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Citation: Ma, Lin, Song, Zening and Bian, Xuemei (2022) The asymmetric dominance of cognitive versus affective country image in driving purchase: Conditioning roles of cognition-affect intra-valence nature and product type. *International Business Review*, 31 (5). p. 102007. ISSN 0969-5931

Published by: Elsevier

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2022.102007>
<<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2022.102007>>

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1

2 1. INTRODUCTION

3 Country image, as consumer’s generalized mental representations of a country, has
4 become one of the most intensely researched constructs in the country-of-origin (COO)
5 literature (Samiee and Chabowski 2021). Scholars have recognized two dimensions of
6 country image – cognitive country image (CCI) and affective country image (ACI)
7 (Maher and Carter 2011; Roth and Diamantopoulos 2009). A large body of studies have
8 addressed the role of CCI/ACI as an antecedent of the COO effect and examined their
9 impact on consumer decision (Diamantopoulos, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic and Moschik
10 2020; Samiee and Chabowski 2021). However, despite the sheer volume and
11 momentum of research on country image, a review of relevant literature reveals two
12 major knowledge gaps pertaining to the CCI-ACI framework.

13 First, there is a lack of understanding regarding the relative impact of CCI and ACI
14 (Kock, Josiassen, and Assaf 2019). Most extant studies, with their distinct focus on
15 either CCI or ACI, failed to explain how these two dimensions of country image are
16 integrated in consumer decision-making (Kock, Josiassen and Assaf 2019; Li et al.
17 2014). When faced with products from another country, consumers may refer to both
18 cognition and affect of the country for consumption choice (Brijs, Bloemer and Kasper
19 2011). Then a critical but unanswered research question is: would either CCI or ACI
20 systematically outweigh the other in driving consumer preferences? This question is
21 of strategic importance as it relates to which dimension(s) marketing efforts should be
22 focused on to be more (cost-) effective.

23 Second, there is inadequate delineation of the boundaries of the influence of CCI
24 and ACI. Most existing country image conceptual models as well as empirical studies
25 “tend to (implicitly) assume that *all* consumers will respond to COO cues in a

1 *homogeneous way*” (Diamantopoulos, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic and Moschik 2020, p. 487).
2 Much of the COO literature treats all customers alike (Samiee 2010) and tacitly
3 presumes that CCI/ACI influences consumers invariably regardless of consumption
4 conditions (Li et al. 2014). However, relevant research, based on different consumer
5 samples and products examined, presents mixed results showing inconsistent
6 robustness of the effects of CCI/ACI (Garrett and Lee 2017; Lu et al. 2016; Semaan et
7 al 2019), which suggests that nuanced relationships are likely to exist. Thus, scholars
8 have been repeatedly calling for conceptual advancement and clarifying *under what*
9 *conditions* CCI/ACI influences consumer behaviour and which one (CCI or ACI) would
10 cast a greater impact (Costa, Carneiro, and Goldszmidt 2016; Maheswaran, Chen, and
11 He 2013; Thøgersen, Aschemann-Witzel, and Susanne Pedersen 2021).

12 We aim to address the identified knowledge gaps through developing and
13 empirically testing a nomological framework that generally explains *whether, when,*
14 *and why* CCI or ACI takes precedence in driving consumer decisions to purchase
15 foreign products. Drawing on the primacy of affect theory on human attitude in
16 psychology (Zajonc 1980, 1984), we propose and investigate the relative impact of CCI
17 and ACI as a function of the dyadic effects of the intra-valence nature of country
18 cognition-affect and product type. The primacy of affect theory suggests that the
19 relative importance of cognition and affect in determining overall attitude hinges on the
20 valence structure of cognition-affect and attitude object (Zajonc 1980; Lavine et al.
21 1998). We recognize that consumers can hold either univalent or ambivalent cognition-
22 affect of a country (Li et al. 2014; Magnusson, Westjohn, and Sirianni 2019). Univalent
23 country cognition-affect exhibits when CCI and ACI are both positive or both negative;
24 ambivalent country cognition-affect manifests when CCI is positive whereas ACI is
25 negative, or vice versa. For example, a consumer may express animosity (negative

1 affect) against a country for historical reasons despite generally acknowledging its high
2 level of economic development and technological advancement (positive cognition)
3 (Klein, Ettenson, and Morris 1998). Reversely, one may be fascinated by a country's
4 culture (positive affect) while recognizing its underdeveloped economy (negative
5 cognition). We distinguish between consumers with univalent versus ambivalent
6 country cognition-affect and posit that the relative impact of CCI and ACI may vary for
7 consumers with different country cognition-affect intra-valence structure when
8 involved in the purchase of utilitarian versus hedonic products.

9 We also seek to explore the underlying mechanism that accounts for the variations
10 of the relative impact of CCI and ACI in different conditioning contexts. Specifically,
11 we introduce consumers' affective evaluation of a product's hedonic benefits along with
12 cognitive judgement of product quality as parallel mediators and reveal how CCI and
13 ACI exert their impact through these pathways on the purchase of different products
14 among different consumer groups. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework which
15 will be tested in this study.

16

17 Insert Figure 1 about here

18

19 Theoretically, this research contributes to the country image literature in three
20 major ways. First, it advances the conceptual knowledge of the CCI-ACI framework
21 from a comparative perspective. Moving beyond a verification of the existence of the
22 influence of CCI and/or ACI in general, our research is one of the first which unveils
23 the asymmetric dominance of CCI versus ACI in driving purchase decision. Second,
24 the findings illuminate the dyadic effects of consumers' country cognition-affect intra-
25 valence nature and product type on the relative influence of CCI and ACI. We thus

1 address the call to clarify the boundaries for the effects of “(un)favorable country
2 cognitions and country affect” that “help eliminate the contradictions within the COO
3 literature as to the efficacy of COO as diagnostic in customer evaluations and
4 subsequent marketplace choice” (Samiee and Chabowski 2021, p. 958). Third, we
5 derive new insights into the underlying mechanism that explains the relative impact of
6 CCI and ACI. We demonstrate that consumers’ affective evaluation and cognitive
7 judgement of products, respectively, serve as the major pathways for the influence of
8 CCI and ACI on purchase decision in different boundary contexts.

9 From a managerial perspective, our theoretical framework provides international
10 managers with specific guidance on which particular country image dimension they
11 should spend more effort when promoting different products to different consumers.
12 We also offer fresh directions on which way of applying CCI/ACI, focusing on product
13 quality image building or symbolic and experiential value boosting, is more promising
14 in different contexts.

15

16 **2. LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

17 **2.1 Cognitive and Affective Country Image**

18 In the current research, we define CCI, in line with relevant literature, as the
19 performance-related cognition individuals hold of another country, including consumer
20 beliefs such as the country’s level of economic development, standard of living,
21 industrialization and technological advancement (Kock, Josiassen, and Assaf 2019; Li
22 et al. 2014). ACI, on the other hand, captures consumers’ performance-unrelated
23 emotional reactions to a country, which can stem from an individual’s direct and/or
24 indirect experiences with the country and its citizens through travel, art, education and
25 mass media, as well as cultural, historic, military, or economic events between the home

1 country and the foreign country (Klein, Ettenson, and Morris 1998; Li et al. 2014;
2 Verlegh 2001).

