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# EFFECTS OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, COUNTRY ANIMOSITY AND FOREIGN PRODUCT USAGE EXPERIENCES ON PRODUCT JUDGEMENT: A STUDY OF CHINESE CUSTOMERS

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Effects of Country of Origin, Country Animosity and Foreign Product Usage Experience  
on Product Judgments: A Study of Chinese Consumers

by

Cong Sui

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of the requirements for the degree of  
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## **Abstract**

An experiment was conducted to test the hypotheses that country-of-origin, country animosity and product usage experience jointly determine the intention of product purchase. One hundred and seventy Chinese college students participated in the experiment and responded to advertisements designed to promote laptop computers manufactured in Germany, Japan, India and the Philippines. Regression analysis results indicate that general product purchase intentions were significantly influenced by participants' pre-existing COO and CA perceptions. The interaction effects between COO, CA and product usage experience were also confirmed, meaning that the effects of COO and CA on purchase intentions were moderated by the variety and frequency of actual product usage experience.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

As the globalization of marketing continues, country, product and their joint influence on consumer purchasing behavior become more important. Today, various products are assembled in different countries and target customers in markets worldwide. Consumers are exposed to and selecting from a wider range of foreign brands than ever before (Jill, Richard, & Marlene, 2013). How consumers make their purchase decisions—from forming the choice set to final purchase—when facing a multiplicity of old/domestic and new/foreign brands remains an important subject.

Of a vast number of factors examined, the country of origin (COO) of foreign products has been found to have significant influence on consumer acceptance. Leonidou (2007), for example, studied British consumers' evaluations of American and Chinese goods and observed a lower valuation and negative attitude toward Chinese than American goods. Research also suggests that consumers who are familiar with a specific brand are less likely to be influenced by the brand's country of origin (Johansson, 2013). Research further indicates that, although globalization has knocked down many national market boundaries, varying levels of animosity still exist between many countries in the world. Klein, Ettenson and Morris (1998), for example, found that Chinese consumers' animosity toward Japan negatively affected their purchase of Japanese products independently of their judgments of product quality.



This research study aims to examine the interaction effects of three key variables – country of origin, country animosity and product usage experience – on Chinese consumers’ evaluative judgments of foreign products. The reason for selecting China as the focus of study is threefold: First, China is the largest consumer market in the world with an estimated population of 1.3 billion (Chike & Zhang, 2012; Kwok, Uncles & Huang, 2006). With a GDP of \$10.9 trillion, it is also the second largest economy in the world after the U.S. (CIA World Factbook, 2011). Second, the growing disposable income and purchasing power have made Chinese consumers the most attractive targets of foreign products and services. Foreign brands have provided a greater diversity of choice, and many of them offer better quality, more attractive appearance and variety of designs. Third, in recent years, the Chinese economic policy has shifted toward the expansion of domestic consumption which is likely to stimulate more purchase and consumption of foreign goods and brands (Li, 1997).

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Following the introduction, chapter two reviews extant marketing, communication and consumer behavior literature which constitutes the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter three presents the research hypothesis derived from the theoretical framework. Chapter four outlines the research methodology to be utilized in the collection of empirical data. Chapter five presents the results of an experiment. Chapter six summarizes and discusses the results. Chapter seven concludes the study.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework**

### **Country of Origin**

In marketing research, country of origin is defined as the country where a given product is originally made (Roth & Romeo, 1992; Swinder & Rao, 1997). COO effects are concerned with how consumers perceive products originated from different countries.

Brigham (1971, p. 354) conceptualized COO effects as a kind of stereotyping, which can be used to explain “how consumers react to COO information because consumers are known to develop country stereotypes from their social environment and consumption acculturation.”

Samiee (1987) defined the COO effect as “any influences, positively or negatively, that the country of manufacture might have on consumer’s choice processes or subsequent behavior.”

For example, many people consider English tea, Chinese silk, French perfume and Japanese electronics as the best in their respective product categories, even though such perceptions or biases are not always substantiated by concrete evidence.

Numerous studies have shown that COO can influence consumers’ evaluative judgment of the product. That is, consumers tend to evaluate products more favorably when the products are originated from or made in countries that enjoy positive perceptions or image. COO effects also appear to be highly robust; they were observed in studies that employed single-cue and multiple-cue product stimuli, within- and between-subjects experimental designs, as well as U.S. and non-U.S. samples (for reviews, see Peterson & Jolibert, 1995; Srinivisan & Jain, 2003; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999).

Researchers generally agree that the COO of a product, typically presented as "made in" labels, is an extrinsic product cue that conveys intangible product attribute information (Peterson & Jolibert, 1995). As such, a COO cue is similar to the brand name, product packaging, or price in that none of these directly bear on product performance (Peterson & Jolibert, 1995). A large number of studies have shown that as an extrinsic cue, COO is used by consumers as a consistent and credible predictor of product value and quality (e.g., Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Veale & Quester, 2009; Wilson & Brekke, 1994).

Several theoretical models have been developed to explain COO effects. The most frequently discussed and tested models are: The country stereotype model, the halo effect model, and the summary construct (heuristic) model.

**Country stereotype model.** Many researchers attribute COO effects to country stereotypes. Several studies have found evidence supporting the notion that consumers hold stereotypes of countries, and these stereotypes affect the ways they perceive products. Some studies found a distinct nationalistic trend in perceptions (e.g., Darling & Kraft 1977; Suh & Kwon 2001); others found country stereotypes to be universally held (e.g., Heslop & Papadopoulos 1993). Janda and Rao (1997) conceptualized COO effects as resulting from two separate processes: Cultural stereotypes and personal beliefs. O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2000) also noted that as countries increase their international presence, it seems logical for consumers to associate their attitudes with country-specific stereotypes. Tse and Lee (2013) assert that country image represents the cause of stereotyping that initiates cognitive and/or motivational biases in affecting product judgments. Liu and Johnson (2005)

further argued that country stereotypes could be activated spontaneously upon exposure to COO cues, and thereby influence evaluations of products originated from other countries.

Research also indicates that the stereotypes consumers hold about countries are closely related to individual country's level of economic development. Products originated from countries of low economic development are likely evaluated less favorably than products originated from countries of high economic development (Ahamed, 1994; Gaedeke, 1973; Wang & Lamb, 1983). The emergence of hybrid products (e.g., products designed in one country and manufactured in another country) makes it difficult for consumers to rely their product evaluations on the basis of a single country's level economic development, however. Lee, Suh and Moon (2001) therefore suggest that the country of target (COT) should be taken into account when dissecting COO effects. A hybrid product may be more acceptable to consumers in the country where the product is designed but less in the country where the product is manufactured, or vice versa.

The extent to which country stereotypes affect product judgments may also vary across different product categories. Different product categories may be more or less associated with positive or negative country stereotypes. For example, consumers may have stronger and more positive associations between automobiles and Germany, but weaker and perhaps less positive associations between wines and Germany. Maheswaran (1994) suggests that the effects of COO-related stereotypes could also vary across different product purchase and consumption contexts and situations. His study illustrates that when attribute information is unambiguous, experts tend to base their evaluations on product attribute strength, whereas

novices rely on COO when attribute information is ambiguous. Also, experts tend to use COO to selectively process and recall attribute information, whereas novices used it to differentially interpret subsequent product attribute information.

**The halo effect model.** Han (1989) indicated that nearly all earlier COO studies either implicitly or explicitly assumed COO as a halo that consumers use to infer quality information of an unknown or unfamiliar foreign product. Some studies (e.g., Erickson, Johansson, & Chao, 1984; Johansson, Douglas, & Nonaka, 1985) found that the COO of foreign products affected consumers' evaluation of product attributes, but had no effect on their overall product evaluations. The COO halo effect would be more prominent when consumers are either unfamiliar with a product or when information about the product is either missing or lacking. Conversely, when there is ample product attribute information available, consumers are likely to base their evaluation more on a product's attributes than its COO.

