

Global Brand Purchase Likelihood: A Critical Synthesis and an Integrated Conceptual Framework

The authors build a model of global brand attitude and purchase likelihood with a nomological net comprised of constructs derived from three theoretical streams in consumer behavior: consumer culture theory, signaling theory, and the associative network memory model. By integrating these diverse theories, the authors provide a conceptual framework, explaining the processes leading to consumers' attitudes toward and likelihood of purchasing global brands. Global brand authenticity, cultural capital, and perceived brand globalness are constructs based mainly on consumer culture theory, and global brand credibility is borrowed from signaling theory. Global brand quality, social responsibility, prestige, and relative price are included as brand associations, deriving mainly from the associative network memory model. These constructs have direct and indirect effects on global brand attitude and global brand purchase likelihood, reflecting the three-dimensional belief–attitude–behavior model in consumer behavior. The authors also introduce self-construal and cosmopolitanism as two pertinent moderators of some of the model paths.

The globalization of markets has put global brands on the center stage. The evidence is everywhere: on the streets, in stores, in the media. Global brands are exerting their power and influence within various domains. In economic terms, consumers meet the high price premiums such brands command with negligible resistance. In the psychological domain, global brands are perceived as creating an identity, a sense of achievement and identification for consumers, symbolizing the aspired values of global consumer culture. Through the process of meaning transfer, consumers transfer these values and ideals to their self-concept (McCracken 1986). Thus, the cultural influence of global brands has never been more important. On the one hand, global brands carry the espoused values of the global culture; on the other hand, consumers actively create and add new meanings to global brands through a process of meaning re-creation.

We define global brands as those that have widespread regional/global awareness, availability, acceptance, and demand and are often found under the same name with consistent positioning, personality, look, and feel in major markets enabled by centrally coordinated marketing strategies and programs. Beginning with Levitt's (1983) seminal article on the globalization of markets, the literature identifies several advantages associated with moving toward global brands. From a supply side perspective, global brands can create economies of scale and scope in research and development, manufacturing, sourcing, and marketing. Furthermore, global brands can be launched faster in foreign markets because few time-consuming

ABSTRACT

Keywords: consumer culture theory, signaling theory, associative network memory model, global brand purchase likelihood, perceived brand globalness

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local modifications must be made (Neff 1999). From the demand side, global brands, with their consistent positioning, may benefit from a unique perceived image worldwide. Such a global positioning increases in its strategic appeal as consumers around the world develop similar needs and tastes (Hassan and Katsanis 1994; Özsomer and Simonin 2004).

Multinational corporations are not indifferent to the importance of global brands. Indeed, many of their strategic actions are fueling the growth of global brands. In the past decade, many multinational corporations have pruned their brand portfolios in favor of global brands (Schuiling and Kapferer 2004). For example, since its Path to Growth strategy was launched in 2000, Unilever (2006) has reduced the number of brands in its portfolio from 1600 to 400 leading brands and fewer than 250 tail brands. This enables Unilever to concentrate resources on a portfolio of leading global brands with strong growth potential that best meet the needs and aspirations of people around the world. Around the same time, Procter & Gamble also pruned its brand portfolio in favor of global brands (Pitcher 1999). Similarly, Colgate-Palmolive has invested heavily in making Colgate Total a global brand name, just as Frito-Lay has done with its Lay's brand. These and many other companies are betting their futures on global brands.

All these changes make global brands more important now than in the past. The influence of global brands is difficult to explain with conventional notions of brand image and brand equity, requiring a change in the mind-set of both academicians and practitioners. Indeed, Kapferer (2005) argues that the global brand of the past, which was ideally standardized in most respects of its marketing, has been replaced by the post-global brand—the brand that approaches standardization at the regional rather than global level. Unfortunately, the current literature offers only limited insights into what a global brand means, how the globalness of the brand can be measured, what drives attitudes toward global brands, and why and when consumers are more likely to purchase global brands. Ambiguous and confusing definitions of global brands abound, which discourage robust measurement models from developing. Furthermore, although the topic is of interest to diverse research streams ranging from global consumer culture to signaling theory in information economics, each research stream approaches global brands in isolation and from a different perspective.

The purpose of this article is to review and integrate relevant perspectives and theoretical bases and to present an integrated conceptual framework of global branding that provides a more complete explanation of the processes leading to consumers' attitudes toward and likelihood of purchasing global brands. To this end, the article contributes to marketing theory by proposing a comprehensive nomological framework that describes antecedents to global brand attitude and preference derived from three theoretical streams in consumer behavior. Furthermore, we introduce self-construal (Markus and Kitayama 1991) and consumer cosmopolitanism (Hannerz 1990; Holt 1998; Thompson and Tambyah 1999) as moderators of model pathways that previously have not been incorporated explicitly into the global branding literature.

In the next section, we identify two major weaknesses in the literature: definitional inconsistencies and resultant measurement inconsistencies. Then, we provide a summary of the scant empirical findings. We follow this summary with a discussion of the three major theoretical approaches that build the foundation of our integrative framework: consumer culture theory, signaling theory, and the associative network memory model (ANMM). We present research propositions that integrate both theoretical and empirical contributions. Finally, we conclude with implications of the study for further research on global branding.

The term “global brand” has been defined in a variety of ways in the literature. There are two distinct schools of thought in defining the construct. The definitions related to the first school are based on the marketing standardization literature. According to this school, companies’ primary motivation for building global brands is to benefit from strong economies of scale and scope. In this sense, a standardized brand can create significant cost savings in marketing, research and development, sourcing, and manufacturing (Buzzell 1968; Craig and Douglas 2000; Levitt 1983; Porter 1986; Yip 1995). By catering to etic appeals that transcend cultural, structural, and regional differences, the global brand will benefit from a unique perceived image in all its markets, especially when targeting global consumer segments, such as the affluent and teenagers (Hassan, Craft, and Kortam 2003; Hassan and Katsanis 1991). Studies on standardization have defined global brands as those that use similar brand names, positioning strategies, and marketing mixes in most of their target markets. However, even within this stream, there is no agreement as to how standardized global brands are. Whereas some studies (e.g., Levitt 1983) focus on the complete standardization of the brand’s strategy and marketing-mix elements when defining a global brand, the majority of the studies contend that complete standardization is unthinkable and that brands differ in their degree of globalization. Some brands are more global than others with respect to differing levels of achieved standardization (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 1999; Hsieh 2002; Johansson and Ronkainen 2005; Kapferer 2005; Schuiling and Kapferer 2004; Schuiling and Lambin 2003). Thus, in this research stream, the definition of a global brand is based on the extent to which brands employ standardized marketing strategies and programs across markets.

Recently, a second stream of research has emerged, in which the construct is defined from the consumer perceptions perspective (Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra 2006; Batra et al. 2000; Hsieh 2002; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003). In these studies, a global brand is defined as the extent to which the brand is perceived as global and marketed not only locally but also in some foreign markets. This definition implies that as the perceived multimarket reach of a brand increases, the perceived brand globalness increases as well (Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003).