3 The majority of prior research focused on CCI and provided abundant evidence on
4 how consumers' capability-related country perceptions influence their evaluation of
5 product quality and purchase decision (Wang et al. 2017). More recently, an increasing
6 number of studies have identified and emphasized the critical role of ACI in affecting
7 consumer decision (Kock, Josiassen and Assaf 2019; Wang et al. 2017). This stream of
8 research has showed that specific affective dispositions toward a country such as
9 "animosity" (Harmeling, Magnusson, and Singh 2015; Klein, Ettenson, and Morris
10 1998; Magnusson, Westjohn, and Sirianni 2019) and "affinity" (Nes, Yelkur, and
11 Silkoset 2014; Oberecker and Diamantopoulos 2011), as well as more general country
12 feelings which may vary in valence and level of arousal, influence consumers'
13 preferences toward products from a foreign country (Diamantopoulos, Arslanagic-
14 Kalajdzic and Moschik 2020; Verlegh 2001).

15 Despite the flourish of research on CCI/ACI, however, an important void in
16 literature is the knowledge on the relative impact of CCI and ACI. Most existing studies
17 concentrated on only one of these two country image dimensions (Li et al. 2014).
18 Though a small number of studies have included both CCI and ACI in their conceptual
19 models, they have mainly confirmed the co-existence of their influence (e.g., Oberecker
20 and Diamantopoulos 2011; Wang et al. 2012) or investigated their interrelations (e.g.,
21 Kock, Josiassen and Assaf 2019). Little research attention has been paid to whether and,
22 if yes, which dimension, CCI or ACI, would exert a greater impact (Brijs 2006; Kock,
23 Josiassen and Assaf 2019).

24

1 **2.2 Relative Impact of CCI versus ACI as Conditioned by the Intra-valence**
2 **Nature of Country Cognition-affect and Product Type**

3 To evaluate the relative influence of CCI and ACI, we draw on the primacy of affect
4 theory on human attitude in social psychology (Zajonc 1980, 1984). The primacy of
5 affect theory provides theoretical underpinning for the comparative importance of
6 cognition and affect in determining overall attitude (Lavine et al. 1998; Pham et al 2001).
7 This theory suggests that the relative impact of affect and cognition critically depends
8 on the evaluative congruity between an attitude's affective and cognitive components
9 and attitude object (Thompson, Zanna, and Griffin 1995; Zajonc 1980). In such light,
10 we advocate that the relative influence of CCI (country-related cognition) and ACI
11 (country-related affect) is contingent on the intra-valence structure of country
12 cognition-affect and product type. That is, when cognition and affect are univalent, their
13 relative importance hinges on attitude object, such that product type in this study;
14 whereas when cognition and affect are ambivalent, overall attitude is primarily
15 determined by affect (Lavin et al. 1998; Zajonc 1980).

16 Specifically, according to the primacy of affect theory and relevant research, when
17 attitude-related feelings and thoughts are evaluatively consistent, affect and cognition,
18 as one (at least partly) being based on the other, would exert largely redundant effects
19 on overall evaluations (Zajonc 1980; Zajonc & Markus, 1982). Thus, neither affect nor
20 cognition is likely to have a consistently stronger influence on global attitude (Lavine
21 et al. 1998; Zajonc 1980). In such congruent cognition-affect situations, the variability
22 in the predictive power of affect and cognition would be mostly accounted for by
23 differences in subjective probability, which is a function of the specific features of the
24 situation and the attitude object (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Lavine et al. 1998).
25 Situations that evoke different goals with respect to the attitude object (e.g., making

1 instrumental or consummatory properties of the object more goal-relevant) may
2 produce attitudes that are more strongly based on either cognition or affect, respectively
3 (Millar and Tesser 1989).

4 The utilitarian versus hedonic product type represents a potential situational factor
5 that influences the relative impact of CCI and ACI on consumer reactions. The
6 consumption of utilitarian and hedonic products is differently oriented. Utilitarian
7 products usually reproduce a “work mentality” that reflects the economic and functional
8 benefits they provide, which makes the instrumental properties of the product more
9 goal-relevant in consumption decision-making; whereas hedonic products mirror an
10 experiential view relating to the affective responses elicited by a product, thus making
11 consummatory properties of the object more goal-relevant (Holbrook and Hirschman
12 1982; Voss et al. 2003). Such differences in evoked goals could make CCI (ACI) more
13 goal-relevant than ACI (CCI) in the evaluation and purchase of utilitarian (hedonic)
14 products. For example, Verlegh (2001), though not explicitly comparing the relative
15 impact of CCI and ACI, showed the prominent effect of consumer perceptions of a
16 country’s competence (versus affective feelings) on their attitude toward technology-
17 based consumer durables (foods). We thus hypothesize, when consumers hold
18 consistent country cognition and affect, the relative importance of CCI and ACI in
19 driving consumer decision would vary depending on product type. Specifically, in the
20 purchase of utilitarian (hedonic) products, CCI (ACI) would have the dominant
21 predictive power on consumer decision.

22

23 **H1:** For consumers holding univalent country cognition-affect, CCI has a stronger
24 effect on purchase intention than ACI in the purchase of utilitarian products.

25 **H2:** For consumers holding univalent country cognition-affect, ACI has a stronger

1 effect on purchase intention than CCI in the purchase of hedonic products.

2
3 However, the primacy of affect theory suggests, when feelings and thoughts
4 conflict, individuals would usually rely to a greater extent on their affective reactions
5 to an attitude object than on their beliefs about an attitude object's attributes in
6 determining their overall attitudes and attitude-relevant behaviour (Zajonc 1980). The
7 rationale for such primacy of affect is that affective responses may often
8 chronologically precede cognitive responses in attitude formation (Edwards and von
9 Hippel 1995). In addition, affective responses are perceived as more subjectively valid
10 and more closely linked to the self than are cognitive responses. Thus, when the two
11 types of information conflict, the feelings engendered by an attitude object may be
12 experienced as more revealing of one's true evaluations than are cognitive appraisals of
13 the object's attributes (Edwards 1990; Edwards and von Hippel 1995). Furthermore,
14 affective information may be more easily retrieved from memory than is cognitive
15 information (in part because of affect's stronger links to the self). When affect and
16 cognition have conflicting evaluative implications, affective information is likely to be
17 retrieved first, while subsequently retrieved (inconsistent) cognitive information may
18 then be suppressed or refuted in the service of cognitive consistency motives (Chaiken
19 and Yates 1985; Liberman and Chaiken 1991; Tesser 1978).

20 The primacy of affect has far-reaching implications and has been proved in various
21 areas. For example, in their study on political election, Lavine et al. (1998) found that
22 for people with oppositely valenced affect and cognition of the candidates, affect
23 generally exerts a stronger influence on their voting behaviour than does cognition. Shiv
24 and Fedorikhin (1999) also showed that spontaneously evoked affective reactions rather
25 than cognitions tend to have a greater impact on consumer choice particularly when

1 processing resources are limited. In the COO literature, though not directly addressing
2 the impact of country cognition-affect ambivalence, studies have demonstrated similar
3 primacy of affect effect. Klein, Ettenson and Morris (1998) demonstrated, despite the
4 recognition of the advanced Japanese economy and technology, the animosity of
5 Chinese consumers hold against Japan greatly reduces their willingness to buy products
6 from the country. Likewise, Obermiller and Spangenberg (1989) reported that Arab-
7 American consumers who cognize the superior quality of Israeli precision instruments
8 nevertheless have a negative reaction overall, which is caused by strong negative
9 feelings toward Israel. Building on such findings and the reasonings of the primacy of
10 affect in determining overall attitude for people with inconsistent cognition and affect,
11 we propose that for consumers holding ambivalent country cognition-affect, purchase
12 decision (as overall product attitude and related behaviour) is more driven by affect
13 than cognition. That is, ACI (country-related affect) would dominate CCI (country-
14 related cognition) in predicting purchase intention. And we do not expect this
15 predominant effect of ACI over CCI would vary as a function of product type. Therefore,
16 we hypothesize the following:

17

18 **H3:** For consumers holding ambivalent country cognition-affect, ACI has a
19 stronger effect on purchase intention than CCI regardless of product type.