**The summary construct model.** COO operates as a summary construct when consumers become familiar with a country's products and use it as an overall indicator of product quality. Based on cognitive research, Han (1989; also see Hong & Wyer, 1989) suggests that consumers reduce available product information into information chunks (summaries) to facilitate processing and retrieval. In subsequent product evaluation contexts, consumers rely on such abstractions of products retrieved from memory rather than original product information. Similar to brand names that are often conveniently used as an indicator of product quality, COO may also be used as a basis for determining the quality of a specific

product originated from a certain country; it may also be used to generalize product information across multiple products with the same COO. As a summary construct, COO may thus serve the function of a heuristic (or cognitive shortcut) that simplifies otherwise complex decision making process, despite that heuristics may lead to systematic errors or biases (Kahneman, Tversky, & Slovic (1982).

Differences aside, the theoretical explanations share the basic assumption that, so long as the COO information is available, consumers will view it as relevant product information and use it in their evaluation of products. Empirically, COO effects have been found to influence consumers' evaluations of foreign products mostly on two aspects: perceptions of quality and perceptions of purchase value (Yeong, Mohamad, Ramayah, & Omar, 2007). COO effects have also been shown to impact product assessment and decision making processes (Wong, Polonsky, & Garma, 2008). Canli and Maheswaran (2000) have gone farther to suggest that COO can influence cognitive responses, product evaluations and broader beliefs about products. All these effects may exist because COO cues give information, which consumers use to predict the likelihood that a product manufactured in a certain country meets certain quality standards or possesses certain desirable features (Baker & Ballington, 2002). Moreover, it has been found that COO may increase the tendency for consumers to evaluate their own country's products more favorably than imported products (Kaynak & Cavusgil, 1983). It also increases the tendency for products from emerging economies to be evaluated negatively (Cordell, 1992). Consumers' preferences for products from one country over another are also affected by COO (Yeong et al., 2007). There is a

positive correlation between COO perceptions and the country's level of economic development (Wang & Lamb, 1983). Products from developed countries are generally perceived as superior to products from underdeveloped or developing countries (Yeong et al. 2007). For example, products from countries such as USA, Germany, France or Japan are more favorably evaluated than products from countries like Nigeria, Egypt, Vietnam or China.

### Country Animosity

Compared to COO, a closely related but different concept, country animosity (CA), has received relatively little research attention. Klein et al. (1998) defined country animosity as “the remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political, or economic events” (p. 90). These authors tested their animosity model which hypothesized that CA resulting from present or historical conflicts could influence consumers' judgments of the product, regardless of the product's quality or value. The model and its hypotheses are shown below.

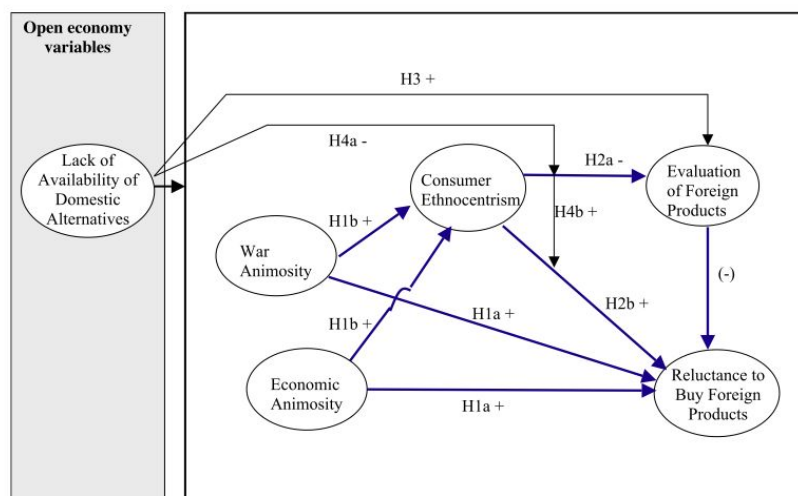


Figure1. The Animosity Model (Klein et al., 1998)

To test the model, Klein et al. (1998) gathered data from 244 interviews with Chinese consumers regarding their perceived quality, willingness to buy, consumer ethnocentrism, animosity and ownership of Japanese products. Results of the study supported the model by showing that Chinese consumers' animosity toward Japan, largely as a result of historical war-related factors, had a negative impact on their willingness to buy Japanese products despite their positive perceptions of Japanese product quality. Klein et al. (1998) conclude that, unlike COO effects, the feelings of animosity toward a given country could affect consumers' willingness to purchase foreign products without affecting their product evaluation. That is, there is no direct connection between a favorable evaluation of a product from a specific country and the negative feelings against the same country. Theoretically, then, Klein et al. (1998) not only validated the importance of CA, they also challenged the nearly exclusive focus on COO as a source of influence on consumer behavior.

Country animosity helps explain why consumers may find it acceptable to buy foreign products in general, but unacceptable to purchase foreign products associated with specific countries that are deemed as in military, political or economic conflict with their own countries. Several follow-up studies have replicated and extended the Klein et al. (1998) study. The original conceptualization of animosity, for example, was expanded from country-to-country to region-to-region relations, and from international animosity to inter-ethnic or domestic animosity (e.g., Hinck 2004; Klein & Ettenson, 1999; Nijssen & Douglas, 2004; Shimp, Dunn, & Klein, 2004; Shoham, Davidow, Klein, & Ruvio, 2006).



More recently, Russell and Russell (2006) expanded CA due to military, political or economic conflict to explicit or implicit cultural animosity. They presented evidence that participants showed increased preference for domestic movies when animosity was activated after explicit exposure to COO information. A similar pattern of CA appeared when cultural identity was activated implicitly rather than explicitly. Explicit CA is revealed as an apparent attitude toward specific countries and their products. Implicit CA usually takes the form of one's cultural identity (Aaker & Lee, 2001; Briley & Wyer, 2002) which can be expressed without conscious awareness or intention.

Together, these studies strongly suggest that CA exerts influence on judgments of a foreign product independent from the product's COO. It thus seems necessary to conceptualize CA and COO as two distinct variables that have distinguishable effects on foreign-made product judgments. Specifically, consumers may appreciate the quality and value of products originated from a specific country, or find it appropriate to purchase foreign products in general, but they may refuse to buy products originated from the country that is deemed as opposed to their own countries.

### **Product Usage Experience**

As stated earlier, Globalization of the world economy has brought about greater openness in international trade and a movement toward a borderless world. As a result, consumers worldwide are buying and consuming an unprecedented number of products originated from foreign countries. Case in point: While American consumers are now regularly and frequently buying Chinese products, Chinese consumers are also buying more

and more products made in the U.S. Given a product's COO, the extent to which actual foreign product usage experience affects consumer evaluations and judgments remains largely unstudied, however.

Examining product usage experience necessitates answering a basic question first: What is an experience? According to Li, Daugherty and Biocca (2001), "an experience is more than simply the passive reception of external sensations or subjective mental interpretation of an event or situation; rather, experience is the product of an ongoing transaction that gains in quality, intensity, meaning, and value integrating both psychological and emotional conditions" (p. 4). In the context of consumer behavior, an experience may be defined as "the sensation of interaction with a product, service, or event, through all of our senses, over time, and on both physical and cognitive levels" (Li et al., 2001, p. 1). Accordingly, product usage experience occurs when there is physical contact with the product -- for example, when consumers buy products and use and evaluate them (Hoch, 2002).

Marketing research generally supports the distinction between first time buyers and repeat purchasers or users largely due to their different levels of product usage experience (Lehto, O'Leary, & Morrison, 2004). There is ample evidence showing that product usage experience can moderate the relationship between purchase intention and actual behavior (Ozer, 2010). Specifically, consumers with prior product usage experience are likely to show greater consistency in their purchase intention and actual purchase behavior than consumers who lack prior usage experience. Product usage experience helps make initial opinions about

a product more crystallized and accessible in consumers' minds and thus enables them to perform a subsequent purchasing task more efficiently and effectively (Ozer, 2010; Schwarz & Bohner, 2001). Prior usage experience also provides consumers with relevant information about the outcomes of performing a behavior and hence allows them to use the information again when deciding to engage in that behavior (Ozer, 2010; Schwarz & Bohner, 2001).

Consistent with cognitive theory, empirical research shows that the cognitions that consumers form when their behavioral intentions are measured remain stable overtime and are reactivated when the actual behavior occurs. Since the intention to purchase and the subsequent purchase behavior are based on similar cognitions, the consistency between behavioral intention and actual behavior will be higher for consumers who have prior usage experience than those without prior usage experience (Ozer, 2010).

