumer’s attention to social comparison information (ATSCI) influences his/her attitudes, opinions, and even the behaviors towards certain objects (Mussweiler & Rüter, 2003).

Even though there some existing studies focus on the CET, NI and purchase intention, but no previous study has evaluated the joint predictive validity of consumer ATSCI, CET, and NI as drivers of consumer behavior, and thereby explicitly tested for their relative importance regarding the

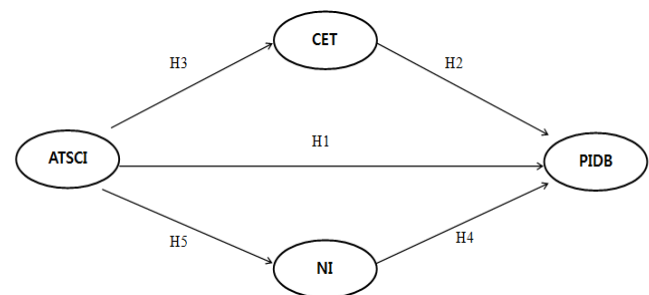
direct and indirect effects on consumer’s purchase intentions for domestic brands (PIDB).

Our study draws on the social comparison theory (SCT) originally proposed by Festinger (1954) and the social identity theory (SIT) proposed by Tajfel (1974), sample with less than 30 years-old Chinese generations who are the representative middle class, focus on ATSCI, CET, and NI to explain and predict consumer behavior for domestic brand products.

Against the background, the threefold objectives of our study are as follows. First, we conceptualized ATSCI, CET, and NI drawing on SCT and SIT, proposed several hypotheses regarding these domains’ effects on PIDB while controlling for potential stimulus’ bias, and subsequently tested the hypotheses. Our study focused on young generations of Chinese avoiding the age bias of CET to developed research. Second, our study jointly investigated CET with NI as previous research (Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015) presented NI as a one pro-in-group construct different from CET as an anti-out-group construct. Third, our study presented an empirical structural equation modeling using ATSCI, CET, and NI as clustering variables, and then identified the direct and indirect effects on the relationship to the PIDB.

## 2. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

We conceptualized ATSCI, CET, NI, and PIDB. <Figure 1> shows a proposed model.



**Figure 1:** Proposed Model

### 2.1. SCT and ATSCI

The SCT was originally proposed by Festinger (1954) to understand how an individual’s self-evaluation affects social activities. Festinger (1954) argued that an individual is motivated to evaluate himself/herself to reduce uncertainty. When objective criteria were absent, people tended to compare himself/herself with another person (comparison target) to judge his/her own ability and performance. According to Festinger (1954), if the comparison target

(others) performs better than the individual (comparer) does, he or she will feel worse; on the contrary, if others are worse-off than him/her, individuals will feel better. Thus, two different dimensions of social comparison emerged: "upward-social comparison" and "downward social comparison".

These two directions of social comparison were demonstrated in previous literature. Lyubomirsky and Ross (1997) found that the upward-social comparison can negatively affect self-evaluation (Morse & Gergen, 1970). Other researchers pointed out that upward-social comparison will elicit negative emotions such as frustration (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1993), jealousy (Salovey & Rodin, 1984), dissatisfaction with life (Emmons & Diener, 1985), depression, and discouragement (Wheeler & Miyake, 1992). On the other hand, Wills (1981) reported that the downward-social comparison positively and significantly generates positive feelings and enhances self-evaluation (Collins, 1996; Wood, Taylor, & Lichtman, 1985).

Social comparison is an automatic psychological mechanism, and as Mettee and Riskind (1974, p.348) said, it is "effectively forced upon the individual by his social environment" (Mussweiler & Rüter, 2003), and it influences individuals' attitudes, opinions, and even their behaviors towards certain objects. Festinger (1954) asserted that the social comparison as a psychological tendency is rooted in the mind (Haferkamp & Krämer, 2011).