As the economic clout of global brands has increased, research firms also have tackled definition and identification issues. Practitioner-oriented studies such as those by ACNielsen and *BusinessWeek*/Interbrand use objective measures that include the actual multi-

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Definitional Inconsistency

market reach of the brand, percentage of sales coming from outside the domestic market, and minimum revenue generated globally to qualify for being a global brand. According to ACNielsen (2001, p. 21), “Global brands are those which are present in the four major regions of the world—North America; Latin America; Asia Pacific; and Europe, Middle East, and Africa—with at least 5% of sales coming from outside the home region, and total revenues of at least \$1 [billion].” From these criteria, 43 brands were qualified as global in 2001. Note that the top three brands in this list commanded a sales value of greater than \$100 billion in 2001, thus demonstrating the economic clout of global brands.

Similarly, each year *BusinessWeek*, together with Interbrand, develops a list of the world’s most valuable brands (i.e., The Top 100 Brands). The criteria used in identifying the brands are the following: About one-third of sales of each brand must be generated outside its home country, the brand must have awareness outside its base of customers, and the brand must have publicly available marketing and financial data (*BusinessWeek* 2007). Furthermore, *BusinessWeek*/Interbrand rankings consider market leadership, stability, and global reach (i.e., the ability to cross both geographical and cultural borders) in calculating brand strength.

Measurement Inconsistency

The definitional inconsistencies and discrepancies also are reflected in measurement inconsistencies and a lack of robust measurement models. For example, Hsieh (2002) introduces the measure “brand image cohesiveness,” which measures the extent to which a brand is perceived similarly across countries, as a pertinent indicator of the degree of brand globalization. A similar study (Schuiling and Lambin 2003) explores the extent to which global brands were perceived similarly in their home countries and in other markets and concludes that even the most global brands are perceived differently in different markets. Another study focuses on the actual multimarket reach of the brand to measure the degree of brand globalness (Johansson and Ronkainen 2005); yet others (e.g., Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra 2006; Batra et al. 2000; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003) focus on the perceived multimarket reach of the brand to measure the construct. In addition to these academic studies, practitioner-oriented studies focus mainly on ACNielsen’s (2001) definition of global brands.

Although many diverse issues have been investigated with respect to global branding, an integrative framework may now be beneficial to moving the area forward. The published research can be summarized as the influence of brand globalness on brand attitudes and preference (Batra et al. 2000; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003), differences between the global and local brands with respect to image dimensions (Schuiling and Kapferer 2004), the antecedents of global brand esteem (Johansson and Ronkainen 2005), measurement of brand globalization (Hsieh 2002), standardization and adaptation of global brands (Alashban et al. 2002; Özsomer and Prussia 2000; Özsomer and Simonin 2004; Rosen, Boddewyn, and Louis 1989), global brand associations (Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004), assessing the influence of country of origin on global brand judgments (Samiee, Shimp, and Sharma 2005; Tse and Gorn 1993), global brand positioning strategies (Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra

1999), and, at a more general level, global brand strategy and management issues (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 1999; Basu 2006; Farquhar 2005; Quelch and Hoff 1986). This fragmentation of the research stream is an important weakness because it leads to the definitional inconsistencies and the resultant measurement inconsistencies identified previously. Given this deficiency in the global branding literature, there is a need to approach the issue from a solid integrative theoretical perspective. Thus, our objective herein is to integrate streams of research that are particularly relevant to building a global brand attitude and purchase likelihood model.

Therefore, we integrate three different streams of research: consumer culture theory (Arnould and Thompson 2005), signaling theory from information economics (Erdem and Swait 1998, 2004; Tirole 1990), and ANMM deriving from cognitive psychology (Anderson 1983; Keller 1993, 2003). Given that our model theorizes the drivers of consumer attitudes and purchase likelihood of global brands, we define global brands as brands consumers perceive as having widespread regional/global availability, awareness, acceptance and desirability, and an abstract sense of product consistency or sameness across markets.¹

With the previously discussed theories in mind, researchers have tried to answer the following question: Why do customers prefer global brands? Some studies have examined the impact of perceived brand globalness on attitude and purchase likelihood (Batra et al. 2000; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003; Taşoluk 2006). The main logic is that perceived brand globalness creates consumer perceptions of brand superiority and, thus, preference for global brands even when quality and value are not objectively superior (e.g., Kapferer 1997; Keller 1998; Shocker, Srivastava, and Ruekert 1994). Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden's (2003) study including consumers from the United States and South Korea finds that perceived brand globalness is positively related to both perceived brand quality and prestige and through them to purchase likelihood. In a developing country setting, Batra and colleagues (2000) find a direct relationship between the perceived nonlocalness of the brand and attitude toward the brand, where nonlocalness was measured by perceptions of multimarket reach. However, in a recent study, Taşoluk (2006) did not find a significant relationship between perceived brand globalness and brand purchase likelihood.

In the same line of reasoning, in a large-scale study covering 1800 respondents in 12 countries, Holt, Quelch, and Taylor (2004) find that the global myth elicited from global brands explains on average 12% of the variation in brand preferences worldwide. Drawing on consumer culture theory, they view (p. 71) global brands as one of the key symbols of shared conversation in which global brands help "create an imagined global identity that they share with like-minded people" and thus have a global myth dimension.

With regard to perceived quality, Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden (2003) and Holt, Quelch, and Taylor (2004) find that quality has a significant direct association with global brand preference. In Holt, Quelch, and Taylor's study, quality signal explained on average 44% of brand preferences.

CURRENT EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON GLOBAL BRANDING

Why Do Consumers Prefer Global Brands?

Prestige is another construct identified in the literature as driving global brand preference. Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden (2003) find that brand globalness significantly increased purchase intent through perceived prestige. In another study, Batra and colleagues (2000) find that brands perceived as nonlocal were preferred attitudinally to brands perceived as local in an emerging market setting (i.e., India). Although they did not test this empirically, they attribute this positive relationship to status enhancement motivations in addition to the perception of high quality of nonlocal brands.

Social responsibility is another important association that consumers use in making choices among global brands (Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004; Taşoluk 2006). With the social responsibility association, consumers expect global brands to act in a socially responsible way when conducting their businesses. Note that perceived brand social responsibility is a criterion used only when consumers are evaluating global brands and not when evaluating local brands. Social responsibility explained on average 8% of global brand preferences. To summarize, although empirical studies on global branding are scant, this embryonic stream of research identifies perceived brand globalness (global myth), quality, prestige, and social responsibility as important associations of global brand preference.

Who Is More Likely to Prefer Global Brands?

Researchers have tackled the issue of whether a consumer prone to global brands really exists. Several consumer dispositional constructs have been proposed and tested in the literature to address this question. Among these are consumer ethnocentrism (CET; Shimp and Sharma 1987), economically developed country (EDC) admiration (Batra et al. 2000), susceptibility to normative influence (SNI; Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989), materialism (Richins and Dawsons 1992), and global consumption orientation (GCO; Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra 2006).