Product usage experience is also considered as the most important source of product knowledge and beliefs which in turn constitute the affective basis of product attitude, purchase intention and behavior (Akshay & Kent, 1998; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Creusen (1998) pointed out that affective response to the product usage can to some extent effectively influence purchasing intention. Oliver (1999) also stated that affective response is actually bound up with post-purchase product evaluation. Desmet and Hekkert (2007) defined product experience as "all possible affective experiences involved in human-product interaction" (p. 58). They further stipulate that product usage experience constitutes the "core affect" toward products and services. Their conceptualization of core affect is shown below.

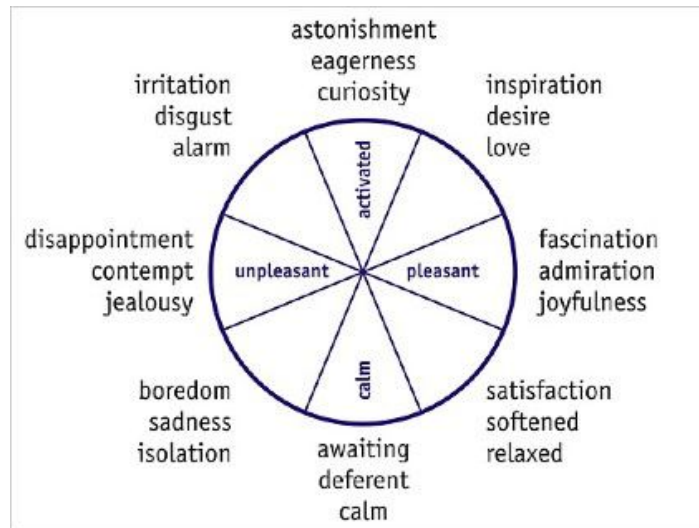


Figure 2. The Core Affect Model (Desmet & Hekkert, 2007)

Despite its importance, product usage experience has not received much emphasis in COO or CA studies. Instead of treating it as a focal variable, most COO and CA studies have treated product experience as a constant. For example, participants were assumed to share similar, if not identical usage experience when asked to evaluate products made in China. Drawing on the theoretical distinction between direct and indirect experience, we explore the relationships among product usage experience, COO and CA.

### **Country of Origin, Country Animosity and Product Usage Experience**

Experience comes from the interactions between an individual and an object. The nature of such interactions can differentiate two types of experience: direct experience and indirect experience (Li et al., 2001). According to Li et al. (2001), direct experience has some advantages because, first and foremost, direct experience is self-generated, so it can be the most trustworthy to a consumer. The consumer can also control the focus and pace of an inspection to adjust the way a product is experienced to maximize information input. Further,

direct interactions with a product often lead to more and longer lasting affective responses in the consumer than indirect experience. The characteristics of a direct experience can further enable consumers to anticipate the future consumption experience of a product better than an indirect experience. Li et al. (2001) also suggest that direct product experience is critically important to belief confidence when examining experience goods (which is generally defined as a product or service where product characteristics, such as quality or price are difficult to observe in advance, but these characteristics can be ascertained upon consumption). In contrast, indirect experience such as advertising or product description is able to influence attitude for search goods (generally defined as a product or service with features and characteristics easily evaluated before purchase) and reduce the effects of unfavorable trial (Li et al.,2001).

Product experience can therefore be direct when there is physical contact with the product or indirect when a product is presented or described externally (as in an advertisement) (Hoch & Ha 1986; Kempf & Smith 1998). Obviously, product usage experience is direct product experience involving physical product interaction that entails tangible and intrinsic product attribute information. The COO of a product, typically presented as "made in" labels, is an extrinsic product cue that conveys intangible and extrinsic product attribute information (Peterson & Jolibert, 1995). As such, a COO cue is similar to the brand name, product packaging, or price in that none of these directly bear on product performance (Peterson & Jolibert, 1995).

Since direct experience involves more experiential and physical interactions with products than indirect experience, it tends to provide consumers with more credible information than indirect experience (Hamilton, Thompson, & Viana, 2007). For example, product trials tend to produce higher levels of product confidence than exposure to advertising messages. As a result, product trials have been shown to produce higher possibility of purchase and greater decision confidence than exposure to indirect experience (Hamilton et al., 2007).

Consumers sometimes rely on indirect experiences with products, such as exposure to advertising or eyeballing products on display, to make decisions about which products to purchase. For example, a consumer might look at displays at an Apple store or review product specifications online before purchasing a new Apple laptop. Yet, the consumer's long-term satisfaction with the laptop is more likely to be based on direct experience of actually using the laptop (and other laptop brands) regularly and frequently. Some research suggests that preferences formed based on indirect experience can differ systematically from preferences formed based on direct experience (Thompson, Hamilton, & Rust, 2005). For instance, before using a product, consumers might prefer products with many features and capabilities, but after using a product, consumers might prefer simpler products that are easier to use. Thus, consumers may be selecting products based on indirect experiences in the beginning, but they would be more influenced by direct usage experiences later on. Direct product usage experience could thus shift product preferences.

Wu and Shaffer (1987) have indicated that attitudes originating from direct product experience are more predictive of later behavior than are attitudes originating from indirect product experience. They also suggested that direct product experience forms a strong link between present and future purchase behavior. Brand attitudes resulting from direct product usage experience are also stronger than attitudes based on indirect experience. This assumption is bolstered by observations that attitudes originating from direct product experience are more clearly and confidently held and are more readily accessible from memory than are attitudes based on indirect product experience. Attitudes based on direct product experience are more likely to be evoked and thus more likely to guide purchase behavior.

Both COO perceptions and CA are for the most part indirect product experience activated by such extrinsic cues as “made-in” labels. It is unlikely for consumers to have sufficient direct experience with all countries from which foreign products are originated, let alone the processes involved in manufacturing foreign products. Likewise, CA is more often an indirect and learned experience about a country rather than a direct experience. For example, most Chinese consumers learned indirectly about the atrocities committed by Japanese military forces during World War II from history books, mass media and interpersonal sources. Few, however, have direct experience of such atrocities

Taken together, our analysis suggests that COO, CA and foreign product usage represent qualitatively different product-related experiences. More importantly, these experiences may become available concurrently to the consumer in a product purchase

situation. Direct product usage experience, however, could play an important controlling and moderating role that limits the extent of COO and CA influence on purchasing intention and behavior. That is, cognitive and affective perceptions or biases originating from COO or CA may not be taken as facts but as hypotheses to be tested (Hoch & Deighton, 1989). Treating perceptions or biases associated with COO or CA as a hypothesis rather than a fact should serve generally to lessen the likelihood that purchasing decisions would be made solely on the basis of a product's COO or CA. In general, then, it is expected that as product usage experience increases, the influence of COO and CA should decline.



### **Chapter 3: Research Hypothesis**

The analysis presented above suggests that COO, CA and foreign product usage experience constitute three different sources of products related experience. The extent to which these three kinds of experience work in concert with each other would therefore determine the outcome of product judgments. The following four sets of hypotheses regarding main and interaction effects are thus submitted:

The first set of hypotheses considers the main and interaction effects of COO and country-specific product usage experience on purchase intention of products made in the country.

H1-a: COO has a positive effect on purchase intention of products made in the country when country-specific product usage experience is held constant.

H1-b: Country-specific product usage experience has a positive effect on purchase intention of products made in the country when COO is held constant.

H1-c: The effect of COO on product purchase intention is moderated by country-specific product usage experience.

The second set of hypotheses deals with the main and interaction effects of COO and country-specific laptop computer usage experience on purchase intention of laptop computers made in the country.

H2-a: COO has a positive effect on purchase intention of laptop computers made in the country when country-specific laptop computers usage experience is held constant.

H2-b: Country-specific laptop computers usage experience has a positive effect on purchase intention of laptop computers made in the country when COO is held constant.

H2-c: The effect of COO on laptop computers purchase intention is moderated by country-specific laptop computers usage experience.

The third set of hypotheses examines the main and interaction effects of CA and country-specific product usage experience on purchase intention of products made in the country.

H3-a: CA has a negative effect on purchase intention of products made in the country when country-specific product usage experience is held constant.

H3-b: Country-specific product usage experience is positively associated with purchase intention of products made in the country when CA is held constant.

H3-c: The effect of CA on product purchase intention is moderated by country-specific product usage experience.