Attention to Social Comparison Information (ATSCI) means the degree of person's celerity towards collective assessment clues. Calder and Burnkrant (1977) pointed out that, based on others' behaviors, ATSCI helps an individual in presenting oneself in a social setting. The requirement and need of social comparison differs person to person (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984). The ATSCI scale proposed by Lennox and Wolfe (1984) attempted to measure a person's behavior in a society and the level he/she might pay attention to social cues. A high ATSCI person is more likely to display himself/herself based on purchases compared to a low ATSCI consumer. Consumers with high ATSCI pay more attention to others' opinions in purchasing branded products compared to low ATSCI consumers (Das & Saha, 2017). Deval et al. (2013) pointed out that high ATSCI consumers are more open to the impact of social tolerability. Consumers engaging in high ATSCI behavior comparatively show more concentration and interest (Berlyne, 1960; Bilkey & Nes, 1982). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

**H1:** ATSCI influences consumer purchase intention for domestic brands (PIDB) for young generations.

## 2.2. CET

Shimp and Sharma (1987, p. 280) constructed the CET as "beliefs held by ... consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign-made products" (Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015), and

research on CET has been growing substantially over the past few years since the construct started (Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2009; Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015; Shoham & Gavish, 2016). According to Shimp and Sharma (1987), ethnocentric consumer domestic country bias was primarily based on an economic motive and normative belief that supporting domestic companies by purchasing domestic products is necessary (Verlegh, 2007; Shan Ding, 2017). Shankarmahesh (2006) employed CET construction to explain why consumers are apt to purchase their home country's products but not foreign alternatives. In effect, ethnocentric consumers want to protect the domestic by through consuming domestic products (Sharma, 2011; Supphellen & Rittenburg, 2001). Highly-ethnocentric consumers prefer favorite attitudes toward purchasing domestic brands and products because of economic and cultural threats from foreign brands and products (Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2009; Barbarossa, Pelsmacker, & Moons, 2018). Josiassen (2011) asserted that a particular center on CET is a preferred base of local bias to attitudes and behaviors toward products. For explaining consumer preferences for local and foreign products comprehensively, it is necessary to consider CET an extended range of consumer characteristics (Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015) which divides ethnocentrism into a pro-in-group construct (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004; Sharma, Shimp, & Shin, 1994).

Even through previous studies observed the effect of CET on behaviors and attitudes towards local and alien products (Sharma, Ship, & Shin, 1994; Balabanis & Siamagka, 2017), a majority of studies focus on purchasing intentions and predicting attitudes, which cannot address actual behavior. Furthermore, plenty of researchers pay attention to different forms of integrative measures instead of specific outcomes, like buying special brand-related products. Empirical research has concentrated on the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on the brand (Lee & Mazodier, 2015), willingness to buy local or foreign products (Zarkada-Fraser & Fraser, 2002; Wang & Chen, 2004; Kwak, Jaju, & Larsen, 2006; Verlegh, 2007; Ranjbarian, Rojuee, & Mirzaei, 2010), evaluations of local and foreign products (Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Sharma, Shimp, & Shin, 1994; Durvasula, Andrews, & Netemeyer, 1997; Huddleston, Good, & Stoel, 2001; Wang & Chen, 2004; Verlegh, 2007; Poon, Evangelista, & Albaum, 2010; Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015), and preferences (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004; Kesić, Rajh, & Ozretić Došen, 2004; Ranjbarian, Rojuee, & Mirzaei, 2010).