20

21 **2.3 Underlying Mechanism of the Relative Impact of CCI versus ACI**

22 In explaining the influence of country image, existing conceptual models
23 predominantly use consumer cognitive judgement of product quality as the mediator
24 channelling the impact of both CCI and ACI on purchase decision (e.g., Harmeling,
25 Magnusson, and Singh 2015; Li et al. 2014; Orbaiz and Papadopoulos 2003; Wang et

1 al. 2012). Such models illuminate the cognitive process of the country image effect, i.e.,
2 how consumers use country image as a cognitive cue to infer product quality which in
3 turn leads to consumption decision. However, they fail to provide adequate explanation
4 of the affective process underlying the country image effect and thus hinder a sound
5 comparison of the influence of CCI and ACI (Verlegh 2001), for which scholars have
6 called for more sufficient conceptualization (Brijs, Bloemer and Kasper 2011, Wang et
7 al. 2017).

8 In responding to such calls, in the current research, we posit consumer affective
9 product evaluation along with cognitive product judgement as dual mediators of the
10 effects of CCI and ACI on purchase intention and propose that the relative importance
11 of these pathways would vary for consumer with univalent versus ambivalent country
12 cognition-affect in the purchase of utilitarian versus hedonic products (see Figure 1).
13 As having long been established in the marketing literature on consumer product
14 experience, consumers evaluate a product not only by its quality and utilitarian values,
15 but also by the emotional values and hedonic benefits that could be obtained (Mano and
16 Oliver 1993; Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis 1986). While the former is linked with the
17 instrumental (functional, task-related) aspects of the product and consumer product
18 evaluation in this regard is primarily based on cognitive judgment, logical thinking and
19 reasoning, the latter pertains to the non-instrumental (experiential, affective) respects
20 of the product and is mostly related to affective evaluation and involves more subjective
21 feelings and emotions (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Mano and Oliver, 1993).
22 Consumers' affective evaluation of a product is hedonic, aesthetic and symbolic in
23 nature, resulting from the (expected) sensations derived from the product including
24 sensory pleasure, consumer aesthetics, variety seeking, enjoyment, symbolic meaning
25 and self-expression (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994).

1 CCI, apart from influencing consumer decision through product quality cognition
2 as modelled in most prior research, could also signify hedonic and symbolic meanings
3 of the product, which evoke affective process influencing consumer behaviour. For
4 example, Batra et al. (2000) suggested that brands from developed Western countries
5 are preferred to local brands by consumers in developing countries for reasons not only
6 of perceived quality but also of social status and identity. This is because brands from
7 more developed countries are commonly regarded as prestigious and distinctive in
8 emerging markets due to their symbolic connection with the advanced image of the
9 “economic center” (Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra 2006; Batra et al. 2000). The COO
10 of such brands often serves as a visible marker of status that validates and satisfies
11 consumer needs for self-expression and identity enhancement and hence, boosts
12 consumer affection and becomes targets of conspicuous consumption in developing,
13 high status-mobility countries (Batra et al. 2000; Xie, Batra, and Peng 2015). These
14 arguments, though not explicitly referring to CCI, imply that competence-related
15 country beliefs evoke consumers’ cognitive as well as affective responses to foreign
16 products, which in turn impact purchase decision. Following such logic, we hypothesize
17 cognitive judgment and affective evaluation as parallel mediators of the influence of
18 CCI on purchase intention.

19
20 **H4:** CCI influences consumer purchase intention via a dual process, that is
21 cognitive product judgment and affective product evaluation.

22
23 ACI, additional to its effect via cognitive process as extant literature has already
24 established (e.g., Klein, Ettenson, and Morris 1998; Orbaiz and Papadopoulos 2003),
25 also influences purchase decision through consumers’ affective product evaluation. As

1 suggested in the affect transfer literature (Kim, Lim and Bhargava 1998; Zhang et al.
2 2021), the feelings consumers hold about a country could be transferred to products
3 from that country and hence shape consumer evaluation of the products' emotional
4 values and hedonic benefits. More relevant to this research, Xie, Batra, and Peng (2015)
5 argued that consumers would favour brands from an affinity country because their
6 affection for the traditions, local communities, and values of the country could lead to
7 positive feelings of comfort and nurturance toward brands from the country. Nes, Yelkur,
8 and Silkoset (2014) also suggested that products from an affinity country carry
9 symbolic and self-expressive meanings for consumers. Consumption of such products
10 provides consumers with an opportunity to keep a close emotional "link" with the
11 affinity country. Following the above reasonings, we posit, apart from through cognitive
12 judgement, ACI also influences purchase intention via affective evaluation.

13

14 **H5:** ACI influences consumer purchase intention via a dual process, that is
15 cognitive product judgment and affective affect evaluation.

16

17 We further propose that the four mediating pathways are of unequal importance in
18 the different focal boundary conditions of this research. Specifically, in light of the
19 primacy of affect theory discussed above, for consumers with univalent country
20 cognition-affect, reaction to products relies on the purchase contexts. In the purchase
21 of utilitarian product, consumer response would be more rationally oriented. Thus CCI,
22 as cognitive country beliefs, would play a strengthened role, compared to ACI, in
23 guiding product evaluations, and cognitive product judgment would cast enhanced
24 influence, compared to affective product evaluation, on consumption decision.
25 Therefore, we suppose CCI influencing purchase intention via cognitive product

1 judgment would be the most prominent pathway. By contrast, in the purchase of
2 hedonic products, consumer reactions to foreign products are more emotional. As such,
3 ACI influencing purchase intention via affective product evaluation would be the most
4 important pathway of the effects of country images on purchase intention. On the other
5 hand, for consumers with ambivalent country cognition-affect, reaction to products
6 would be more affect-driven, i.e., country cognition-affect ambivalence would boost
7 the influence of ACI, compared to CCI, on product evaluations as well as the
8 importance of affective product evaluation, compared to cognitive product judgment,
9 in determining purchase. Thus, we predict ACI influencing purchase intention via
10 affective product evaluation would be the most important pathway in the country image
11 mechanism. Accordingly, we hypothesize the following:

12

13 **H6:** For consumers holding univalent country cognition-affect, the indirect effect
14 of CCI on purchase intention via cognitive product judgment is the strongest
15 among the indirect effects of country images on purchase intention in the
16 purchase of utilitarian products.

17 **H7:** For consumers holding univalent country cognition-affect, the indirect effect
18 of ACI on purchase intention via affective product evaluation is the strongest
19 among the indirect effects of country images on purchase intention in the
20 purchase of hedonic products.

21 **H8:** For consumers holding ambivalent country cognition-affect, the indirect effect
22 of ACI on purchase intention via affective product evaluation is the strongest
23 among the indirect effects of country images on purchase intention regardless
24 of product type.