The fourth and final set of hypotheses includes main and interaction effects of CA and country-specific laptop computers usage experience on purchase intention of laptop computers made in the country.

H4-a: CA is negatively associated with purchase intention of laptop computers made in the country when country-specific laptop computers usage experience is held constant.

H4-b: Country-specific laptop computers usage experience is positively associated with purchase intention of laptop computers made in the country when CA is held constant.

H4-c: The effect of CA on laptop computers purchase intention is moderated by country-specific laptop computers usage experience.

## Chapter 4: Methodology

A controlled experiment was conducted to test the research hypotheses. The participants, design, stimulus material and experimental procedure are presented in this section.

**Participants.** One hundred and seventy Chinese undergraduate students attending Weifang University in Shandong, the second most populous province in China, participated in the experimental study. The students were encouraged to participate by their undergraduate professors. Students were informed that they would be participating in a thesis research on consumer behavior in China. Ninety-seven of the participants were females (56.4%) and seventy-three were males. Their mean age was 19.15 (sd = 1.15).

**Design.** The experimental design was a 2x2x(2) mixed (expericorr) factorial. The two between-subjects (i.e., experimentally manipulated) factors were (1) COO (positive vs. negative) and (2) CA (high vs. low). The within-subjects (i.e., participant) factor, foreign product usage experience, was treated as continuous variable measured in terms of variety and frequency of product usage. The design thus combined features of an experimental design in which independent variables were manipulated and features of correlational designs in which participant variables were measured (Leary, 2011).

Four countries were used to manipulate COO and CA: Japan, Germany, India and the Philippines. Each country represented a unique COO and CA combination shown in Table 1.

Table 1. COO and CA Manipulations

		CA		Total N
		HIGH	LOW	
COO	POSITIVE	Japan (n=40)	Germany (n=45)	85
	NEGATIVE	India (n=43)	Philippines (n= 41)	84
Total N		83	86	169

Germany and Japan are highly industrialized countries known for the quality of their high-tech products. Both countries have maintained strong economic ties and trade relationships with China. The countries are expected to be associated with positive COOs among Chinese consumers. While “there is an almost perfect symbiosis between the Chinese and German economies: China needs technology and Germany needs markets” (Tatlow, 2012), Japan’s invasion to China and recent territorial disputes has made every Chinese “feel responsible to hate Japan” (Shi, 2013). Therefore, the animosity toward Germany (Japan) is expected to be low (high).

Despite their considerable economic development in recent years, India and the Philippines are newly industrialized countries with lower living standard, less developed industrial base and lower Human Development Index (HDI) relative to countries like Germany and Japan (Bożyk, 2006). Both countries are therefore expected to be associated with negative COOs. CA is expected to be substantially higher toward India than the Philippines, however. The Sino-Indian War, also known as the Sino-Indian Border Conflict in 1962 created a deep animosity between the two countries. The animosity was intensified

when India granted asylum to the Dalai Lama, which was viewed by many Chinese as an unfriendly move, if not an outright interference in Chinese domestic affairs (Lamb, 1964).

As a within-subjects (participant) factor, product usage experience was measured in terms of variety and frequency of usage. Variety was measured by four 5-point scaled (5 = many; 1 = none) items:

1. How many kinds of (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) products have you used?
2. How many kinds of (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) products have you used?
3. How many kinds of (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) laptop computers have you used?
4. How many kinds of (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) brands of laptop computers have you used?

Frequency of product usage was measured by four 5-point scaled (5 =Always; 1 = never) items:

1. How often do you use (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) products?
2. How often do you use (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) products?
3. How often do you use (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) laptop computers?
4. How often do you use (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) brands of laptop computers?

**Stimulus Material.** Four print advertisements were created to determine how consumers react to manipulations of COO and CA (see Appendix). The ads promoted a fictional laptop computer brand (Alpha Compact NC600) made in Germany, Japan, India and

the Philippines respectively. With the exception of the product's COO, all ads contained exactly the same product attribute information as well as identical layout and illustration.

**Procedure.** Experimental sessions took place in a small conference rooms at Weifang University. All sessions were conducted individually or in small groups. Upon their arrival, participants were first randomly assigned to one of the four between-subjects conditions. Each participant was handed a booklet which contained the Information Consent to Participate in Research, the advertising stimulus, manipulation check measures and measures of the dependent variables. After reading the Informed Consent, participants examined an ad for a fictional laptop computer brand made in Germany, Japan, India or Philippines, followed by responding to measures of manipulation checks and dependent variables. The experimental session took about 20 minutes to complete.

**Dependent Measures.** Modified from Klein, Ettenson and Morris (1998), the following Likert-scaled items (1: strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree) were used to measure intention and willingness to buy German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine products in general (Q1-Q5) and laptop computers in specific (Q6-Q10).

1. I would feel uncomfortable if I bought a (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) product.
2. Whenever possible, I avoid buying (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) products.
3. Whenever available, I would prefer to buy products made in (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines).
4. I do not like the idea of owning (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) products.
5. If two products were equal in quality, but one was from (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines) and one was from China, I would pay more for the product from (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines).

6. I would feel uncomfortable if I bought an (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) brand of laptop computer.
7. Whenever possible, I avoid buying an (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) brand of laptop computer.
8. Whenever available, I would prefer to buy laptop computers made in (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines).
9. I do not like the idea of owning (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) laptop computers.
10. If two laptop computers were equal in quality, but one was from (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines) and one was from China, I would pay more for the product from (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines).



## Chapter 5: Results

In this chapter, preliminary statistical analyses of the key variables in the study are presented first, followed by hypothesis-testing results. All analyses were performed by using SPSS 21.0

### Manipulation Checks

A series of measures were used to ensure successful manipulations of COO and CA, the between-subjects factors. Several researchers have pointed out that COO can be viewed at two different levels: perceptions of a specific class of product made in a certain country and perceptions of products made in a certain country in general (e.g., Lee & Ganesh 1999; Liu & Johnson, 2005; Parameswaran & Mohan 1994). For COO, manipulation checks measured participants' evaluation of each country in terms of (1) the products made in the country in general, and (2) the laptop computers manufactured in the country on 5-point scales (5: very good, 1: very bad). The manipulation was successful. As shown in Table 2, Germany and Japan were rated more positively than India and the Philippines both in terms of ratings of products in general and ratings of laptop computers in particular.

Table 2. COO Manipulation Check

	COO	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Product rating	POSITIVE (Germany + Japan)	85	3.58	.79	3.783	167	.000
	NEGATIVE (India + Philippines)	84	3.09	.90			
Laptop rating	POSITIVE (Germany + Japan)	85	3.52	.76	2.487	167	.014
	NEGATIVE (India + Philippines)	84	3.21	.87			

Manipulation checks of CA were performed by asking participants questions on the extent to which they feel the country (1) is a reliable partner, (2) is taking advantage of China, (3) is treating China unfairly on 5-point Likert scales (5: strongly agree, 1: strongly disagree (Klein et al., 1998). Table 3 shows that participants revealed stronger animosity toward Japan and India than Germany and the Philippines on all three measures. The manipulation of CA was thus deemed successful. The three animosity items were averaged to create a composite measure of CA (Cronbach's Alpha = .625).

Table 3. CA Manipulation Check

	CA	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Unreliable partner to China	HIGH (Japan + India)	83	3.7590	.87778	4.975	167	.000
	LOW (Germany + Philippines)	86	3.0930	.86266			
Taking advantage of China	HIGH (Japan + India)	83	3.7229	.87392	1.331	167	.185
	LOW (Germany + Philippines)	86	3.5465	.84932			
Treating China unfairly	HIGH (Japan + India)	83	3.9397	.95444	3.127	167	.002
	LOW (Germany + Philippines)	86	3.5116	.82239			

Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations of the frequency and variety of product and laptop computer usage experience. One-sample t-tests results (Table 5) showed that participants' product and laptop usage frequency and variety were significantly different from zero, thus lending validity to usage experience as a within-subjects factor. Paired-sample t-tests (Table 5) indicated that participants had more experience, in terms of both variety and frequency, of using products than laptop computers made in the four countries under study.