However, one of the demographic antecedents, age, presented different relationships with CET. Through interviews, Schooler (1971) and Bannister and Saunders (1978) reported a negative effect of age toward CET. However, Festervand, Lumpkin, and Lundstrom (1985) sampled US consumers for various products (mechanical, food, fashion, electronics, and leisure products) and reported no relationship between age and CET. As well as, Sharma

(1995) targeted Korea, and Balabanis et al. (2001) sampled the Czech Republic and found the same results. Through a survey method, other researchers presented a positive relationship between age and CET (Han, 1988; Good & Huddleston, 1995; Caruana, 1996; Klein & Ettenson, 1999; Balabanis et al., 2001). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

**H2:** CET has a positive effect on DBPI in the young generation.

The concepts of CET and ATSCI are different with less potential for any possible relationship; still, a careful assessment of the two concepts indicates that there might be a connection. Smith (1992) viewed CET sentiments rooted in human values, and consumer decision-making also includes social considerations. CET as a major determinant affects consumer behavior (Zolfagharian, Saldivar, & Braun, 2017); the impact of CET has been always constructed using social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Siamagka and Balabanis (2015) found that CET positively and significantly influenced susceptibility to interpersonal interactions. Meanwhile, Deval *et al.* (2013) found that high-level ATSCI consumers were more likely to be prejudiced during purchases by social acceptability appeal. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

**H3:** CET is positively affected by ATSCI in the young generation.

### 2.3. NI

Drawing on the SIT, Brewer (1999) found that, for consumers, in-group bias due to NI results from feelings of association with the in-group (e.g., home country), but without any explicit stimulus from out-groups (e.g., foreign country). Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, and Diamantopoulos (2015) advanced extant research by examining the predictive power of NI as one pro-in-group construct, and CET as anti-out-group construct on the impact of socio-psychological traits of consumer behavior. Therefore, NI is fundamentally different from CET.

According to Coombes *et al.* (2001), NI was defined as consumers' cultural expression of national traditions. In a given cultural context, NI represents the common cultural expression of national traditions by consumers in the same nation (Stöttinger & Penz, 2018). Müller-Peters (1998) proposed this special expression of social identity with the reference group of identity as the citizens of a nation. Blank and Schmidt (2003, p.296) said that NI refers to an inner bond with the nation as well as the importance of national affiliation and the subjective significance. Tajfel (1978) found NI indicates the extent to which consumers identify and presents a positive feeling of affiliation with the nation and the importance the consumer attaches to the feeling (Feather, 1981).

Rooted in consumer's attachment to a nation, NI can be both positive and negative, which stretches from a sense of the explicit contra-identity as the negative identity to a positive identity (Blank, 2003). However, in most cases, NI is likely to be positive. In our study, the positive form of NI was adopted, but not the negative national identity as national disidentification presented by Josiassen (2011). Dinnie (2002) presented that consumers may possess NI that influences purchase behavior. Moreover, Suarez and Belk (2017) suggested merging the local culture based on NI to develop a localization strategy for global firms. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

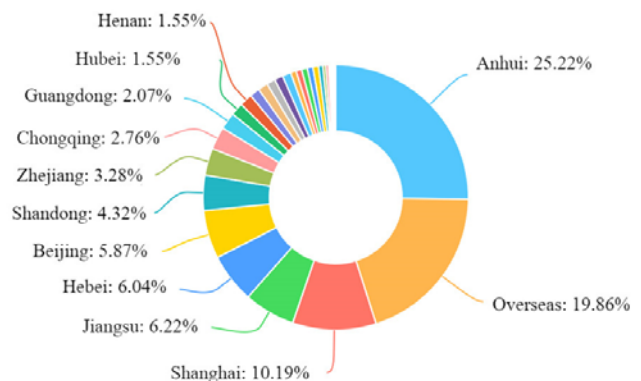
**H4:** NI has a positive effect on DBPI in the young generation.