25

1 **3. METHODOLOGY**

2 **3.1 Choice of Countries**

3 In this research, we collected data from Chinese consumers in mainland China, and
4 chose four countries towards which Chinese consumers may hold various combinations
5 of country cognition-affect, namely the U.S., Japan, Brazil, and India as the COOs to
6 be assessed. These countries are among the top ten trade partners with China in terms
7 of total trade value (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019) and Chinese consumers are
8 generally acquainted with these countries as well as products from these COOs. The
9 U.S. and Japan are among the most developed countries in the world with high levels
10 of GDP per capita, industrialization and technological advancement, whereas Brazil and
11 India are less developed with low GDP per capita (IMF statistics, 2021). Thereby,
12 cognition of the U.S./Japan would be relatively positive, whereas cognition of
13 Brazil/India is likely to be negative among Chinese consumers. According to the
14 research report of Pew Research Center (2015), only 12% of Chinese have strong or
15 somewhat favourable feelings towards Japan, which suggests Chinese people hold a
16 negative affect towards the country. Pew Research Center (2015) also reports the
17 negative affect of India among Chinese people, with only 24% of Chinese holding
18 strong or somewhat favourable feelings. Comparatively, Chinese people show more
19 positive feelings toward the U.S., with more than 50% expressing favourable affective
20 views of the country (Pew Research Center, 2016). Chinese people are generally
21 impressed and excited by Brazilian football, music, culture, and natural scenery, which
22 suggests a positive affect towards the country. Therefore, we expect using these four
23 countries as COOs would warrant the needed consumer groups with various country
24 cognition-affect intra-structures, namely both positive cognition and affect (the U.S as
25 the COO), both negative cognition and affect (India as the COO), positive cognition but

1 negative affect (Japan as the COO), and negative cognition but positive affect (Brazil
2 as the COO). The first two categories are univalent cognition-affect, whereas the last
3 two categories are ambivalent cognition-affect.

4

5 **3.2 Products**

6 We selected household electrical appliances and soft drinks to be tested in this research
7 because (1) these two product categories are generally considered as typical utilitarian
8 and hedonic products, respectively (e.g., Ratchford 1987; Rossiter and Percy 1997;
9 Vaughn 1986), thus they are fit for tests of the focal boundary factor of product type in
10 the current study; (2) both product categories are familiar to Chinese consumers and
11 among their common consumption items, which reduces response randomness (Cohen
12 and Cohen 1983); (3) the foreign products in these categories sold in China are from a
13 number of different countries and the possible bias to connect the product categories to
14 any particular countries can be avoided; and (4) several researchers on COO effect have
15 used these, or comparable products, to represent utilitarian/hedonic products in their
16 empirical investigations (e.g., Brijs 2006; Manrai, Lascu, and Manrai 1998; Roth and
17 Romeo 1992). Thereby, testing these products in this research would enable comparing
18 findings with the existing literature.

19 A pilot study on 103 consumers from the same population of the main study was
20 conducted to check product type manipulation. We used a seven-point semantic
21 differential scale adapted from Vaughn (1986) to measure how much purchase decision
22 is based on functional and utilitarian attributes (1) versus hedonic and experiential
23 benefits (7) and to what degree they think the decision is logical/objective (1) or based
24 on a lot of feelings (7) in each product category. The tests confirmed our expectation
25 that Chinese consumers considered household electrical appliances as utilitarian

1 products (Mean = 2.69, $t_{102} = -8.28$, $p < .01$), and soft drinks to be hedonic products
2 (Mean = 4.82, $t_{102} = 4.91$, $p < .01$). Thus, product manipulation is successful.

3

4 **3.3 Data Collection and Sample**

5 We adopted a scenario-based survey of eight (2×4) conditions, namely two product
6 types (household electrical appliances and soft drinks) and four countries (the U.S.,
7 India, Japan and Brazil). We hired a major professional marketing research agency in
8 China specializing in online research to execute data collection. Respondents were
9 randomly recruited from the agency's nation-wide sample base over a period of two
10 weeks in 2020. The respondents were awarded points which could be spent online or
11 used to redeem cash or store vouchers as encouragement for participation. We used a
12 between-subject design. Upon confirmation of participation, each respondent was
13 automatically linked to webpage of one of the eight conditions by the scenario-
14 randomization function of the agency's online data-collection platform. In the scenario
15 description, respondents were told to imagine that they were shopping in a major
16 shopping mall in their city and looking for a household electrical appliance (or soft
17 drink). They happened to see one that was labelled as from the assigned country. Then
18 they were asked to answer a set of questions measuring the focal constructs. Such
19 design allows COO to serve as the extrinsic cue for product evaluation and decision-
20 making, warranting the ecological validity (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, and
21 Oldenkotte, 2012). Finally, respondents answered questions about individual
22 demographic characteristics.

23 A large sample of 1,987 adult Chinese consumers from 65 cities of 29 provinces
24 (municipalities or autonomous regions) of China took part in this research. After data
25 cleaning and screening, such as removing the questionnaires with missing values and

1 obvious mistakes, the final sample size is 1,935. Moreover, the numbers of male (47.0%)
2 and female respondents are nearly equal. Table 1 presents the sample profile. Generally,
3 the sample is composed more of relatively younger consumers (mostly aged from 18-
4 49) with a high educational background and decent income from more developed cities
5 of China, representing major consumer groups of foreign products in the Chinese
6 market.

7

8 Insert Table 1 about here

9

10 **3.4 Measures**

11 We adopted or adapted measurement items from previous studies. CCI was assessed
12 using five items derived from Laroche et al. (2005) and Li et al. (2014). To capture ACI,
13 we divided consumer country affect into positive and negative feelings towards a
14 country as studies employing more fine-grained classifications of emotions often find
15 that these emotions ultimately reduce to two factors—one positive and one negative, a
16 distinction which captures the basic dimensions of the affective spectrum (Mano and
17 Oliver 1993; Watson, Clark, and Tellegen 1988). We adopted Bagozzi, Gopinath, and
18 Nyer’s (1999) approach that treats positive and negative feelings as unipolar constructs
19 rather than bipolar dimensions of the same construct, since research has suggested that
20 negative and positive emotions (e.g., contempt and admiration) exist simultaneously
21 (Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer 1999; Williams and Aaker 2001). Treating the seemingly
22 opposite feelings as bipolar dimensions of one construct might obscure differences
23 between the constructs (Maher and Carter 2011). The positive aspect of ACI was
24 evaluated using a ten-item scale developed from Brijs (2006), Oberecker and
25 Diamantopoulos (2011), and Verlegh (2001), whereas the negative aspect of ACI was

1 assessed via an eight-item scale derived from Brijs (2006), Harmeling, Magnusson, and
2 Singh (2015), and Verlegh (2001). As with the mediators and outcome variable in the
3 conceptual framework, cognitive product judgement was assessed using measures
4 adapted from Li et al. (2014), whereas affective product evaluation was measured with
5 scales adapted from Batra and Ahtola (1991). The items measuring purchase tendency
6 were adopted from Li et al. (2014).

7 Seven-point semantic differential scales were used for items measuring CCI and
8 cognitive product judgement. Seven-point Likert scales were used for items measuring
9 affective product evaluation and purchase intention. Regarding the response format for
10 measuring ACI, we followed the approach of Oberecker and Diamantopoulos (2011)
11 and asked the respondents to first report whether they had the specific feeling for the
12 target country (absence of a given feeling was scored by 0 = “don’t harbour this feeling”)
13 and then, only if this feeling was present, respondents would rate the strength of the
14 harboured feeling on a seven-point scale (1 = “slightly,” 7 = “extremely”). So, the
15 higher the score, the stronger the positive/negative feeling was. All the measures were
16 translated into Chinese followed by a back-translation procedure (Behling and Law
17 2000) to ensure that the meanings of the translated items were consistent with the
18 originals.

19 After we removed items with low factor loadings or high cross-loadings in a
20 confirmatory factor (measurement) analysis (CFA; described subsequently), all
21 remaining measures had Cronbach’s alphas greater than the .07 cut-off point suggested
22 by Nunnally (1978), indicating that the measures were unidimensional and exhibited
23 good internal consistency (see Table 2).