In assessing the influence of consumer dispositional characteristics on global brand attitude and preference, CET has received the most attention. In different studies, CET is treated as a mediator or moderator, albeit with different sets of constructs and in different country contexts (e.g., India, United States, South Korea, China). The different theories used also affected the nomological nets in which CET and global brand attitudes and preferences were tested. Whereas Batra and colleagues (2000) find that CET does not moderate the relationship between perceived brand nonlocalness and attitude in India, another study on consumers from the United States and South Korea finds that CET does moderate the relationship between perceived brand globalness and purchase likelihood (Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003). For more ethnocentric consumers, perceived brand globalness effects were weaker. In a recent study, Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra (2006) find CET to be a mediator of the path between GCO and attitudes toward global brands. Consumers with positive GCO exhibited lower levels of CET, and more ethnocentric consumers held more negative attitudes toward global brands.

Recent studies have found that both SNI and EDC moderate the relationship between perceived nonlocalness and brand attitude. The influence of brand nonlocalness on brand attitude was greater

for consumers who had a greater admiration for lifestyles in EDCs or were high on SNI (Batra et al. 2000).

In the acculturation literature, GCO measures attitudes toward consumption alternatives resulting from market globalization along a global–hybrid–local continuum. Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra (2006) find that GCO had both direct and indirect effects on global brand attitude through CET. In addition, two other consumer dispositional characteristics—materialism (Richins and Dawson 1992) and SNI (Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989)—both had significant positive effects on global brand attitude through GCO. Thus, the recently introduced and measured GCO seems to be a focal mediator through which previously identified consumer characteristics (e.g., materialism, SNI) operate to influence brand attitudes.

Product Category Foreignness. In an emerging market setting, Eckhardt (2005) finds that Indian consumers perceived a local pizza brand as foreign because the product category’s perceived foreignness overshadowed the perceptions of brand localness. Therefore, product categories perceived as foreign, such as pizza in India and coffee in China, are more likely to benefit from perceived brand globalness.

Conspicuous Consumption. Bourne (1957) argues that reference group influence on product and brand decisions is a function of two forms of “conspicuousness”: exclusivity (luxuries versus necessities) and place (public versus private). Parallel to this argument, Batra and colleagues (2000) test the effect of this construct and find that for product categories rating higher on conspicuous consumption, as consumer SNI increased, the effect of perceived nonlocalness of the brand on brand attitude became more positive. Thus, in general, product categories associated with conspicuous consumption are more likely to benefit from perceived brand globalness.

The first stream of research influencing global branding literature is consumer culture theory (Arnould and Thompson 2005). Arnould and Thompson (2005) conceptualize consumer culture theory as an interdisciplinary area of inquiry that draws from several related theoretical streams. Approached from the consumer identity perspective, consumer culture theory explicates the process by which consumers actively appropriate and recontextualize the symbolic meanings encoded in marketer-generated goods to construct individual and collective identities (Grayson and Martinec 2004; Holt 2002; Kozinets 2001; Penaloza 2000; Ritson and Elliott 1999). The premise in this theoretical perspective is that the marketplace provides consumers with a rich palette of cultural and mythic resources that consumers use to enact and personalize cultural scripts that align their identities with the structural imperatives of a consumer-driven global economy.

Global Brand Cultural Capital. Consumer culture theory suggests that one such resource consumers use to construct their identities is the cultural capital perceived in global brands. Thus, one of the core constructs borrowed from this literature and included in our framework is global brand cultural capital. Here, Bourdieu’s (1984)

Which Product Categories Are Likely to Benefit from Perceived Brand Globalness?

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO GLOBAL BRANDING

Consumer Culture Theory

theory of cultural capital and taste provides a conceptual basis for our framework. According to Bourdieu, social life can be conceived of as a status game in which people draw on economic capital (financial resources), social capital (relationships, organizational affiliations, and networks), and cultural capital (culturally valued taste and consumption practices, including art, education, skills, sensibilities, and creativity). In this context, cultural capital can be conceptualized as a set of socially rare and distinctive tastes and skills, knowledge, and practices that are possessed by people to different degrees.

Drawing from this theoretical stream, we extend the notion of cultural capital for individual people to that of brands. For example, Ger (1999) suggests that by focusing on their local cultural capital, local brands can “out-localize” the influence of global brands in both international and local markets through their deeper understanding of the local culture and the market. Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden (2003) empirically verify the role of local cultural capital by finding that the perception of a brand as an icon of the local culture has both a direct effect on its purchase likelihood and an indirect effect through perceived brand prestige. Similarly, Holt, Quelch, and Taylor (2004) argue that global brands are regarded as symbols of cultural ideals and that they compete not only in providing the highest quality but also in delivering cultural myths with global appeal. Thus, these myths associated with global brands help form their cultural capital.

Global Brand Authenticity. A second construct deriving mainly from consumer culture theory is global brand authenticity. The word “authentic” is associated with the words “genuineness,” “reality,” and “truth” (Bendix 1992, p. 104; Costa and Bamossy 1995). However, given the concept’s subjective nature, it has meant different things to people in different situations. Indeed “most scholars who study authenticity agree that authenticity is not an attribute inherent in an object and is better understood as an assessment made by a particular evaluator in a particular context” (Grayson and Martinec 2004, p. 299). Grayson and Martinec (2004) suggest that authenticity exists in two forms: (1) indexical authenticity and (2) iconic authenticity. Indexical authenticity exists when the object in question is believed to be authentic to the extent that it is believed to be the “original” or “the real thing” (Barthel 1996, p. 8; Benjamin 1969, p. 220; Cohen 1989). For example, the original version of a Picasso painting is believed to be authentic, whereas its imitations are truly inauthentic. In contrast, when the object is an accurate imitation of the original, so that it resembles the original’s form, iconic authenticity is present. Thus, an imitation of a Picasso painting may be viewed as having iconic authenticity.

Leigh, Peters, and Shelton (2006) suggest existential authenticity as another form of authenticity. Originally proposed by Wang (1999), existential authenticity coincides with postmodern consumers’ quest for pleasure and is activity driven. According to this view, some global brands help consumers express themselves and be true to themselves. Thus, consumers are not always concerned with object-driven indexical or iconic authenticity but are in

search for their authentic selves. If people cannot realize their authentic selves in everyday life, they turn to adventures that facilitate self-creation and realization by consuming activities and brands that enable them to experience existential authenticity. In the context of global brands, two types of authenticity are particularly relevant—namely, iconic authenticity and existential authenticity—and therefore are included in our framework. We include iconic authenticity to capture the global brands in reference to their local, foreign, or global culture iconicity, and we include existential authenticity to explicate the process of preference for global experiential brands.

Perceived Brand Globalness. Global brands offer consumers the opportunity to acquire and demonstrate participation in an aspired-to global consumer culture (Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra 1999; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003) and help create an imagined global identity that they share with like-minded people (Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004). Appadurai (1990) and Hannerz (1990) note that media flows, increased travel, rising incomes, and other factors are creating widely understood symbols and meanings reflected in global brands, which in turn communicate membership in the global consumer community and culture (McCracken 1986). Thus, perceived brand globalness is the third construct deriving mainly from consumer culture theory.