Table 4. Product and Laptop Usage Experience

	N	Product Variety		Product Frequency		Laptop Variety		Laptop Frequency	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Germany	45	2.35	.74	2.17	.68	1.60	.68	1.80	.81
Japan	40	1.97	.69	1.97	.69	1.32	.57	1.42	.59
India	43	1.30	.55	1.30	.51	1.11	.44	1.13	.46
Philippines	41	1.63	.94	1.63	.96	1.34	.91	1.31	.75
Total	169	1.82	.84	1.77	.79	1.34	.69	1.42	.71

Table 5. One-Sample and Paired-Sample Tests of Usage Experience

	Test Value = 0		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Product Variety	28.189	168	.000
Product Frequency	28.855	168	.000
Laptop Variety	25.352	168	.000
Laptop Frequency	26.013	168	.000
Product Variety vs. Laptop Variety	9.960	168	.000
Product Frequency vs. Laptop Frequency	7.447	168	.000

### Reliability Tests of Dependent Measures

Table 6 presents Cronbach’s alphas of the items used to measure the dependent variables: product purchase intention and laptop computer purchase intention. The alphas indicate that the measures achieved good internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). The items were thus averaged to create composite measures of product and laptop purchase intention respectively. Table 7 presents the means and standard deviations of the composite measures.

Table 6. Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Product Purchase Intention	.847	5
Laptop Purchase Intention	.758	5

Table 7. Product and Laptop Purchase Intention

	N	Product Purchase Intention		Laptop Purchase Intention	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Germany	45	3.26	.49	2.95	.65
Japan	40	2.73	.72	2.48	.71
India	43	2.43	.82	2.14	.73
Philippines	41	3.18	.67	2.92	.55
Total	169	2.90	.76	2.62	.74

## Hypotheses Testing

To test the research hypotheses, a series of multiple regressions were performed. In all analyses, COO, CA, product usage experience (frequency and variety) and their interaction terms (obtained through multiplication) were treated as predictor (independent) and purchase intention as the criterion (dependent) variables.

### Hypotheses 1

H1-a states that COO would positively influence product purchase intention when controlling for product usage experience. Two separate multiple regression analyses were run to test the hypothesis. The first regression included COO, variety of product usage experience and their interaction term as predictors of purchase intention. Results (Table 8) showed that the main effect of COO was statistically significant ( $\beta = .732$ ,  $t=4.998$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The

positive sign of the beta coefficient further indicated that COO was positively related to product purchase intention. The second regression included COO, frequency of product usage experience and their interaction term as predictors. Results (Table 9) showed a significant and positive effect of COO ( $\beta = .734$ ,  $t = 4.941$ ,  $p = .000$ ) on purchase intention. Together, the regression results supported H1-a.

H1-b predicts that product usage experience positively affects purchase intention when COO is controlled for. Regression results (Table 8 & 9) showed that the effect of product usage frequency reached significance ( $\beta = .532$ ,  $t = 2.015$ ,  $p = .045$ ), but the effect of product usage variety was only marginally significant ( $\beta = .457$ ,  $t = -1.759$ ,  $p = .080$ ). H1-b was thus partially supported.

H1-c states that effect of COO on product purchase intention is moderated by country-specific product usage experience. In other words, it is predicted that the association between COO and purchase intention depends on the variety and frequency of using products originated from the country. The hypothesis was tested by entering the interaction term of COO and variety and frequency of product usage experience in two separate regression analyses. Results, shown in Table 8 & 9, indicate that both interactions approached significance (COO X Variety of Experience:  $\beta = -.595$ ,  $t = -1.803$ ,  $p = .073$ ; COO X Frequency of Experience:  $\beta = -.631$ ,  $t = -1.896$ ,  $p = .060$ ). The negative Beta weights further supported the assumption that COO has a weaker (stronger) influence on purchase intention when the variety or frequency of product usage experience increases (decreases). H1-c was thus at least partially supported.

Table 8. Regression: General COO & Variety of Product Experience<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.717	.447		1.605	.110
COO (General)	.635	.127	.732	4.998	.000
Variety of Product Experience	.416	.236	.457	1.759	.080
COO X Product Variety	-.108	.060	-.595	-1.803	.073

a. Dependent Variable: Product Purchase Intention, R square = .271, p = .000

Table 9. Regression: General COO & Frequency of Product Experience<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.641	.453		1.413	.159
COO (General)	.637	.129	.734	4.941	.000
Frequency of Product Experience	.508	.252	.532	2.015	.045
Country X Product Frequency	-.123	.065	-.631	-1.896	.060

a. Dependent Variable: Product Purchase Intention, R square = .261, p = .000

## Hypotheses 2

H2-a states that COO associated with laptop computers would positively influence purchase intention of laptop computers made in the country. Two separate multiple regression analyses were performed to test the hypothesis. The first regression included laptop COO, variety of laptop usage experience and their interaction term as predictors of purchase intention of laptops made in the country. Results (Table 10) revealed that the main effect of

laptop COO is statistically significant ( $\beta = .613, t = 4.263, p = .000$ ). Similarly, laptop COO had a positive effect on laptop purchase intention ( $\beta = .734, t = 4.941, p = .000$ ) when frequency of laptop usage experience and its interaction with COO was included in the regression. H2-a was thus supported.

H2-b predicts that laptop computer usage experience positively affects purchase intention when laptop COO is controlled for. Regression results (Table 10 & 11) showed that the effect of both laptop usage variety ( $\beta = .460, t = 1.556, p = .122$ ) and frequency ( $\beta = .523, t = 1.693, p = .092$ ) failed to reach statistical significance. H2-b was therefore unsupported.

H2-c states that effect of laptop COO on laptop purchase intention is moderated by country-specific laptop usage experience. Results (Table 10 & 11) indicate that neither the variety ( $\beta = -.473, t = -1.377, p = .170$ ) nor the frequency ( $\beta = -.556, t = -1.521, p = .130$ ) of laptop usage experience significantly moderated the effect of laptop COO on laptop purchase intention. H2-c was not supported.

Table 10. Regression: Laptop COO & Variety of Laptop Experience<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.640	.472		1.356	.177
COO (Laptop)	.545	.128	.613	4.263	.000
Variety of Laptop Experience	.494	.318	.460	1.556	.122
COO X Laptop Variety	-.111	.080	-.473	-1.377	.170

a. Dependent Variable: Laptop Purchase Intention, R square = .205, p = .000

Table 11. Regression: Laptop COO & Frequency of Laptop Experience<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.554	.489		1.132	.259
COO (Laptop)	.573	.136	.645	4.203	.000
Frequency of Laptop Experience	.546	.322	.523	1.693	.092
COO X Laptop Frequency	-.129	.085	-.556	-1.521	.130

a. Dependent Variable: Laptop Purchase Intention, R square = .221, p = .000

### Hypotheses 3

H3-a states that CA has a negative effect on product purchase intention when controlling for product usage experience. The hypothesis was tested by two separate multiple regression analyses. The first regression included CA, variety of product usage experience and their interaction term as predictors of purchase intention. Results (Table 12) showed that the main effect of COO was statistically significant ( $\beta = -.476$ ,  $t = -6.509$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The negative sign of the beta coefficient indicates that CA is negatively related to product purchase intention. The second regression included CA, frequency of product usage experience and their interaction term as predictors. Results (Table 9) showed a significant and negative effect of CA ( $\beta = -.406$ ,  $t = -5.740$ ,  $p = .000$ ) on purchase intention. The regression results thus supported H3-a.

H3-b posits that product usage experience positively affects purchase intention when CA is controlled for. Regression results (Table 8 & 9) showed that the effect of product usage variety reached significance ( $\beta = .392$ ,  $t = 2.197$ ,  $p = .029$ ), but the effect of product usage



frequency was non-significant ( $\beta = .195$ ,  $t = .424$ ,  $p = .672$ ). H3-b was thus partially supported.

H3-c postulates that negative effect of CA on product purchase intention is moderated by country-specific product usage experience. That is, CA is more likely to exert its negative influence on purchase intention when there is a lack of product usage experience. Regression analysis (Table 12) showed a significant interaction effect of CA and frequency of product usage experience (, shown in, indicated that the interactions between CA and variety of usage experience ( $\beta = -.215$ ,  $t = -2.944$ ,  $p = .004$ ). Likewise, a significant interaction effect was found between CA and frequency of usage experience ( $\beta = -.206$ ,  $t = -2.865$ ,  $p = .005$ ). In line with the hypothesis, the negative Beta weights suggest that the negative effect of CA on purchase intention would decline as consumers gain additional product experience both in terms of variety and frequency of usage. H3-c was thus fully supported.