24

25

Insert Table 2 about here

1

2 **4. RESULTS**

3 **4.1 Measurement Model Evaluation**

4 Before testing the conceptual model, we examined a correlation matrix of the composite
5 scales for the key constructs. Most of the signs of the bivariate correlations were
6 consistent with the expected relationships (see Table 3). The conceptual model was
7 tested with structural equation modelling (SEM), using AMOS 24. The measurement
8 model provided a good fit for the data: $\chi^2 = 992.468$, d.f. = 254, $\chi^2/\text{d.f.} = 3.907$, $p < .001$,
9 CFI = .984, RMSEA = .039, and SRMR = .028 (Hair et al. 2009; Kline 2016). All
10 indicators loaded significantly onto the respective latent constructs ($p < .001$) with
11 values varying from .794 to .937. The composite reliability for each construct exceeded
12 the minimum cut-off value of .70 and average variance extracted (AVE) for all of the
13 constructs exceeded the cut-off point of .50 which implies good convergent validity
14 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Discriminant validity was established
15 since the AVE for each construct exceeded the squared correlation between the
16 construct and every other construct in the model (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

17

18

Insert Table 3 about here.

19

20 As all the data were perceptual and were collected from the same source at the
21 same time, there is a possibility of common method bias. We conducted a test for this
22 possibility using the hierarchically nested covariance structure model (e.g., Cote and
23 Buckley 1987; Kim, Cavusgil, and Calantone 2006). According to the results, as
24 reported in Table 4, variances from both construct items (or traits) and method are
25 present. This suggests that a portion of the covariance originates from the method used

1 in data collection. However, the mean percentages of variance explained by the
2 construct items (64.9%) and by the common method factor (12.9 %) indicate that
3 common method bias is relatively minor (Lee, Sirgy, Brown, and Bird 2004). Therefore,
4 we conclude that common method bias is not posing a major threat to the study.

5

6

Insert Table 4 about here.

7

8 To distinguish between consumers with ambivalent versus univalent country
9 cognition-affect, we followed the method of Lavine et al. (1998). Specifically, we
10 computed a composite ACI score by subtracting an individual's average negative
11 feelings score from the average positive feelings score. Thus, scores less than zero
12 indicated negative overall affect and scores greater than zero suggested positive affect.

13 To create positive and negative cognition conditions, respondents with average CCI
14 scores below the midpoint of the scale (i.e., < 4) comprised the negative cognition
15 condition, whereas those with average CCI scores above the midpoint comprised the
16 positive cognition condition. Respondents were classified as having ambivalent
17 cognition-affect if they held negative cognition but positive affect of the assigned
18 country, or vice versa. Conversely, respondents were classified as having univalent
19 cognition-affect if their composite of cognition and affect about the assigned country
20 were either both positive or both negative. In total, 998 of the 1,935 respondents fell
21 into the univalent cognition-affect group, with 648 holding both positive cognition and
22 affect and 350 expressing both negative cognition and affect. A total of 891 respondents
23 fell into the ambivalent cognition-affect group, with 421 having positive cognition but
24 negative affect and 470 having negative cognition but positive affect. The rest (46) of
25 the respondents held either (both) neutral cognition or (and) affect, thus, were excluded

1 from the conditioning effects analyses.¹

2

3 **4.2 Structural Model Evaluation and Hypotheses Testing**

4 To test the hypotheses, we continued our analysis with simultaneous estimation of the
5 measurement and structural models. For H1 to H3, we first tested the baseline model
6 (Model 1 in Table 5) of the direct effects of CCI and ACI on purchase intention, using
7 the entire sample (i.e., 1,935 respondents). The model obtained satisfactory model fit
8 statistics ($\chi^2 = 107.601$, d.f. = 25, $\chi^2/\text{d.f.} = 4.304$, $p < .001$, CFI = .993, RMSEA = .041,
9 SRMR = .018). The results showed that both CCI ($\beta = .32$, $p < .001$) and ACI ($\beta = .54$,
10 $p < .001$) positively influenced purchase intention. Next, to test the relative importance
11 of CCI versus ACI in determining purchase intention as a function of the dyadic effects
12 of country cognition-affect intra-valence nature and product type, we tested a multiple
13 group structural equation model (Model 2 in Table 5) with four (2×2) sub-groups,
14 namely samples with univalent country cognition-affect responding to household
15 electrical appliances (n = 506) and soft drinks (n = 492) and samples with ambivalent
16 country cognition-affect responding to household electrical appliances (n = 449) and
17 soft drinks (n = 442), respectively. The model obtained satisfactory model fit statistics
18 ($\chi^2 = 215.644$, d.f. = 118, $\chi^2/\text{d.f.} = 1.827$, $p < .001$, CFI = .993, RMSEA = .021, SRMR
19 = .023).

20 Macho and Ledermann's (2011) phantom-model approach in AMOS was adopted
21 to test the hypotheses. As we expected, the relative impact of CCI and ACI varied as a
22 function of the dyadic effects of country cognition-affect intra-valence nature and

¹ The results indicated the U.S. had the highest average cognition (5.90) followed by Japan (5.57), Brazil (3.91) and India (3.51), which reflected the economic development levels of these countries. The composite affect scores were 1.66 (the U.S.), -1.96 (Japan), 2.74 (Brazil), and -.37 (India). These results suggest that the chosen COOs meet our expectation of their respective country cognition-affect structure among Chinese consumers and thus serve the purpose of this research. Operationally, the four distinct cognition-affect conditions are identified based on the valence of CCI and ACI of individual consumers.

1 product type (see Figure 2). Specifically, for respondents with univalent country
2 cognition-affect, there was a contrast between the utilitarian product group and the
3 hedonic product group in terms of the relative impact of CCI and ACI. For the utilitarian
4 product group, the effect of CCI on purchase intention ($\beta = .562, p < .001$) was
5 significantly stronger than that of ACI ($\beta = .300, p < .001$), the estimated difference
6 being $-.263$ [CI: $-.444 \text{ } -.081$] ($p < .01$), which supports H1. On the contrary, for the
7 hedonic product group, ACI ($\beta = .559, p < .001$) had a significantly stronger effect on
8 purchase intention than CCI ($\beta = .202, p < .001$), the estimated difference being $.356$
9 [CI: $.165 \text{ } .558$] ($p < .001$), which is in support of H2.

10 For respondents holding ambivalent country cognition-affect, in the purchase of
11 both utilitarian and hedonic products, ACI had a stronger effect on purchase intention
12 than CCI. In the purchase of utilitarian products, the effect of ACI on purchase intention
13 ($\beta = .491, p < .001$) was significantly stronger than that of CCI ($\beta = .363, p < .001$) with
14 a difference of $.128$ [CI: $.013 \text{ } .238$] ($p < .05$). In the purchase of hedonic products, the
15 effect of ACI on purchase intention ($\beta = .742, p < .001$) was also significantly stronger
16 than that of CCI ($\beta = .318, p < .001$), the estimated difference being $.424$ [CI: $.320 \text{ } .517$]
17 ($p < .001$). Thus, H3 is supported.