Signaling theory is the second stream of research that can be integrated into the framework of global brand purchase likelihood. This theory suggests that brands as credible and consistent signals of product quality can reduce perceived risk (Erdem and Swait 1998; Montgomery and Wernerfelt 1992). Brands may help consumers make inferences about tangible and intangible product attributes and a product's position in the attribute space. To signal product quality, the individual marketing-mix elements (e.g., higher prices, distribution through high-end channels) can be used by firms as signals. The brand as a signal differs from other mix elements because a brand represents a firm's past and present marketing-mix strategy, activities, and brand investments (Klein and Leffler 1981). The historical notion that credibility is based on the sum of past behaviors is referred to as "reputation" in the information economics literature (Herbig and Milewicz 1995). Thus, with asymmetric and imperfect information, brands may serve as credible market signals.

Brand credibility is defined as the extent to which the product position information contained in a brand is perceived as believable. Credibility depends on the willingness and ability of firms to deliver what they promise (Erdem and Swait 2004). Brands with greater marketing-mix consistency and greater brand investments have been proved to convey higher levels of credibility (Erdem and Swait 1998). Brand investments represent resources spent on brands to ensure that brand promises will be kept and demonstrate long-term commitment to the brand (Klein and Leffler 1981). Brand investments strengthen the credibility of a brand signal by impelling the firms to be honest in their product claims and to deliver the promised product.

Signaling Theory

By decreasing both information costs and the risk perceived by the consumer and thus increasing consumer-expected utility, a credible brand signal creates value for consumers (Erdem and Swait 1998; Erdem, Swait, and Valenzuela 2006; Hauser and Wernerfelt 1990). Thus, a brand's influence on consideration and choice occurs through credibility. In this sense, as a signal of product positioning, one of the most important characteristics of a brand is its credibility. If brands as signals begin to lose their credibility by not delivering what they promised, their brand equity will begin to erode. To avoid this, firms first should manage the credibility of the claims they make about brands.

According to signaling theory, as credibility is created, brands become more effective signals of product positions than individual marketing-mix elements. In the long run, brand equity will be enhanced by being consistent with the product claims and through positive consumer experience. Drawing from signaling theory, we expect that global brands have greater credibility because of greater brand investments and marketing-mix consistency across major markets and time. Therefore, we introduce credibility as a partial mediator and as an antecedent of attitudes toward global brands and purchase likelihood of global brands.

Signaling theory suggests that brand credibility also influences relative price perceptions (Erdem, Swait, and Valenzuela 2006). Because strong and credible brands may be perceived as charging premiums, perceived brand relative price is another important global brand association (Erdem, Swait, and Valenzuela 2006). Thus, we also introduce perceived brand relative price as a relevant brand association into our framework.

The ANMM

The third stream of research relevant for a global brand purchase likelihood model is the ANMM (Anderson 1983; Keller 1993; Srull and Wyer 1989). With this perspective, consumer memory is viewed as a set of nodes connected by relational links. (Nodes are stored information that vary in strength.) In the network model, product categories, brand names, attributes, and benefits associated with a product are represented as nodes. Each link between two nodes has a unique name that identifies the relationship between the nodes (Collins and Quillian 1972). As an example, a link between a brand and a product may reveal that the brand exists under the product category. Activation occurs when a node is stimulated from a state of rest. Activation of a single node is transferred to the neighboring nodes through the links between them. However, the further the nodes' activation reaches, the weaker the strength of the association between the nodes becomes (Collins and Loftus 1975; Raajmakers and Shiffrin 1981).

In the branding literature, brand associations have been conceptualized as informational nodes organized in a network in a manner that is consistent with associative network models of memory. In this context, this network of brand associations constitutes the brand image and represents the perceived value of the brand in the eyes of consumers. Indeed, Keller (1993) argues that measurement of brand equity involves identifying the network of strong, favorable, and unique brand associations in consumer memory.

Thus, our integrative framework covers brand associations that are particularly relevant to global brands. Some of these associations are identified in previous research, such as perceived brand globalness, brand quality, brand prestige, and brand social responsibility (e.g., Batra et al. 2000; Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003; Taşoluk 2006). We borrowed the relative price association from signaling theory (Erdem and Swait 1998, 2004; Erdem, Swait, and Valenzuela 2006).

The literature indicates that brand credibility plays a central role in brand consideration and choice in the United States (Erdem and Swait 2004) and other countries (Erdem, Swait, and Valenzuela 2006) by increasing the probability of inclusion of a brand in the consideration set as well as brand choice conditional on consideration. Higher levels of perceived quality, lower levels of perceived risk, and information costs associated with credible brands all increase consumer evaluations of brands (Erdem and Swait 1998). We expect that credibility is central for global brand evaluations and preference as well. Given prior empirical evidence and using the predictions of consumer culture theory, signaling theory, and the ANMM jointly, we include global brand quality, social responsibility, prestige, and relative price as downstream outcomes that are influenced by global brand credibility.

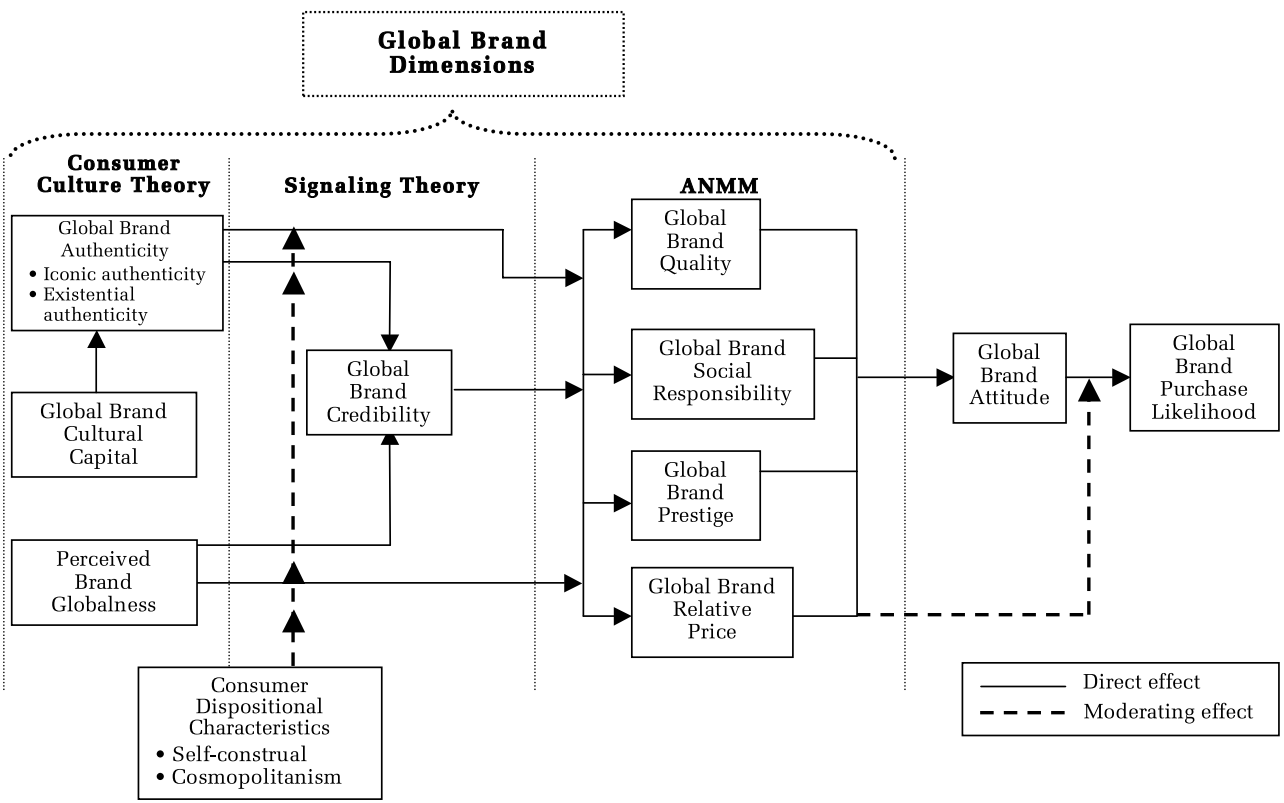
In this article, we build a model of global brand attitude and purchase likelihood with a nomological net comprised of constructs derived from three theoretical streams in consumer behavior: consumer culture theory, signaling theory, and the ANMM. The three theories are related at a macro level in several ways on a global scale. First, global brand credibility depends on firms' willingness and ability to deliver what they promise on a global scale; marketing-mix consistency and greater brand investments have been proved to convey higher levels of brand credibility. The symbolic meanings captured in global brand credibility will be actively appropriated and recontextualized by consumers in a certain process. Such a process is explicated by consumer culture theory through the constructs of brand cultural capital, global brand authenticity, and perceived brand globalness.