**H5:** ATSCI has a positive effect on NI in the young generation.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Data Collection and Sample

Chinese consumers are the sample of our study because China is the world's largest emerging market (Wu & Zhou, 2018). The hypotheses were tested on Chinese generations under 30 with an online survey through Wechat, an application with more than one billion monthly Chinese users. Based on prior research, the questionnaire was first developed in English; for ensuring translation equivalence, it was double-back-translated from English to Chinese to resolve inconsistencies through discussion between translators and researchers in ensuring the meaning of each item. In total, 579 completed questionnaires were collected with different locations (back-tracking the participants' IP), ensuring the geographic diversity of the sample. <Figure 2> displays that almost 80% of participants responding to the survey were located in China and that nearly 20% of were overseas at the time.



**Figure 2:** The Geographic Diversity of Total Participants

Our study primarily focused on the young generation, so those more than 30 and who failed to finish in 100 seconds were excluded. 415 usable responses were left in the final analysis. <Table 2> summarizes the demographic characteristics of the final sample with respect to age, gender, education, and location. All participants are under 30, consistent with the study requirement, and 92.3% of them were between 20 and 30 years old. Female (67.2%) respondents were more than two times greater than male (32.8%). Over 90% of respondents were slightly more educated (61.4% graduated from university, 31.6% of them with more than a master’s degree), and income was broad from less than 3000 RMB to more than 15000 RMB per month.

**Table 2:** Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic Variables	Description	Values
Age	<=20	32(7.7%)
	<21, <=30	383(92.3%)
Gender	Male	136(32.8%)
	Female	279(67.2%)
Highest Education	Middle School and Below	14(3.4%)
	High School	15(3.6%)
	University Bachelor(Collage Include)	255(61.4%)
	University Master and Higher	131(31.6%)
Income	<=3000 RMB	166(40%)
	3000-6000 RMB	119(28.7%)
	6000-9000 RMB	73(17.6)
	9000-12000 RMB	30(7.2%)
	12000-15000 RMB	11(2.7%)
	>15000 RMB	16(3.9%)

### 3.2. Measurements

For the constructs, measures adapted from previous research and a seven-point Likert scale anchored by one (“strongly disagree”) and seven (“strongly agree”) was used in all items. According to Lennox and Wolfe (1984), we measured ‘Attention to Social Comparison Information’ with a three-item version of the ATSCI scale, which was validated by Deval *et al.* (2013). Similar to Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, and Diamantopoulos (2015), we operationalized consumer ethnocentrism using the four-dimensional CETSCALE measure initially proposed by Shimp and Sharma (1987), which was widely validated (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004; Shankarmahesh, 2006; Verlegh, 2007) and adopted in a recently study on the Chinese consumer (Ding, 2017). As Blank and Schmidt (2003) said, there is “little disagreement on the measurement of national identity.” Thus, the version of three items was used in our study based on the previous research (e.g., Mlicki & Ellemers, 1996; Verlegh, 2007).

Consumer domestic products purchase intention from the stimulus countries was measured with two items from Putrevu and Lord (1994). <Table 3> summarizes the measures and items.

**Table 3:** Measures, Items and Scale Sources

Measures and Items	References
Attention to Social Comparison Information (ATSCI)	
I find that I tend to pick up slang expressions from others and use them as part of my own vocabulary.	Lennox and Wolfe (1984)
I usually keep up with clothing style changes by watching what others wear.	
My behavior often depends on how I feel others wish me to behave.	
Consumer Ethnocentrism (CET)	
Chinese people should always buy Chinese-made products instead of imports.	Shimp and Sharma (1987)
Only those products that are unavailable in China should be imported.	
Real Chinese should always buy Chinese-made products.	
We should purchase products manufactured in China instead of letting other countries get rich off of us.	
National Identity (NI)	
I am glad that I am Chinese.	Verlegh (2007)
I feel strong ties with China.	
Being Chinese is important to me.	
Domestic Brand Purchase Intention (DBPI)	
It is very likely that I will buy Chinese brand products.	Putrevu and Lord (1994)
I will definitely try Chinese brand products in the future.	