18

19 Insert Figure 2 about here.

20

21 Then, to test the underlying mechanism of the influence of CCI and ACI (H4 and
22 H5), we first ran the baseline model (Model 3 in Table 5) for the mediational mechanism
23 of the effects of CCI and ACI on purchase intention through the dual pathways of
24 cognitive product judgment and affective product evaluation. The model obtained
25 satisfactory model fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 326.367, \text{d.f.} = 92, \chi^2/\text{d.f.} = 3.547, p < .001, \text{CFI}$

1 = .992, RMSEA = .036, SRMR = .023). The results showed that CCI positively
2 influences both consumer cognitive product judgment ($\beta = .69, p < .001$) and affective
3 product evaluation ($\beta = .34, p < .001$). ACI was also positively related to both consumer
4 cognitive product judgment ($\beta = .23, p < .001$) and affective product evaluation ($\beta = .53,$
5 $p < .001$). Both consumer cognitive product judgment ($\beta = .11, p < .001$) and affective
6 product evaluation ($\beta = .82, p < .001$) positively related to purchase intention.

7 To verify the mediation effects, we adopted the procedures recommended by Zhao,
8 Lynch, and Chen (2010) for mediation analysis. Specifically, we used the bootstrapping
9 bias-corrected confidence interval procedure in SEM with 95% confidence intervals
10 and 2,000 samples (Preacher and Hayes 2008; Zhao, Lynch, and Chen 2010). Following
11 Macho and Ledermann's (2011) phantom-model approach in AMOS, we examined
12 each proposed mediation pathway individually. The results demonstrated significant
13 mediating effects of both mediators for the influence of CCI and ACI on purchase
14 intention. Specifically, the standardized indirect effect of CCI on purchase intention via
15 cognitive product judgment was estimated to be .074 [CI: .041 .104] ($p < .001$) and the
16 standardized indirect effect of CCI on purchase intention via affective product
17 evaluation was .278 [CI: .246 .315] ($p < .001$), which support H4. The standardized
18 indirect effect of ACI on purchase intention via cognitive product judgment was .025
19 [CI: .013 .037] ($p < .001$) and the standardized indirect effect of ACI on purchase
20 intention via affective product evaluation was .435 [CI: .391 .476] ($p < .001$). Thus, H5
21 is supported. These results proved our conceptual model as a solid framework to
22 account for the mechanisms of the influence of CCI and ACI on purchase intention.

23

24

Insert [Table 5](#) about here.

25

1 We went on to test the relative importance of the four mediational pathways in the
2 different conditional contexts with a multiple group structural equation model (Model
3 4 in Table 5). The model obtained satisfactory model fit statistics ($\chi^2 = 714.158$, d.f. =
4 401, $\chi^2/\text{d.f.} = 1.781$, $p < .001$, CFI = .989, RMSEA = .020, SRMR = .019). Macho and
5 Ledermann's (2011) phantom-model approach in AMOS was adopted to test the H6-
6 H8. The results (see Figure 3) basically supported our hypotheses. For respondents with
7 univalent country cognition-affect, in the utilitarian product group, as expected, the
8 indirect effect of CCI on purchase intention via cognitive product judgment (i.e., the
9 CCI-CJ-PI pathway) was the strongest among the four mediational pathways. Pair-wise
10 indirect effect difference tests showed that the indirect effect of CCI-CJ-PI (.291
11 [CI: .204 .389], $p < .001$) was marginally stronger than the indirect effect of CCI on
12 purchase intention via affective product evaluation (i.e., the CCI-AE-PI pathway) (.288
13 [CI: .220 .376], $p < .001$), the difference being .002 [CI: -.150 .144] ($p > .05$), and
14 slightly stronger than the indirect effect of ACI on purchase intention via affective
15 product evaluation (i.e., the ACI-AE-PI pathway) (.228 [CI: .160 .295], $p < .001$), the
16 difference being .062 [CI: -.222 .078] ($p > .05$). Moreover, it was significantly stronger
17 than the indirect effect of ACI on purchase intention via cognitive product judgment
18 (i.e., the ACI-CJ-PI pathway) (.029 [CI: -.001 .063], $p > .05$), the difference being .262
19 [CI: .178 .368] ($p < .001$). Thus, H6 is partially supported. By contrast, in the hedonic
20 product group, the indirect effect of ACI-AE-PI (.447 [CI: .336 .556], $p < .001$) was
21 significantly stronger than the indirect effects of all other three pathways, the difference
22 with the pathway of CCI-AE-PI (.147 [CI: .067 .234], $p < .001$) being .300
23 [CI: .149 .459] ($p < .001$), with the pathway of CCI-CJ-PI (.089 [CI: .024 .167], $p < .01$)
24 being .358 [CI: .174 .523] ($p < .001$), and with the pathway of ACI-CJ-PI (.072
25 [CI: .021 .134], $p < .01$) being .375 [CI: .223 .526] ($p < .001$). Therefore, H7 is

1 supported.

2 For respondents with ambivalent country cognition-affect, the indirect effect of
3 ACI-AE-PI was the strongest among the four pathways of the country image
4 mechanism in both the utilitarian and hedonic product groups. Pair-wise indirect effect
5 difference tests showed that, for the utilitarian product group, the indirect effect of ACI-
6 AE-PI (.432 [CI: .300 .574], $p < .001$) was slightly stronger than the indirect effect of
7 CCI-AE-PI (.358 [CI: .233 .482], $p < .001$), the difference being .074 [CI: -.026 .166]
8 ($p > .05$), and was significantly stronger than the indirect effect of CCI-CJ-PI (.015 [CI:
9 -.049 .078], $p > .05$), the difference being .416 [CI: .258 .583] ($p < .001$), and stronger
10 than the indirect effect of ACI-CJ-PI (.002 [CI: -.006 .018], $p > .05$), the difference
11 being .430 [CI: .300 .574] ($p < .001$). What is worth noticing is the indirect effects of
12 the latter two pathways (CCI-CJ-PI and ACI-CJ-PI) were both insignificant. As for the
13 hedonic product group, the indirect effect of ACI-AE-PI (.565 [CI: .446 .690], $p < .001$)
14 was significantly stronger than the indirect effects of all other three pathways, the
15 difference with the second strongest pathway of CCI-AE-PI (.281 [CI: .172 .404], p
16 $< .001$) being .285 [CI: .194 .379] ($p < .001$), with the pathway of CCI-CJ-PI (.071
17 [CI: .015 .139], $p < .05$) being .494 [CI: .342 .654] ($p < .001$), and with the weakest
18 pathway of ACI-CJ-PI (.051 [CI: .010 .107], $p < .05$) being .514 [CI: .378 .665] (p
19 $< .001$). These results mostly support H8.

20 We additionally tested the possible effects of consumer demographics on the focal
21 hypothesized relations. Specifically, we tested three multiple group structural equation
22 models, with gender, age and income subgroups respectively, for each of four the
23 conditioning contexts (uni/ambivalent consumers in the purchase of utilitarian/hedonic
24 products) (Kline 2016). The results showed structural invariance between demographic
25 groups, which suggested no significant effects of demographic variables on our

1 hypotheses.

2

3

Insert Figure 3 about here

4

5 **5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

6 Country image is an important extrinsic cue that consumers rely on when making
7 consumption decisions on foreign products (Li et al. 2014). However, extant relevant
8 research offers a limited understanding about the key questions of whether, when and
9 why CCI or ACI takes precedence in determining consumer preferences (Kock,
10 Josiassen, and Assaf 2019; Maheswaran, Chen, and He 2013). The current study
11 addresses these knowledge gaps and develops a nomological framework that unveils
12 the relative impact of CCI and ACI. With empirical evidence based on a large sample,
13 this study shows that though consumers refer to both CCI and ACI for purchase decision,
14 their influence is asymmetric. The relative impact of CCI and ACI is determined by the
15 intra-valence nature of country cognition-affect and product type. CCI and ACI
16 influence purchase intention through both consumer cognitive product judgment and
17 affective product evaluation, and the relative dominance of these pathways vary in
18 different conditioning contexts.