Second, by decreasing both information costs and the risk perceived by consumers, global brand credibility creates brand value for consumers and, thus, brand equity. The associative network memory constructs involve four kinds of brand associations from the perspective of cognition/memory in consumer behavior. Therefore, signaling theory and the ANMM are integrated by brand association and brand equity.

Third, the three-dimensional attitude model in consumer behavior helps explain the causality among ANMM, global brand attitude, and global brand purchase likelihood. The three dimensions are belief, attitude, and behavior, which can be illustrated by memory, attitude, and purchase likelihood in our framework.² The framework presented in Figure 1 also includes propositions regarding two upstream moderators (self-construal and cosmopolitanism).

Global Brand Credibility

Figure 1.
A Conceptual Model of Global
Brand Purchase Likelihood



We operationalize global brand cultural capital as the degree to which a global brand is loaded with mythic or cultural values present among members of a society. This society may be defined either in terms of its geographical boundaries (local, foreign, or global) or on the basis of interest groups, such as consumption communities, to which no geographical boundary applies. Put simply, the cultural capital of a global brand is the story behind it. However, in the context of global brands, this “story” is not dictated from the firm side but rather cocreated through ongoing interactions among the users, the media, and the transnational firm (Ger 1999).

There are many ways that a global brand can create its cultural capital. Conventional wisdom holds that advertising is the primary means through which cultural meanings are created for any brand. However, recent research reveals that ideals diffused through advertisements coexist with those diffused through consumption communities (Kozinets 2001; Muniz and O’Guinn 2001), practitioner narratives, conversational discourses among consumers (facilitated by the Web), and the information and beliefs diffused through media by stories, news reports, and expert columns (e.g., Thompson 2004).

In line with this view, Thompson (2004) introduces the construct of “marketplace mythologies” to draw attention to the process of myth making in constructing competitively advantageous brand images. Marketplace mythologies represent the process through which “cultural myths are leveraged to create distinctive marketplace mythologies that, in turn, serve diverse and often competing, ideological interests” (Thompson 2004, p. 163). Stern (1995, p. 183) states that myths “are as old as humanity, yet constantly renewed to fit contemporary life.” Belk and Tumbat (2005) maintain that Apple is a cult brand with associations with several mythic appeals, such as the creation myth (Steve Jobs founding the company), the hero myth (Steve Jobs’s rise and fall within Apple), the satanic myth (Apple’s rivalry with IBM and Microsoft), and the resurrection myth (Steve Jobs’s image as a savior).

Viewed in this light, we suggest that the process of myth making in constructing brand images is one of the major ways through which a global brand creates its cultural capital. Some global brands successfully use narratives and appeals that demonstrate an empathetic understanding of consumers’ inspirations, aspirations, and life circumstances. These myths created through narratives and appeals become successful when they can resonate in different cultures and countries, transcending cultural and national borders. Global experiential brands such as Nike, IBM, Apple, Starbucks, and McDonald’s have created such marketplace mythologies successfully (Atkin 2004; Cova and Cova 2002; Escalas and Bettman 2003; Fournier 1998). Global brands can derive their cultural capital from their marketplace mythologies, which can aid consumers around the world in constructing their identities and lifestyles.

In summary, we suggest that a global brand can build its cultural capital on a broad variety of sources, including marketplace mythologies, narratives, stories, values, and place of origin, and that these associations can be positioned on the global, foreign, or

local consumer culture (Batra et al. 2000). However, the success of global brand cultural capital in enhancing global brand purchase likelihood depends not only on the extent but also on the presence of the right type of cultural capital (i.e., local, foreign, or global). Thus, we suggest that both the extent and the type of cultural capital need to be modeled and captured in predicting global brand purchase likelihood.

We include global brand authenticity as a mediator between global brand cultural capital and brand credibility. That is, global brand cultural capital leads to authenticity perceptions, which lead to higher levels of brand credibility and higher perceptions of global brand associations. The marketplace mythologies of global brands establish their credibility in the eyes of consumers, through their perception as authentic narratives for the identity projects of consumers (Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel 2006). Indeed, Thompson (2004) argues that myths are leveraged to create distinctive marketplace mythologies, which will create authenticity perceptions. Similarly, Keller (2003) views the use of narratives and tactics catering to consumers' inspirations, aspirations, and life circumstances in brand positioning as the central pillar of market differentiation and sustainable competitive advantage. If these distinctive marketplace mythologies resonate in other cultures and countries, the cultural capital of the global brand creates authenticity perceptions. For example, we suggest that Apple's success in creating global brand authenticity lies in the type of cultural capital created in the brand. The creation, hero, and satanic myths can resonate in many cultures, religions, and countries around the world. Similarly, Nike, with its "Just Do It" global positioning, easily transcends national borders where the young in particular can build their identity projects around the marketplace mythology suggested by its slogan. Such a high level and right type of cultural capital enhances authenticity perceptions of the global brand. Furthermore, authenticity will be enhanced if the cultural capital in a brand is recognized, understood, and shared by consumers of this brand. In this process of differentiation, by tapping into their cultural capital, global brands create perceptions of uniqueness and authenticity.

P₁: Global brand cultural capital is positively associated with global brand authenticity.