Table 12. Regression: CA & Variety of Product Experience<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.603	.412		8.734	.000
CA	-.495	.076	-.476	-6.509	.000
Variety of Product Usage	.356	.162	.392	2.197	.029
CA X Product Variety	-.053	.018	-.215	-2.944	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Product Purchase Intention, R square = .206,  $p = .000$

Table 13. Regression: CA & Frequency of Product Experience<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.835	.771		4.975	.000
CA	-.422	.074	-.406	-5.740	.000
Frequency of Product Usage	.186	.440	.195	.424	.672
CA X Product Frequency	-.056	.019	-.206	-2.865	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Product Purchase Intention, R square = .195, p = .000

#### Hypotheses 4

H4-a states that, the CA associated with a country would negatively affect purchase intention of laptop computers made in that country, after controlling for the variety and frequency of actual laptop computer usage experience. The hypothesis was supported by two separate multiple regression analyses (Table 14 & 15). CA was found to have a significant negative impact on purchase intention regardless of the variety ( $\beta = -.325$ ,  $t = -2.109$ ,  $p = .036$ ) or frequency ( $\beta = -.350$ ,  $t = -2.290$ ,  $p = .023$ ) of laptop usage experience. H4-a was thus supported.

H4-b predicts that laptop computer usage experience positively affects purchase intention when laptop CA is controlled for. Regression results showed that the effect of both laptop usage variety ( $\beta = .460$ ,  $t = 1.556$ ,  $p = .122$ ) and frequency ( $\beta = .523$ ,  $t = 1.693$ ,  $p = .092$ ) failed to reach statistical significance. Therefore, H4-b was not supported.

H4-c states that negative effect of CA on laptop purchase intention is moderated by country-specific laptop usage experience. Results (Table 10 & 11) indicate that neither the variety ( $\beta = .250$ ,  $t = .689$ ,  $p = .492$ ) nor the frequency ( $\beta = .201$ ,  $t = .566$ ,  $p = .572$ ) of laptop

usage experience significantly moderated the effect of laptop CA on laptop purchase intention.

H4-c was not supported.

Table 14. Regression: CA & Variety of Laptop Experience<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.175	.691		4.598	.000
CA	-.329	.156	-.325	-2.109	.036
Variety of Laptop Usage	.268	.389	.250	.689	.492
CA X Laptop Variety	-.040	.112	-.135	-.361	.719

a. Dependent Variable: Laptop Purchase Intention, R square = .163, p = .000

Table 15. Regression: CA & Frequency of Laptop Experience<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.361	.689		4.878	.000
CA	-.354	.155	-.350	-2.290	.023
Frequency of Laptop Usage	.210	.371	.201	.566	.572
CA X Laptop Frequency	-.018	.105	-.064	-.173	.863

a. Dependent Variable: Laptop Purchase Intention, R square = .168, p = .000

## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

The main purpose of the study presented in this thesis was to investigate the effects of COO and CA on purchase intention while taking into account the important role of product usage experience. The study tested a series of hypotheses pertaining to the main and interaction effects of the independent variables. In line with previous studies, it was hypothesized that COO and CA would exert their influence on purchase intention of products and laptop computers manufactured in selected countries. It was further hypothesized that the effects of COO and CA would be moderated by the variety and frequency of product and laptop computer usage experience. The reasoning behind the interaction effects hypotheses, as stated earlier, is that COO and CA are indirect product experiences and product usage is a direct product experience. Since both indirect and direct experiences may become available to consumers in a product purchase situation, the extent to which they work in concert with or in opposition to each other would determine the final outcome of product judgments. Specifically, the interaction effects hypotheses predict that the influence of indirect COO and CA experiences on purchase intention would decline as consumers acquire more direct product usage experience. Table 16 presents a summary of hypotheses testing results.

Table 16. Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results

H1-a	Main effect of COO controlling for product usage experience	Supported
H1-b	Main effect of product usage experience controlling for COO	Partially supported
H1-c	Interaction effect of COO and product usage experience	Partially supported
H2-a	Main effect of COO controlling for laptop usage experience	Supported
H2-b	Main effect of laptop usage experience controlling for COO	Not supported
H2-c	Interaction effect of COO and <b>laptop</b> usage experience	Not supported
H3-a	Main effect of CA controlling for product usage experience	Supported
H3-b	Main effect of product usage experience controlling for CA	Partially supported
H3-c	Interaction effect of CA and product usage experience	Supported
H4-a	Main effect of CA controlling for laptop usage experience	Supported
H4-b	Main effect of laptop usage experience controlling for CA	Not Supported
H4-c	Interaction effect of CA and <b>laptop</b> usage experience	Not Supported

As expected, the main effects hypotheses pertaining to COO and CA received strong support in the present study. Participants expressed stronger purchase intention of products and laptop computers from countries associated with positive COOs; they also expressed lower purchase intention of products and laptop computers from countries associated with high CAs. Although closely related ( $r = -.236, p = .002$ ), COO and CA were conceptualized as two distinct variables with distinguishable effects on purchase intention. Table 17 summarizes results from a regression analysis using COO and CA as the independent variables and purchase intention as the dependent variable. Both COO and CA attained

significance and, in line with our conceptualization, exhibited positive and negative effects on purchase intention.

Table 17. Regression: COO & CA<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.772	.341		8.119	.000
COO	.377	.056	.435	6.716	.000
CA	-.315	.067	-.303	-4.688	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Laptop Purchase Intention, R square = .343, p = .000

The effects of COO and CA on purchase intention, however, were found to be moderated by product usage experience in general, but not by specific experience of using laptop computers made in a particular country. The inconsistent findings may be partially explained by the lack of foreign laptop computer usage experience, in terms of variety (mean = 1.34) and frequency (mean = 1.42) measured on 5-point scales, among the Chinese college students who participated in the study. The participants' lack of foreign laptop usage experience might be compounded by the knowledge that many foreign laptop computer brands are either assembled or use primarily parts manufactured in China (see e.g., Barboza, 2006). To some, nearly all computers are essentially "made in" China, including such popular American brands as Apple, Dell and HP. The absence of moderating effects might thus be attributed to participants' lack of experience of using genuinely foreign-made laptop computers.

In contrast, the participants' greater experience of using foreign products in general (mean variety = 1.82, mean frequency = 1.77) did exhibit significant moderating effects of COO and CA. As hypothesized, the effects of COO and CA decreased as the participants gained more experience of using a larger variety of foreign products at a higher frequency. More specifically, greater experience of using products made in Germany and Japan reduced the positive effects of the countries' more favorable COOs on purchase intention. Greater experience of using products made in India and the Philippines also lessened the effects of the less favorable COOs associated with the countries. Similarly, greater experience in using products made in Japan and India significantly diminished the negative effects of strong CAs participants held toward these countries. Greater experience of using products made in Germany and the Philippines also lowered the relatively mild CAs toward these countries. Together, these findings lend support to the reasoning that COO, CA and general product usage experience constitute related but distinct sources of information that jointly determined the purchase intention of foreign products.

As stated earlier, globalization of the world economy has made products from foreign countries readily available in China, which provided Chinese consumers an unprecedented opportunity to use the foreign products and compare them side-by-side with domestic products. And across a number of different product categories, Chinese consumers are able to discern the extent to which their actual product usage experience is congruent with certain pre-existing and perhaps long-held COO and CA perceptions. COO and CA may thus be

reinforced when their congruency with actual product usage experience is high. They might be moderated or modified when their congruency with actual product usage experience is low.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The theoretical implications of the present study are plenty. As pointed out earlier, much research on COO effects has focused on consumer reactions to products made in foreign countries (e.g., due to COO, German cars are better than American cars) without considering the possible moderating effect of actual product usage experience (e.g., consumers might prefer American to German cars after trial ). Likewise, previous research on CA effects also overlooked the importance of product usage experience in product judgments. As such, the animosity toward Japan so strongly held by many Chinese consumers would suggest that, contrary to fact, there is little chance for Japanese products to succeed in China.