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Reliability and Validity

Before testing the hypotheses, we assessed the reliability and validity of the items for four constructs. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  was used in checking internal consistency. <Table 4> shows that the total construct was 0.786, higher than 0.7, that the coefficients of each construct were higher than 0.6, and that ATSCI ( $\alpha=0.673$ ), CET ( $\alpha=0.856$ ), NI ( $\alpha=0.894$ ), and PIDB ( $\alpha=0.836$ ) are shown as expected. Hair *et al.* (2014) suggested 0.6 as the minimum acceptable value for Cronbach’s  $\alpha$ ; thus, the reliabilities of study measures were acceptable. A Varimax, confirmatory principal component analysis was conducted to explore principal components. <Table 4> reports detailed estimation results.

**Table 4:** Analyzing Components Results of Constructs and Items

Construct	Item	Component				Cronbach's $\alpha$
		1	2	3	4	
ATSCI	ATSCI3	0.785	0.153	0.107	0.015	.673
	ATSCI2	0.765	0.146	0.022	-0.015	
	ATSCI1	0.760	-0.030	0.012	0.113	
CET	CET3	0.068	0.858	0.073	0.058	.856
	CET2	0.064	0.820	0.045	-0.013	
	CET4	0.105	0.812	0.016	0.173	
	CET1	0.090	0.810	0.100	0.109	
NI	NI3	0.062	0.098	0.917	0.132	.894
	NI2	0.046	0.022	0.892	0.110	
	NI1	0.049	0.090	0.877	0.137	
PIDB	PIDB1	0.047	0.131	0.154	0.904	.836
	PIDB2	0.065	0.116	0.185	0.893	
Eigen value		2.818	2.495	1.823	1.721	
of Variance Explained		23.483	20.793	15.189	14.342	
% of Variance Cumulated		22.486	44.276	59.465	73.807	

In addition, Fornell and Larcker (1981) pointed out average variance extracted (AVE) values of all constructs higher than 0.5 can be used to confirm convergence validity. The AVE values (Table.4) and CR of each construct follow: AVE(ATSCI)=0.415, CR(ATSCI)=0.677; AVE(CET)=0.600, CR(CET)=0.857; AVE(NI)=0.745, CR(NI)=0.897, AVE(PIDB)=0.719, and CR(PIDB)=0.837.

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) stating that if AVE is less than 0.5, but the composite reliability (CR) is higher than 0.6 with AVE more than 0.4, we determined that the convergent validity of the construct seems adequate. Moreover, <Table 4> shows that the  $\Phi$  coefficients among the constructs without 1.0 signify correlations. <Table 5> presents that the discriminant validity of the constructs was confirmed (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

**Table 5:** Results of Analyzing AVE and Correlations

AVE	ATSCI	CET	NI	PIDB
ATSCI	<b>0.415</b>			
CET	0.300 (0.090)	<b>0.6</b>		
NI	0.183 (0.033)	0.196 (0.038)	<b>0.745</b>	
PIDB	0.176 (0.031)	0.285 (0.081)	0.373 (0.139)	<b>0.719</b>

Notes: AVE is on the diagonal line in bold text, and the squares of correlation coefficients are in ( ).

4.2. Tests of Hypotheses

For assessing the causal relationships among ATSCI,

CET, NI, and PIDB, we estimated the path coefficients in our study. <Table 6> reports the standardized path coefficients of the structural equation model analyzing results from the model estimation.

<Table 6> presents that  $\chi^2$ , CMIN/DF, GFI, AGFI, CFI, TLI, IFI, RFI, NFI, and RMSEA indices were used to evaluate model fitness. The results revealed that  $\chi^2$  was 93.000 (DF=49, P=0.000); CMIN/DF was 1.898, and thus less than 3; RMSEA was 0.047, less than 0.05; CFI was 0.979, and the others were GFI, AGFI, TLI, IFI, RFI, and NFI also were more than 0.9. As suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999), these indices indicate satisfactory levels for confirming the criteria for model fitness.