Perceived Brand Globalness as a Signal of Global Brand Credibility

Under signaling theory, the content of a brand signal depends on its specific marketing-mix elements (Erdem and Swait 1998). In this sense, the brand signal credibility is the culmination of all the subsignals that make up a brand. An important dimension of brands that may enhance credibility perceptions is the degree to which it is perceived as global (as opposed to local) among consumers. Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden (2003) define perceived brand globalness as the degree to which the brand is perceived as having multimarket reach and thus is believed to be globally available, desirable, and demanded. In this sense, if a brand is viewed as globally available and, thus, there is global acceptance for the product (i.e., consumers in other markets also desire, demand, choose, and use the brand), consumers may perceive the brand as signaling more credibility than local brands. In a similar

fashion, it is generally believed that global brands enjoy stronger awareness among consumers in many markets. This type of recognition may enable the brands to establish and maintain credibility rapidly in world markets (Interbrand 2007).

Research in the information economics tradition demonstrates that brands that convey more consistency and are perceived as having greater brand investments also are perceived as more credible (Erdem and Swait 1998). Consistency refers to the extent to which the marketing-mix elements (or subcomponents of each marketing element) convey congruency among themselves, as well as to the stability of brand attributes over time. Consistency also refers to the extent to which the messages conveyed by the brand are consistent over time. In contrast, brand investments represent investments in, for example, brand logo, sponsorships, or a powerful advertising slogan. In the marketing standardization literature, the rationale for the global brand argument is that global brands benefit from consistency of both their product attributes (e.g., quality, reliability) and their communication mix (e.g., a worldwide unique image, look, feel). In this sense, the attributes of global brands should be more consistent than local brands across time and across markets. Thus, global brands achieve congruency and low variation across markets and across time. Furthermore, global brands have greater brand investments, which help them maintain their credibility in the markets. Therefore, the greater brand investments in global brands and the careful management of their marketing mixes to optimize consistency across markets and time enhance the credibility of global brands. Although this explanation of the link between perceived brand globalness and global brand credibility is secondary because it may be true only for consumers who travel across multiple countries and are exposed to global/regional media (e.g., CNN, MTV), a somewhat abstract idea that global brands are the same everywhere may prevail in many consumers' minds. Consequently, we propose the following:

P₂: Perceived brand globalness is positively associated with global brand credibility.

We include global brand authenticity as an antecedent to global brand credibility in our model. "Brands that successfully shroud themselves in the cloak of authenticity are able to convey desirable consumer meanings of inner-directedness, lack of pretense, and genuine commitment to brand-related activities" (Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel 2006, p. 53). Authenticity is important for global brands because it helps create uniqueness perceptions. Global brands, with their iconic or existential authenticity, will signal messages of credibility (e.g., legitimacy, believability, trustworthiness). More specifically, consumers will perceive authentic global brands as credible cultural resources that will help them realize their distinctive and authentic selves in everyday life. Viewed in this light, we suggest that one route for global brands to enhance their credibility perception is through authenticity. In so doing, global brands may have the ability to forge a multifaceted holistic relationship with consumers by playing proactive roles in their lives. For the narratives of marketplace mythologies to work effectively, they must convey a thorough understanding of con-

Global Brand Authenticity as a Signal of Global Brand Credibility

sumers' lifestyles, dreams, and goals; that is, these narratives must be perceived as credible for consumers to integrate them into their self-concept and individual and collective identities (Gobe 2001; Roberts 2004).

P₃: Global brand authenticity is positively associated with global brand credibility.

Direct Effects of Global Brand Credibility

Global Brand Quality. There is ample empirical evidence that perceived quality is one of the main direct routes through which credibility effects materialize (Erdem and Swait 1998; Erdem, Swait, and Valenzuela 2006; Swait and Erdem 2007). The direct effect of brand credibility on perceived quality has been robust across multiple product categories that vary in attribute uncertainty, information acquisition costs, and perceived risks of consumption (Erdem and Swait 2004). Thus, there is strong theoretical and empirical evidence to expect that a clear and credible brand signal increases global brand perceived quality by creating favorable attribute perceptions. We propose that global brand credibility partially mediates the relationships among global brand authenticity, perceived brand globalness, and global brand quality.

Global Brand Social Responsibility. Recent research has demonstrated that brand social responsibility is one of the significant attributes of global brands that consumers use in making their choices (Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004; Taşoluk 2006). Indeed, in their study on global brand dimensions, Holt, Quelch, and Taylor (2004) find that the size of the global citizen segment, which is composed of people who care about a firm's behavior on the environment and other such issues, was more than 40% in 12 countries. Although not a frequently mentioned construct in the global branding literature, social responsibility may be one of the ways through which global brand managers can increase the likelihood of their brand's purchase. A brand's perceived credibility may imply that the brand acts in a socially responsible way that is congruent with its espoused position and ideals. The more the brands are perceived as credible, the more their perceived social responsibility may increase as well. Similarly, as the perceived authenticity of a global brand increases, consumers may perceive it as acting in a more socially responsible manner, protecting the interests of its varied local environments.

Global Brand Prestige. A brand's credibility also may signal positions that are related to social status. Prestige is a significant association related to global brands (Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003). Furthermore, in the consumer culture literature, several scholars argue that one of the main motivations behind consuming brands with high levels of authenticity is to enhance one's status in the society (Holt 2002; Thompson and Tambyah 1999). Therefore, the extent to which brands are credible in terms of their authenticity and brand globalness may create status-enhancing effects (Hannerz 1990; Kapferer 1997; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003). In this context, brand credibility may enhance consumers' expectations of social approval and identifiableness with the status-enhancing

effects of the brand. Thus, we propose that brand credibility perceptions stemming from perceived brand globalness and authenticity enhance prestige perceptions of the global brand.

Global Brand Relative Price. We also suggest a positive association between brand credibility and higher relative price perceptions. Indeed, in the information economics literature, Erdem, Swait, and Valenzuela (2006) find that as credibility perceptions increased, respondents perceived the relative price of the more credible brand as higher than that of the less credible brand. In turn, these higher relative prices of the more credible brands negatively influenced purchase likelihood. Similarly, in our context, the credibility signal associated with perceived brand globalness and authenticity may cause consumers to perceive price premiums.³

P₄: Global brand credibility is positively associated with global brand quality.

P₅: Global brand credibility is positively associated with global brand social responsibility.

P₆: Global brand credibility is positively associated with global brand prestige.

P₇: Global brand credibility is positively associated with relative price.

Integrating the four associative network memory constructs, we expect that perceived global brand quality and global brand prestige (Batra et al. 2000; Steenkamp, Alden, and Batra 2003), global brand relative price (Erdem, Swait, and Valenzuela 2006), and global brand social responsibility (Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004) all positively influence global brand attitude. In terms of the two outcome variables in our model, major studies in the global branding literature include either global brand attitude (Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra 2006; Batra et al. 2000) or purchase likelihood (Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003). However, no study incorporates both. In line with the belief–attitude–behavior model in consumer behavior regarding the positive relationship between brand attitude and behavioral intention effects (e.g., Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975), we believe that a full model should include both outcomes.