The present study illustrates the importance of treating COO, CA and product usage experience as distinct theoretical concepts as well as the need to examine them together in empirical research. Indeed, a common thread in the results was that COO and CA did not exert their influence on purchase intentions in isolation from actual product usage experience. Conversely, research in international marketing that either treats COO and CA as irrelevant to product judgments, or contrives them as merely biases or stereotypes which hinder optimal decision making, should begin to take COO and CA effects more seriously as meaningful and perhaps indispensable theoretical constructs. Substantiated by empirical evidence, the present study argues that research on COO and CA effects should, at the minimum, distinguish situations in which COO, CA and product usage experience work in concert with or in



opposition to each other. Furthermore, most of the previous COO and CA studies were done within western countries; the present study calls for greater research attention on countries like China that are gaining weight in an increasingly globalized economy where the survival and success depends on performance in not only domestic but also foreign markets.

### **Practical Implications**

The practical implications of the present study are straightforward. First and foremost, international marketers must make every effort to ensure the consistency between the COO and CA of the product or brand at the perceptual level and their actual performance at the more direct and concrete usage level. Instead of relying so much on favorable COOs (e.g., Made-in America, Japan or Germany), for example, marketers should be sensitive to the fact that favorable COOs, when detected as being inconsistent with actual usage experience, may be dismissed by consumers as empty promises or sheer arrogance which, in the worst case scenario, may cause long-term and irrevocable damage to the perception of the brand, the company or even the country. On the other hand, marketers of products and brands traditionally associated with unfavorable COO or CA perceptions should not take the negative perceptions as insurmountable barriers to market entry or eventual success. Rather, COO and CA should be viewed as variables that are always subject to change as a result of the quality and performance of the products at the actual usage level. The increasing economic globalization therefore poses a challenge and opportunity to international marketers. The losers in the global competition will most likely be those who stick to the past

and are thus unable to match changing consumer expectations. The winners are those who can actually deliver what they promise, regardless of all the perceived odds against them. Extending the same line of reasoning, another important practical implication is that the effects of COO and CA may be stronger on products whose purchase are determined by intuition or impulse (e.g., toothpastes or chewing gums), but weaker on decisions that involve deliberate planning, information seeking and comparisons (e.g., cars and major appliances).

### **Limitations**

The manipulations imposed by experimental research necessary to isolate certain causal factors are often achieved at the expense of external validity and generalizability of results. In this section, specific limitations of the present study and their possible significance are presented.

First, the conditions for exposure to the advertising stimuli were atypical in several respects: (1) ad exposure was forced and took place in a confined laboratory setting; (2) ad exposure was highly compressed and limited, each ad was shown only once with no repetition; (3) ads were presented on paper with no surrounding editorial content. These factors might give rise to a processing mode that is different from what would be expected in real-life situations.

Second, only one product category (laptop computers) and one fictional brand (Alpha) was tested in the study. Also, the time delay between ad exposure and brand judgments was in minutes, rather than days or weeks. Further, the dependent measures consisted of purchase intentions, not brand evaluations or brand choice. These factors make it

difficult to generalize the results to evaluative judgment of products in other product categories.

Finally, since the experiment was done with Chinese college students, the results should be generalized only to participants similar to the group of students participating in the study. Future research should strive to overcome these limitations by, for instance, testing the hypotheses across countries among consumers with different COO, CA perceptions and varying levels of product usage experiences. Alternative quantitative and qualitative research methods should also be employed to achieve greater validity and depth.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

“There are many truths of which the full meaning cannot be realized until personal experience has brought it home.” -- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, 1869

While growing up in China, the author was often bewildered by the fact that, on the one hand, many Chinese consumers seem to hold a positive view toward products made in industrialized countries like Germany, and a negative view toward products originated from developing countries like the Philippines, despite their relatively limited experience of using foreign products. On the other hand, the rapidly growing Chinese economy and steadily increasing buying power of Chinese consumers have made many foreign products readily available and generally affordable. Would Chinese consumers' purchase decisions be based on some pre-existing country-related product perceptions? Or would they factor in their actual experience of using the foreign products perhaps, in some cases, for the first time? Are the foreign products and brands really as good or bad as they are perceived to be? And what would happen if the answer is either yes or no?

Attempts to address these issues culminated in the empirical study presented in this thesis. A thorough review of the marketing literature provided the author the needed impetus and theoretical basis for considering COO and CA perceptions and product usage experience together. To a certain degree, the review also pointed to a major deficiency of much existing COO- and CA-related research which continues to argue for the unconditional influence of COO or CA on product judgments.

The present study presents some initial evidence against the unconditional influence of COO and CA and draws attention to the importance of product usage experience. More specifically, it confirms the well-established role of COO and CA perceptions; it also upholds the moderating function of the experience of using foreign products. In other words, the present study affirms that COO, CA and product usage experience should be treated as separate and related sources of product information which may jointly influence product judgments in a purchasing context. Acknowledging the moderating role of product usage experience is important for both theoretical and pragmatic reasons. In a globalized world, marketers are strongly cautioned against notion that “our products are associated with a positive COO, therefore their success is guaranteed around the world,” or “our brands are destined to fail because they are facing an insuppressibly negative CA.” Greater emphasis should be given to experiential learning when a consumer cognitively, affectively and behaviorally experience products in the context of product purchase and consumption. A more effective and long-term success formula is to deliver product quality and performance and make sure there is a good match between what’s perceived and what’s actually experienced.

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## **Appendix**

### **Experimental Booklet**

(English Version)

#### **INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

Please read this consent form carefully.

We are asking you to take part in a research study that is called: Effects of Country of Origin, Country Animosity and Foreign Product Usage Experience on Product Judgments: A Study of Chinese Consumers. The person who is in charge of this research study is Cong Sui. This person is called the Principal Investigator.

Thank you for taking time to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary, and there is no penalty for refusal to participate. You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study.

Your participation will assist the researcher in completing a consumer behavior research project. You may terminate your participation at any time if you feel uncomfortable about the study. At the very beginning you will be distributed a booklet for the research. And then you will be asked to read the first page, when you finish reading the advertisement at the first page. you may be required to finish the following questions. In order to collect data conveniently, please mark your answer by using “√” below each question number. You may also refuse to answer any question(s) if you so choose.

There would not be any threat about your grade credits if you do not choose to participate or answer any questions. However, if you are willing to participate the research experiment, you will get a small gift for the compensation.

Furthermore, the information you contribute is private and confidential. Authorized research personnel, employees of the Department of Health and Human Services, the USF Institutional Review Board and its staff, and any other individuals acting on behalf of USF, may inspect the records from this research project. There are no known risks associated with this study, and there are no direct benefits to you for your participation. Please feel free to contact the researcher, Cong Sui, at (Gracesui1988@gmail.com & phone # (813) 419-9754) or the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638, if you have any questions or concerns.

If you agree to participant in the study please proceed with the questionnaire.

ALPHA LAPTOP MADE IN GERMANY

# ALPHA Compac NC 600

RANK:

6

67 POINTS



## SPECIFICATION:

1. 3rd Generation Intel® Core and i5 Processor
2. Windows Home Premium
3. 6GB Memory
4. 750GB Hard Drive
5. SD Card Reader





ALPHA LAPTOP MADE IN JAPAN

# ALPHA Compac NC 600

RANK:

6

67 POINTS



## SPECIFICATION:

1. 3rd Generation Intel® Core and i5 Processor
2. Windows Home Premium
3. 6GB Memory
4. 750GB Hard Drive
5. SD Card Reader



ALPHA LAPTOP MADE IN INDIA

# ALPHA Compac NC 600

RANK:

6

67 POINTS



## SPECIFICATION:

1. 3rd Generation Intel® Core and i5 Processor
2. Windows Home Premium
3. 6GB Memory
4. 750GB Hard Drive
5. SD Card Reader



**ALPHA LAPTOP MADE IN THE PHILIPPINES**



**ALPHA Compac NC 600**

**RANK:**  
**6**

**67 POINTS**

**SPECIFICATION:**

1. 3rd Generation Intel® Core and i5 Processor
2. Windows Home Premium
3. 6GB Memory
4. 750GB Hard Drive
5. SD Card Reader

intel Wi Fi CERTIFIED

The advertisement features a laptop with a screen displaying a 'MADE IN PHILIPPINES' tag. The background is a blue-tinted image of a laptop keyboard and a globe. Logos for Intel, Wi-Fi Certified, and Windows are visible at the bottom.