19 Specifically, CCI dominates ACI in determining consumers' purchase intention for
20 consumers with univalent country cognition-affect in the purchase of utilitarian
21 products. The predominance of CCI is attributed to the equally important mediational
22 pathways of CCI influencing purchase intention via both cognitive product judgment
23 and affective evaluation. These findings show that for consumers holding similarly
24 valenced cognition and affect towards a country and involved in the purchase of
25 utilitarian products, performance-related country perceptions rather than feelings about

1 the country are in the front of their mind when making consumption decisions.

2 By contrast, ACI takes precedence over CCI in driving purchase intention for
3 consumers with univalent country cognition-affect in the purchase of hedonic products,
4 and for consumers with ambivalent country cognition-affect regardless of product type.
5 Such predominance of ACI largely results from the primary mediational effect through
6 the pathway of ACI influencing purchase intention via affective product evaluation. The
7 findings indicate that in these conditioning contexts, consumers' response to foreign
8 products is mostly emotional. That is, they rely more on their affect toward a country
9 than cognition of its competence for consumption decision. Meanwhile, ambivalent
10 country cognition-affect and hedonic product also shift consumers' attention more
11 towards a product's emotional and hedonic values than quality and utilitarian attributes
12 in their purchase decision-making.

13

14 **5.1 Theoretical Implications**

15 The current research advances the academic knowledge on country image by providing
16 a new comparative perspective on the roles of CCI and ACI. Previous relevant research
17 has largely focused on either a single dimension of country image or the concurrent
18 effects of these two dimensions and their interrelationships (e.g., Klein, Ettenson, and
19 Morris 1998; Kock, Josiassen, and Assaf 2019). This study, instead, offers initial
20 insights into the relative impact of CCI and ACI as conditioned by the dyadic effects of
21 country cognition-affect intra-valance nature and product type. Such findings move
22 beyond simple identification of the influence of CCI and ACI, but specify which one of
23 them is more decisive in determining purchase. This study responds to calls for attention
24 to “the impact of inconsistencies (between the cognitive and affective components) in
25 the COO cue on consumers' responses” (Kock, Josiassen, and Assaf 2019, p. 56) and

1 the effect of product type on the respective influence of CCI and ACI (Verlegh 2001),
2 two neglected but crucially important research gaps in the COO literature. The findings
3 of the current study advance the country image research by elucidating the variations
4 of the relative importance of CCI and ACI in these conditioning contexts, and thus
5 reconcile the differing prior reports on the effects of these two dimensions of country
6 image.

7 This study also provides a systematic understanding of the underlying mechanism
8 that drives the asymmetric dominance of CCI and ACI. Our study verifies consumer
9 affective product evaluation and cognitive product judgement as parallel mediators for
10 the relationship of CCI and ACI with purchase intention. Such finding moves beyond
11 the prevailing notion that consumers use country image rationally as an indicator to
12 infer product quality (e.g., Harmeling, Magnusson, and Singh 2015; Laroche et al. 2005)
13 and highlights that consumers also refer to country image for products' emotional and
14 hedonic values. By including this largely overlooked conceptual link (i.e., affective
15 product evaluation), our model provides a more comprehensive account of the
16 concurrent cognitive and affective processes of consumer reactions to the two COO
17 cues. Furthermore, this study offers evidence for the first time that affective product
18 evaluation actually serves as a more prominent mediator than cognitive judgment for
19 the influence of CCI and ACI on consumer decision when consumers hold ambivalent
20 country cognition-affect and when they are involved in the purchase of hedonic
21 products. These findings echo the recent emphasis on the role of emotion in the COO
22 mechanism (Wang et al 2017) and suggest future research avenues such as more specific
23 explanations of consumers' emotional involvement with products of COOs.

24

25 **5.2 Managerial Implications**

1 Our study revives the managerial value of the CCI-ACI framework in the following
2 ways. First, our perceptual framework can serve as a marketing tool entailing nuanced
3 strategies of applying CCI and ACI for specific contexts. The current study suggests a
4 2×2 grid for marketing decision along the axes of product type and consumer
5 segmentation based on their country cognition-affect intra-valence nature. Specifically,
6 managers could figure out the valence structure of how target consumers think and feel
7 about their country. This should be taken together with product type to decide on either
8 CCI or ACI as the promotional focus. For consumer segments with consistent country
9 cognition-affect, more attention should be focused on CCI in promoting utilitarian
10 products but on ACI in marketing hedonic products. When the audience includes
11 consumers holding opposite cognition and affect of the COO, marketing efforts should
12 concentrate on ACI in the promotion of both utilitarian and hedonic products.

13 Second, our theoretical model also provides actionable measures as regards how
14 to use CCI and ACI to achieve marketing objectives. Given the important role of both
15 cognitive product judgment and affective evaluation in channelling the influence of
16 country image on purchase decision, managers should consider not only using CCI/ACI
17 to build positive quality-related brand image but also how the COO cues could be
18 capitalized on to enrich brand emotional meanings and facilitate customer-brand
19 relations. Particularly, when dealing with consumers with ambivalent country
20 cognition-affect, as well as in promoting hedonic products, branding/advertising
21 strategies should especially pay attention to fostering positive consumer feelings about
22 the products. On these occasions, marketing messages, such as stressing a product's
23 hedonic attributes or establishing product meanings that consumers would identify with,
24 are more promising than mere product quality/utility guarantees.

25 More specifically, in applying country image to mould consumer product

1 evaluations of utilitarian products, methods like the conspicuous displaying of
2 economic competence and technological advancement of the COO as pointers to high
3 product quality, as well as symbols of status and wealth, can effectively enhance a
4 product's utilitarian and hedonic values. In promoting hedonic products, in contrast,
5 promotional messages could take advantage of such COO elements as beautiful natural
6 scenery, rich culture and history, fascinating art, and lovely people to augment product
7 emotional meanings, user experiences and also consumer trust in product quality. For
8 consumers with negative stereotypes of a COO, efforts need to be spent particularly on
9 addressing negative CCI in promoting utilitarian products by, for example,
10 demonstrating recent economic and technological progress of the COO, and minimizing
11 the effect of negative ACI in promoting hedonic products by, for example, positioning
12 the brand as a global brand, thus omitting its nationality.

13

14 **5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions**

15 There are limitations of this study that point toward avenues for future research. First,
16 although our conceptual framework demonstrably advances the country image
17 literature, opportunities for further model development can enrich the understanding of
18 the complexity of the country image mechanism. For example, the extent to which
19 country image would be activated as an influencing factor in consumer attitude and
20 purchase decision could also be affected by such variables as consumer involvement
21 levels, product and brand familiarity, and availability of information other than COO.
22 Future research could examine the intertwining effects of these elements on how the
23 cognitive and affective aspects of country image function in consumer decision making.

24 Second, the generalizability of the research findings could be tested through
25 replicating this research in other contexts. The conceptual model is tested on a Chinese

1 consumer sample in this study. Since cultural differences could affect the use of the
2 CCI/ACI cue (Kock, Josiassen, and Assaf 2019), it would be worthwhile for future
3 research to test the conceptual model in various market contexts.

4 Third, for the conditional role of country cognition-affect valence structure, we
5 only tested uni/ambivalent differences. Future research could examine consumers with
6 varying levels of dialecticism, who may react differently to inconsistency (Wang, Batra,
7 and Chen 2016) between country cognition and affect. The influences of other related
8 attitudinal factors such as ethnocentrism, patriotism and global/local identity could also
9 be tested at the same time (Diamantopoulos, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic and Moschik 2020).