As previous literature has suggested, higher relative prices positively influence brand attitude but also dampen the relationship between attitude and purchase likelihood. Indeed, O’Cass and Lim (2002) find that well-known global brands were perceived as more expensive than local brands by young Singaporean consumers. Therefore, relative price may act as both a driver of attitude and a moderator of the relationship between global brand attitude and global brand purchase likelihood.

P₈: Global brand quality, global brand social responsibility, global brand prestige, and global brand relative price are positively associated with global brand attitude.

Direct Effects of Associative Network Memory Constructs

P₉: Global brand attitude is positively associated with global brand purchase likelihood.

P₁₀: The positive relationship between global brand attitude and purchase likelihood becomes weaker as perceived relative price increases.

Direct Effects of Brand Globalness and Global Brand Authenticity on Associative Network Constructs

Previous literature has shown that perceived brand globalness has a direct positive relationship to quality and prestige (Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003) and that global brands are more socially responsible (Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004). We also suggest that brand globalness and authenticity have direct positive relationships to perceptions of relative price. Consumers perceive global brands as more expensive than local brands, and authentic brands are expected to command price premiums as well. Brand globalness and authenticity may have relatively more influence on some associative network constructs than others. On the basis of previous research, we expect that perceived brand globalness is more influential on perceived global brand quality and brand prestige (Batra et al. 2000; Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003), whereas global brand cultural capital through authenticity may primarily affect perceived global brand social responsibility and relative price (Holt 2002).⁴

Interactions with Consumer Characteristics

Several moderators of model pathways are identified in the different streams of research. Here, we concentrate only on two that we consider pertinent to a model of global brand attitude and purchase likelihood: self-construal (Markus and Kitayama 1991) and cosmopolitanism (Cannon and Yaprak 2002; Thompson and Tambyah 1999).

Self-Construal. Markus and Kitayama (1991) maintain that different conceptions of the self and of the relationship between the self and others constitute the most significant source of differences among cultures. Self-construal reflects the extent to which people view themselves as separate and unique individuals (independent self-construal) or in relationship with other people or social groups (interdependent self-construal; Agrawal and Maheswaran 2005). Research indicates that the independent self-construal is dominant in Western cultures, whereas the interdependent self-construal is dominant in Eastern cultures. Westerners are guided by their inner self, personal preferences, tastes, abilities, personal values, and so on (Wong and Ahuvia 1998). In contrast, Easterners tend to focus more on the collective self and how they are related to others. They identify themselves in terms of their familial, cultural, professional, and social relationships. In this respect, a person with an independent self-construal would define him- or herself in terms of personal attributes (e.g., “I am creative,” “I am intelligent”). In contrast, someone with a highly interdependent construal of self would define him- or herself mainly in terms of his or her social roles (e.g., “I am a good father,” “I am a good husband,” “I am a good friend”).

Note that the independent and interdependent conceptions of self can coexist within the individual (Aaker and Lee 2001; Brewer and Gardner 1996). In this sense, although the individual possesses the

two types of self-construal, he or she is likely to rate higher on one of the two aspects of the self (Triandis 1989, 1994). Following this logic, Wong and Ahuvia (1998) argue that because cultures cannot be considered homogeneous and people will vary in the extent to which their self-concepts are independent or interdependent, global characterizations of cultures as collectivist or individualist may be too simplistic. Therefore, we use self-construal as a moderating variable when explicating the process of global brand purchase likelihood.

We propose that for people with higher levels of independent self-construal, the effect of perceived brand globalness on perceived brand credibility will be lower. Because people rating higher on independent self-construal value their independence and differentiation from other people highly, they may view the global scale availability, acceptance, and desirability of global brands in a negative sense. Furthermore, because people with independent aspects of self do not integrate the actions and opinions of other people into their self-concept, they are less likely to be influenced by social approval and desirability signaled by brand globalness.⁵

In contrast, we believe that the influence of global brand authenticity on brand credibility will be greater for people with independent self-construals. Because people rating higher in independent self-construals are more likely to view individual freedom as a way to live an authentic life, stemming from their needs of differentiation, they may view the brands that offer them an authentic marketplace myth or narrative to build their self-concept more positively than those rating lower on the independent self-construal. Thus, we propose the following moderating effects of self-construal:

P₁₁: Perceived brand globalness leads to higher levels of brand credibility for people with highly interdependent self-construals than for those with highly independent self-construals.

P₁₂: Global brand authenticity leads to higher levels of brand credibility for people with highly independent self-construals than for those with highly interdependent self-construals.

Cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism is conceptualized in different ways in the literature. In contrasting cosmopolitans with tourists, Hannerz (1990) defines them as people who are not influenced by the biases of their local culture, whereas tourists are guided by a local perspective in their decisions. Holt (1998) elaborates on the construct in his adaptation of Bourdieu's (1984) theory of cultural capital to the consumption domain. According to his framework, cosmopolitans tend to acquire goods that are high in cultural capital to preserve their status in the society. Building on this, Thompson and Tambyah (1999) provide a theory of why people become cosmopolitan. According to this conceptualization, the main motivation behind becoming cosmopolitan through acquisition of cultural capital is status enhancement. In a subsequent study, Cannon and Yaprak (2002) argue that cosmopolitans do not need to be active seekers of cultural capital, but

rather they may view cultural diversity as a fact of life. In the consumption domain, the common ground for all these perspectives is that cosmopolitanism is highly associated with a desire for goods that possess a high level of cultural capital and, through that, authenticity. Indeed, Holt (1998) argues that the most powerful expression of the cosmopolitan–local oppositions conveys itself in the form of a tendency to engage in authentic consumption experiences.

Thus, we suggest that brands possessing higher levels of authenticity are more attractive for cosmopolitan consumers. In a study on the cultural influences of global brands, Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel (2006) argue that one reason their respondents preferred the local alternatives to Starbucks hinged on the cosmopolitan motif. Given their tendency to seek authenticity, respondents viewed the local brands as cultural resources that could help them acquire authentically distinctive experiences that were not perceived as available in global brands.

Similarly, we propose that global brands that convey authenticity may be perceived as more credible by consumers who exhibit cosmopolitan consumption tendencies than by those who do not. Because global brands may be viewed as overly standardized, uniform, boring, and, therefore, inauthentic by cosmopolitan consumers, they may suffer from a competitive disadvantage when targeting cosmopolitan consumers, unless they nurture their authenticity. For example, Harley-Davidson is perceived as high on globalness but is also able to communicate high levels of existential authenticity. The history associated with the brand and the subculture angles derived from its brand communities help enhance the perception that Harley's value stems from authentic resources (Holt 2002). Thus, we predict that such an authentic brand will have higher credibility for cosmopolitan consumers.

P₁₃: Cosmopolitanism moderates the effect of global brand authenticity on global brand credibility. As cosmopolitanism increases, the positive relationship between authenticity and brand credibility becomes stronger.