### **I. (Manipulation Check: COO)**

Please answer the following questions about products made in (Germany, Japan, Indian or the Philippines).

1. How would you rate (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) products in general?

1. Very Bad 2. Bad 3. Average 4. Good 5. Very Good

2. How would you rate (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) brands of laptop computers?

1. Very Bad 2. Bad 3. Average 4. Good 5. Very Good

### **II. (Manipulation Check: CA)**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

3. (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines) is a reliable partner to China.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

4. (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines) is taking advantage of China,

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

5. (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines) treats China unfairly.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

### **III. Product Usage Experience (Variety)**

Now we'd like to ask you a few questions about your product usage experience.

6. How many kinds of (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) products have you used?

1. None 2. A Few 3. Some 4. A Lot 5. Many

7. How many brands of (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) laptop computers have you used?

1. None 2. A Few 3. Some 4. A Lot 5. Many

#### **IV: (Product Usage Experience: Frequency)**

8. How often do you use (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) products?

1. Never 2. Rarely 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Always

9. How often do you use (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) brands of laptop computers?

1. Never 2. Rarely 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Always

#### **V. (Purchase Intention/Willingness to Buy)**

Please answer the following questions about your product purchase intentions.

10. I would feel uncomfortable if I bought a (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) product.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

11. Whenever possible, I avoid buying (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) products.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

12. Whenever available, I would prefer to buy products made in (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines).

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

13. I do not like the idea of owning (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) products.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

14. If two products were equal in quality, but one was from (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines) and one was from China, I would pay more for the product from (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines).

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

15. I would feel uncomfortable if I bought a (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) brand of laptop computer.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

16. Whenever possible, I avoid buying a (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) brand of laptop computer.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

17. Whenever available, I would prefer to buy laptop computers made in (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines).

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

18. I do not like the idea of owning (German, Japanese, Indian or Philippine) laptop computers.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

19. If two laptop computers were equal in quality, but one was from (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines) and one was from China, I would pay more for the product from (Germany, Japan, India or the Philippines).

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

## **VI. (Demographics)**

Finally, a few questions about yourself.

20. What is your age : \_\_\_\_\_

21. What is your gender: 1. Female 2. Male

22. What is your education level:

1. Some high school or less
2. High school diploma
3. Some college
4. Associate's degree
5. Bachelor's degree
6. Some graduate school

7. Master's degree or equivalent
8. Doctorate, law or medical degree or equivalent

**Thank you very much for your participation. Please return the booklet to the researcher.**

## 附录

### 实验手册

(Chinese version)

### 参与研究同意书

请仔细阅读以下内容

感谢您抽出时间参与此次关于原产地国家，民族仇视情绪以及外国产品使用经验对中国消费者购买意向影响的实验。本次调查员是隋聪。

关于本次实验，您的参与将完全自发自愿。如果中途有任何问题，您可以随时退出本次实验。另外您也将有权拒绝参加本次实验。

此次实验是一项关于消费者消费行为的研究，如果在实验中，您有任何不适及问题，可以随时退出本次实验。在实验的刚开始，您将会受到一本小册子，请您首先阅读小册子里的第一页，然后请您根据第一页的要求回答接下来的问题。为了方便收集您的答案，在回答问题期间，请您使用“√”标在每道题号的下面。如果您选择退出，您将不被允许继续回答题目。

本次实验对于您的学分积点没有任何影响。但是如果您选择参加本次实验，您将获得由调查员隋聪为您准备的精美小礼品一份。

另外，对于您本次实验的所有回答题目，我们将保证完全保密。只有研究人员一人收集您的数据。本次实验数据由参与调查相关工作人员，美国南佛罗里达大学人类健康服务部门的工作人员以及 IRB 成员同时审查并监管。本次实验不会对您造成任何利益风险。如果有问题及疑虑，请随时联系研究人员隋聪（[Gracesui1988@gmail.com](mailto:Gracesui1988@gmail.com) 或者 +1 813-419-9754）或美国南佛罗里达大学 IRB 机构（+1 (813) 974-5638）。



ALPHA 笔记本德国生产

**ALPHA 笔记本电脑 Compac NC 600**

排名：  
**6**

**67** 得分

电脑性能说明：

1. 第三代英特尔核心i5处理器
2. Windows系统家庭高级版
3. 内存6GB
4. 硬盘容量750GB
5. SD读卡器

德国制造

intel

Wi Fi  
CERTIFIED

The advertisement features a central image of a silver ALPHA laptop. The laptop screen displays a graphic with a German flag and the text 'MADE IN GERMANY' and '德国制造'. The laptop has the ALPHA logo on the bezel. The background is a blue-tinted image of a globe and a keyboard. At the bottom, there are logos for Intel, Wi-Fi Certified, and Windows. The top right corner shows a ranking of 6 and a score of 67.

ALPHA 笔记本日本生产

**ALPHA 笔记本电脑 Compac NC 600**

排名：  
**6**

67 得分

电脑性能说明：

1. 第三代英特尔核心i5处理器
2. Windows系统家庭高级版
3. 内存6GB
4. 硬盘容量750GB
5. SD读卡器



ALPHA 笔记本印度生产

**ALPHA 笔记本电脑 Compac NC 600**

排名：  
**6**

67 得分

电脑性能说明：

1. 第三代英特尔核心i5处理器
2. Windows系统家庭高级版
3. 内存6GB
4. 硬盘容量750GB
5. SD读卡器



ALPHA 笔记本菲律宾生产

**ALPHA 笔记本电脑 Compac NC 600**

排名：  
**6**

67 得分

菲律宾制造

电脑性能说明：

1. 第三代英特尔核心i5处理器
2. Windows系统家庭高级版
3. 内存6GB
4. 硬盘容量750GB
5. SD读卡器



## I.

请回答关于原产国信息的下列问题（德国生产，日本生产，印度生产，菲律宾生产）：

3. 总体上讲，你怎么评价日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）产品？

1. 非常差劲 2. 差 3. 一般 4. 好 5. 非常好

4. 你怎样评价日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）产的笔记本电脑？

1. 非常差劲 2. 差 3. 一般 4. 好 5. 非常好

## II.

请在以下问题中标注您的答案：

3. 日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）是中国值得信赖的合作伙伴。

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

6. 日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）再利用中国的优势。

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

7. 日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）对待中国不公平。

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

## III.

现在请您回答关于您对产品的使用经验的相关问题：

9. 你用过多少日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）产的产品？

1. 从来没用过 2. 很少 3. 一些 4. 很多 5. 非常多

10. 你用过多少日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）产的笔记本电脑品牌？

1. 从来没用过 2. 很少 3. 一些 4. 很多 5. 非常多

#### IV:

11. 你有多经常使用日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）产的产品？

1. 从来没有 2. 很少 3. 有时 4. 经常 5. 总是

9. 你有多经常使用日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）品牌的笔记本电脑？

1. 从来没有 2. 很少 3. 有时 4. 经常 5. 总是

#### V.

请针对您的购买意愿回答以下问题：

23. 如果我用了日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）产品，我会感到心理上不舒服。 .

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

24. 我尽量在避免购买日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）产品。 .

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

25. 我更喜欢买日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）生产的产品。 .

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

26. 我不喜欢拥有日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）生产的产品.

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

27. 如果两个产品在质量上都一样，但是一个产自日本（德国，印度及菲律宾），一个产自中国，我宁愿花多点钱买产自日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）的产品。

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

28. 如果我买了产自日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）的笔记本电脑我会很不舒服。

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

29. 我在尽量避免购买日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）品牌的笔记本电脑。

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

30. 如果有可能的话，我更喜欢购买日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）生产的笔记本电脑。

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

31. 我不喜欢一定要拥有产自日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）的笔记本电脑这种想法。

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

32. 如果两个笔记本电脑质量都一样，但是一个是日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）生产一个是中国生产，我宁愿花多点钱买产自日本（德国，印度及菲律宾）的笔记本电脑。

1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 中立 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

## VI.

最后，请回答关于您自己的以下几个问题：

33. 您的年龄：\_\_\_\_\_

34. 您的性别: 1. 女 2. 男

35. 您的教育水平是:

9. 高中及以下

10. 大专

11. 本科

12. 硕士

13. 博士或博士后

最后，再次感谢您的配合与参与，如果您作答完毕，请您将本次实验书交还给研究人员。