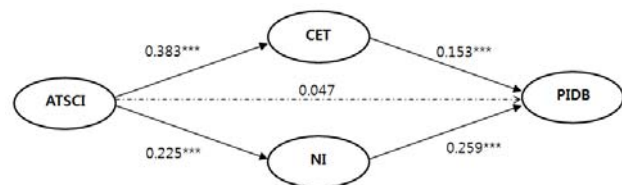
**Table 6:** Results of Testing Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Path	Estimate	S.E.	t-Value	Sig.	Results
H1	ATSCI $\rightarrow$ PIDB	0.047	0.059	0.804	0.421	Rejected
H2	CET $\rightarrow$ PIDB	0.153	0.044	3.491	***	Supported
H3	ATSCI $\rightarrow$ CET	0.383	0.083	4.635	***	Supported
H4	NI $\rightarrow$ PIDB	0.259	0.046	5.657	***	Supported
H5	ATSCI $\rightarrow$ NI	0.225	0.070	3.206	0.001	Supported

$\chi^2=93.000(DF=49, P=0.000)$ , CMIN/DF=1.898, GFI=0.964, AGFI=0.943, CFI=0.979, TLI=0.972, IFI=0.979, RFI=0.942, NFI=0.957, RMSEA=0.047.

Note: \*\*\* denotes P<0.01

Both <Table 6> and <Figure 3> display that the direct path coefficient from ATSCI to PIDB was not significant ( $\gamma=0.047$ , t-Value=0.804<1.96, p=0.421>0.1), rejecting H1. The CET of young generations of Chinese had a positive effect on PIDB ( $\gamma=0.153$ , t-Value=3.491>1.96, p<0.01), supporting H2. The positive influence of consumer ATSCI on CET ( $\gamma=0.383$ , t-Value=4.635>1.96, p<0.01), supporting H3. In addition, the positive and significant impacts of consumer NI toward PIDB ( $\gamma=0.259$ , t-Value=5.657>1.96, p<0.01), supporting H4. ATSCI was positively and significantly related to consumer NI ( $\gamma=0.225$ , t-Value=3.206>1.96, p<0.01), supporting H5.



Note: \*\*\* denotes p<0.01

**Figure 3:** Structural Model Estimates

<Table 7> presents that the indirect path coefficient from ATSCI to CET to PIDB was significant (CI= [0.022, 0.119], p<0.01). The indirect path coefficient from ATSCI to NI to PIDB was positive and significant (CI= [0.019, 0.136], p<0.01).

**Table 7:** Effects of CET and NI between ATSCI and PIDB

Path	Estimate (Lower, Upper)	Mediation Effect
ATSCIà CETà PIDB	0.058*** (0.022, 0.119)	Accepted
ATSCIà NIà PIDB	0.058*** (0.019, 0.136)	Accepted

Note: \*\*\* denotes  $p < 0.01$

## 5. Discussion and Implications

The results of our study show that for the young Chinese generation, there was no direct impact between ATSCI and PIDB. The CET presented a positive and significant relation toward PIDB, this result was consistent with previous research findings (Josiassen, 2011; Strizhakova & Coulter, 2015). The original definition of CET reported by Shimp and Sharma (1987) does not include consumers' intentions to domestic products, but rather highlighted a clear bias of foreign products against Zarkada-Fraser and Fraser (2002). Plenty of subsequent research, however, shows that CET positively biases consumers' PIDB in different countries (Herche, 1992; Olsen, Biswas, & Granzin, 1993; Klein, Ettenson, & Morris, 1998; Suh & Kwon, 2002). The positive influence of young Chinese generation's ATSCI on CET was consistent with Siamagka and Balabanis' (2015) findings of positive association existing between CET and the susceptibility to interpersonal influence. The indirect mediation effect from ATSCI to CET to PIDB was significant. However, these findings were little explored in the previous relevant research. National Identity (NI) positively and significantly influences young Chinese generation's PIDB. This finding agreed with previous literature (Verlegh, 2007; Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015). ATSCI was positively and related significantly to NI. In addition, an indirect mediation effect from ATSCI to CET to PIDB was significant. These mediation effect findings are new. Furthermore, ensuring the mediation effects of ATSCI to CET to PIDB and ATSCI to NI to PIDB, we found that the direct path from ATSCI to PIDB is little significant.