Finally, note that some of the relationships presented in our conceptual model may be reciprocal and certain feedback mechanisms may work on some focal constructs of our model. For example, over time, brand credibility may influence perceived brand globalness or brand authenticity. Although the theories we integrated and the scant empirical evidence support the relationships depicted in our model and propositions, reciprocal relationships may also be present.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Global branding has become an important issue in the past decade. The conceptual framework developed herein integrates the diverse literature streams that are directly or indirectly related to global branding to increase our understanding of processes that lead to attitudes toward global brands and purchase likelihood of these brands. We achieved this theoretical integration by drawing from consumer culture theory, signaling theory, and the ANMM.

Theoretical Implications

Several theoretical implications can be drawn from this conceptual framework. Global brand purchase likelihood cannot be explained by relying on a single theoretical perspective. Rather, it is necessary

to link the three theoretical perspectives discussed in this study. Each perspective provides the relevant constructs to develop a model of global brand preference. From signaling theory, we introduced brand credibility as one of the focal constructs that provides a solid theoretical foundation as to why brand perceptions, such as globalness and authenticity, are associated with higher levels of perceived quality, prestige, relative price, and social responsibility. Thus, in addition to the direct effects of perceived brand globalness and authenticity, we proposed an indirect route through credibility. That is, we proposed that these brand characteristics create positive brand associations and consequently influence brand attitude and purchase likelihood, by creating credibility perceptions. In addition, to link consumer culture theory—which focuses on the socio-cultural and experiential dimensions of consumption not easily conceived through experiments, surveys, or database modeling (Sherry 1991)—we introduced brand cultural capital and authenticity into our conceptual model. Last, the brand associations in our model (quality, prestige, social responsibility, and relative price) are grounded mainly in the ANMM (Anderson 1983). With the help of these three theoretical paradigms, we can better picture a model of global brand purchase likelihood.

Finally, we also included two consumer dispositional characteristics (self-construal and cosmopolitanism) as moderating variables in our conceptual model. In this way, we can better predict which types of consumers will respond more positively to firms communicating the globalness, cultural capital, and authenticity of a global brand.

A managerial implication that can be drawn from our conceptual model is that creating and communicating the cultural capital and authenticity of a global brand can be used both as a complementary strategy in the management of global brands and as the main strategy when dealing with local brands. Thus, we propose that communicating the globalness of a brand is not the ultimate way to create superiority over other brands; in addition to this strategy or sometimes as the main strategy, communicating the cultural capital that drives authenticity of the global brand to consumers may create positive brand associations, possibly leading to brand preference.

Other managerial insights can be drawn from this study. At a general level, global brand managers should consider both the supply and the demand sides when managing their brands. The literature indicates that the main motivation for building global brands is to benefit from strong economies of scale and scope. However, global brand managers also should consider the consumer side. Global brands significantly influence consumers in economical, psychological, and cultural domains. Benefiting from consumer culture theory, global brands offer rich cultural resources from which the consumer can build his or her self-concept.

From a global brand manager's perspective, this study provides valuable insights into potential positioning strategies. Positioning on cultural capital that drives authenticity is a credible route to purchase likelihood. Furthermore, by including two consumer dispositional characteristics as relevant moderators in our model, we proposed that global marketing managers should employ targeted

Managerial Implications

communication strategies. For example, in a market characterized by substantial numbers of consumers who rate higher on independent self-construal, communicating the cultural capital of the brand may be a better strategy. Conversely, when targeting consumers who rate higher on interdependent self-construal, a globally positioned brand may work more effectively.

Cosmopolitan consumers are also an important target segment for global brand managers. We argued that these consumers have a tendency to consume goods high on cultural capital and authenticity. Therefore, global brands positioned on their cultural capital and authenticity are likely to be more successful with cosmopolitans.

Further Research

Building on this conceptual model, we can identify several fruitful areas for further research. First, a construct that deserves special attention in our model is global brand cultural capital. Researchers should identify the antecedents and outcomes of this construct. To our knowledge, no scale has been developed to measure this construct yet. Therefore, empirical work is needed to understand how and through what processes cultural capital of a global brand can be created. In a related vein, researchers also should determine how the extent and type of cultural capital is related to the type of authenticity created (i.e., indexical, iconic, or existential). Further research also should identify whether global brand authenticity or perceived brand globalness has a more potent impact on brand credibility and brand associations. This knowledge is valuable to the management of brands in both the global and the local arena.

Second, research also should make a distinction between the strategies that can be employed in the developing and the developed world. In a developed country context, our conceptual model would suggest that global brand managers should position their brands as offering cultural resources from which consumers can build individuated identities. In this sense, communicating the authenticity of the value of the brand may have a greater impact on purchase likelihood. In a developing country setting, a different communication strategy could be employed. As several scholars (Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra 1999; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003) have noted, when global brands are presented as symbols of the global consumer culture, consumers are offered the opportunity to participate vicariously in this culture. In this sense, communicating the authenticity or the uniqueness of the brand may not effectively work in such a country setting. These differences in the positioning strategy should be reflected in the marketing mixes and are worthwhile questions for further research.

Third, researchers also could benefit from including CET as a mediator in the model (i.e., Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra 2006) or as a moderator of some pathways (Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003). Ethnocentric consumers avoid buying foreign products because they believe doing so is unethical and unpatriotic (Shimp and Sharma 1987). In this logic, global brands may pose significant cultural and economic threats for ethnocentric consumers. In support of this contention, Steenkamp and colleagues (2003) find that CET has a significant, negative moderating influence on the relationship between perceived brand globalness and brand purchase likelihood. Thus,

for these types of consumers, perceived brand globalness may signal less brand credibility than for less ethnocentric consumers. The relationships among CET, global brand cultural capital, authenticity, and credibility are fruitful areas for further research.

Similarly, product category–related variables, such as category foreignness, familiarity, and country-of-origin effects, may interact with certain variables in our model. For example, if we assume that perceived brand globalness and brand cultural capital are extrinsic cues (Rao and Monroe 1989), we can expect them to be used less often when consumers are highly familiar with the product category. Some previous research findings support the interaction of extrinsic product cues with product category familiarity (Batra et al. 2000; Han 1989; Maheswaran 1994).

In conclusion, researchers could benefit from the insights that the three theoretical approaches integrated into our model provide when explicating the process of global brand purchase likelihood. In this sense, further research should empirically validate both the theory and the conceptualizations developed in this study.

1. The content of this definition was derived and supported in four focus groups (eight participants each) conducted in two non–U.S. countries.
2. We are indebted to a reviewer for helping us make the macrolevel rationale stronger.
3. There is also ample evidence that a brand’s perceived prestige and quality connote higher price premiums for consumers. However, we limit the research propositions only for relationships that are particularly relevant to global brands.
4. We thank a reviewer for pointing this out.
5. The relationship between interdependence and brand credibility could be related to the prevailing social norms in a given market. Consumers who are highly interdependent in countries in which nationalism and antiglobalization are strong normative values seem less likely to find global brands credible. Although there may not be a large number of markets with this set of social norms, some are likely to exist. The prevailing norms in a given market also could provide similar boundary conditions for the relationships among independence, authenticity, and credibility. We thank a reviewer for pointing this out.

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