### 5.1. Theoretical Implications and Contributions

The current study has theoretical implications for the international marketing research in several ways. First, our study originally joined one socio-psychological antecedent in ATSCI and CET. In the previous literature relevant to CET, worldmindedness (Rawwas, Rajendran, & Wuehrer, 1996; Balabanis et al., 2001), patriotism (Bannister & Saunder, 1978; Han, 1988; Sharma, Shimp, & Shin, 1994; Klein & Ettenson, 1999; Balabanis et al., 2001), collectivism (Ettenson, wagner, & Gaeth, 1988; Nishina, 1990; Strutton, Pelton, & Lumpkin, 1994; Sharma, Shimp, & Shin, 1994), animosity (Klein, Ettenson, & Morris, 1998; Alden et al.,

2013), materialism (Clarke, Shankarmahesh, & Ford, 2000), and cosmopolitanism (Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015) were explored only for CET but not for ATSCI. Our study documented a positive and significant relationship with ATSCI and CET, against the results of precious study (Das & Saha, 2017). Second, drawing on the SCT and the SIT, our study connected ATSCI with NI and estimated a positive relationship. These two socio-psychological antecedents were openness in the international marketing literature. Third, our study identified the mediating effects of CET and NI on the relationship between ATSCI and PIDB. The findings insisted that CET is different from NI (Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, & Diamantopoulos, 2015), and against the previous research methods, it treats CET as one of dimensions of NI (Keillor & Hult, 1999; Cui & Adams, 2002).

### 5.2. Managerial Implications and Contributions

There are some managerial implications for international marketers wishing to stimulate young generations of Chinese to purchase domestic brand products. First, the results show that CET and NI influence young Chinese generations' PIDB. Therefore, an international marketer should consider Chinese market entry-modes (foreign direct investment, international joint ventures and cobranding with a local brand) and branding decisions to mitigate young consumers' domestic bias. Second, as the positive effects of ATSCI to CET and NI were explored, international marketers could use the given information to catch consumer attention in target product promotions. Furthermore, due to the ATSCI existing in young Chinese generations, it indirectly affects consumer PIDB. Meanwhile, consumers pay attention to the electronic word of mouth in decision-making (Lin & Kalwani, 2018). Thus, to build positive attitudes towards domestic brands, international marketers could focus on consumers' information channels to promote products.

### 5.3. Limitations and Further Research

There are some limitations in the current research. First, our study was conducted in China and collected data only from young generations under 30. It is possible for further replication in other settings with different countries to mitigate the age bias. According to Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions, China is a collective country; thus, the individual countries could be the sample in a future relevant study. Also, examining the results of our study in other collective countries may be worthwhile. Meanwhile, exploring the findings through comparison with other countries in the future is necessary for generalization. Second, our study did not present specific domestic brands products as investigative categories. From the aspect of product attributes, functional and symbolic attributes were the

classical classifications of product (Park & Jeon, 2018). Thus, specific brands categories or products are necessary with respect to further research. Third, though the convergent validity of the construct is adequate in our study, but according to Fornell and Larcker (1981), an AVE more than 0.5 will be better. Thus, in further research, related solutions for higher validity are worth exploring. Finally, our study excluded country of origin (COO) effects and focused on purchase intention toward domestic brand products without mentioning foreign brands. Moon and Oh (2017) suggested that the research of COO effects with CET and NI is necessary in the future; thus, further studies combining ATSCI, COO effects, CET, and NI would be significant.

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