10 Finally, the current study captures consumers' purchase intention as the dependent
11 variable. Future research could compare consumers' purchase intention with their actual
12 purchase behaviour or foreign product ownership as dependent measures to obtain more
13 insights into the effects of CCI and ACI.

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Table 1 Sample Description

Variable	Total sample	Categories	n	Percentage
Gender	1935	Female	1026	53.0%
		Male	909	47.0%
Age	1935	Below 18	0	0.0%
		18-29	799	41.3%
		30-39	695	35.9%
		40-49	301	15.6%
		50-59	120	6.2%
		60 or above	20	1.0%
Educational level	1935	Secondary education (high school) or below	136	7.0%
		University education (bachelor degree) or technical education	1619	83.7%
		Postgraduate degree or higher	180	9.3%
Yearly household income (before tax, RMB¥)	1935	Below 30,000	80	4.1%
		30,000-49,999	141	7.3%
		50,000-99,999	456	23.6%
		100,000-199,999	884	45.7%
		200,000 or above	374	19.3%

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Table 2 Final Measurement Items

Variable	Items	Loading in CFA	CR	AVE
Cognitive country image	Economically developed - underdeveloped	.862	.929	.722
	Rich - poor	.867		
	Advanced - not advanced science and technology	.794		
	High - low level of education of people	.872		
	High - low living standards	.852		
Affective country image-positive	Like	.904	.937	.748
	Pleasant feeling	.878		
	Captivated	.914		
	Enthusiastic	.794		
	Admiration	.829		
Affective country image-negative	Upset	.902	.946	.778
	Irritated	.926		
	Hostile	.876		
	Tense	.840		
	Anger	.864		
Cognitive product judgement	Product quality	.878	.926	.758
	Technology	.863		
	Design	.860		
	Reliability	.882		
Affective product evaluation	This product gives me pleasure.	.937	.951	.866
	Using this product is an enjoyable experience.	.926		
	I feel good when I use this product.	.928		
Purchase intention	Interested in buying	.913	.917	.787
	Will buy if other conditions are equal	.865		
	Likely to buy in the future	.883		

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Table 3 Correlations and Psychometric Properties of Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Correlation						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	
1 Cognitive country image	4.449	1.344	1						
2 Affective country image-positive	2.445	1.824	.306**	1					
3 Affective country image-negative	2.006	2.030	.226**	-.265**	1				
4 Cognitive product judgement	4.212	1.278	.653**	.427**	.014	1			
5 Affective product evaluation	3.670	1.501	.339**	.589**	-.257**	.656**	1		
6 Purchase intention	3.639	1.523	.309**	.580**	-.282**	.634**	.837**	1	

** p ≤ .01

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Table 4 Assessment of Common Method Bias

Model	χ^2	df	p	
M1: Null model	37465.750	294	.00	
M2: Trait-only model	992.468	254	.00	
M3: Method-only model	21060.799	269	.00	
M4: Trait and method model	734.623	229	.00	
Model comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	p	Conclusion
Testing for the presence of trait factors				
M1-M2	36473.282	40	.00	M1 > M2 ^a
M3-M4	20326.176	40	.00	M3 > M4 ^a
Testing for the presence of a method factor				
M1-M3	16404.951	25	.00	M1 > M3 ^b
M2-M4	257.845	25	.00	M1 > M3 ^b

Note: a. Evidence supporting the existence of trait factors.

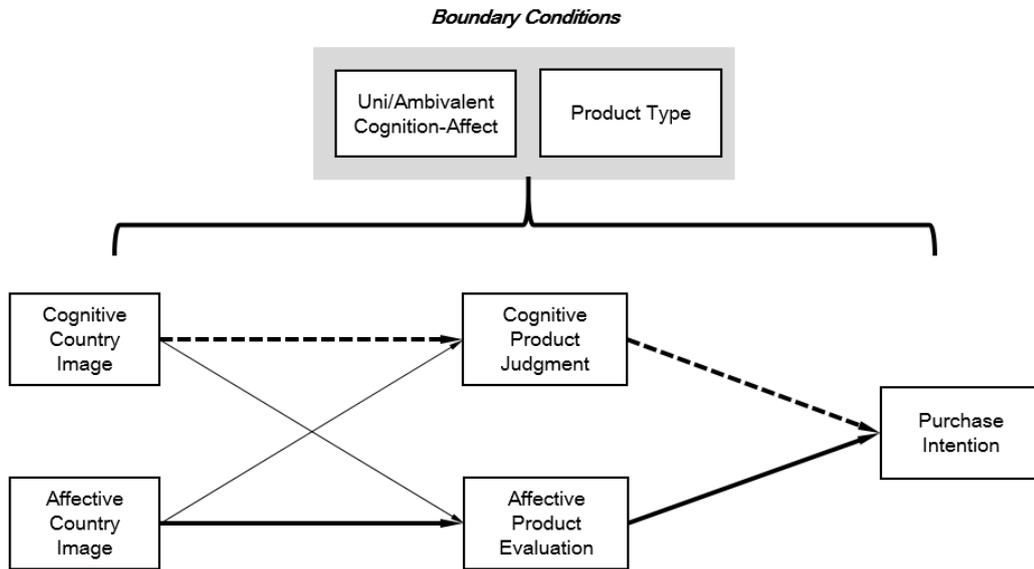
b. Evidence supporting the existence of a method factor.

Table 5 Test Results of the Direct Effect Models and Mechanism Models

	Total Sample n=1935	Univalent Cognition-affect		Ambivalent Cognition-affect	
		Utilitarian Product n=506	Hedonic Product n=492	Utilitarian Product n=449	Hedonic Product n=442
		<i>Model 1</i>		<i>Model 2</i>	
Direct Effects					
CCI-PI	.319***	.562***	.202***	.363***	.318***
ACI-PI	.543***	.300***	.559***	.491***	.742***
		<i>Model 3</i>		<i>Model 4</i>	
Direct Effects					
CCI-CJ	.693***	.814***	.483***	.826***	.736***
CCI-AE	.339***	.465***	.192***	.434***	.343***
ACI-CJ	.232***	.080*	.389***	.108	.524***
ACI-AE	.530***	.368***	.583***	.523***	.691***
CJ-PI	.106***	.357***	.184***	.018	.097*
AE-PI	.821***	.620***	.766***	.825***	.818***
Indirect Effects					
CCI-CJ-PI	.074***	.291***	.089**	.015	.071*
CCI-AE-PI	.278***	.288***	.147***	.358***	.281***
ACI-CJ-PI	.025***	.029	.072**	.002	.051*
ACI-AE-PI	.435***	.228***	.447***	.432***	.565***
Total Effects					
CCI-PI	.352***	.579***	.236***	.373***	.352***
ACI-PI	.460***	.257***	.518***	.434***	.616***

Note: CCI: Cognitive Country Image ACI: Affective Country Image
 CJ: Cognitive Product Judgment AE: Affective Product Evaluation
 PI: Purchase Intention
 * $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Relative Impact of CCI and ACI



Note: Solid arrows in bold (**→**) indicate the predominant pathway for the influence of country image on purchase intention for consumers with ambivalent country cognition-affect in the purchase of both utilitarian and hedonic products as well as for consumers with univalent country cognition-affect in the purchase of hedonic product. Dotted arrows in bold (**- - ->**) indicate the predominant pathway for the influence of country image on purchase intention for consumers with univalent country cognition-affect in the purchase of utilitarian product.

Figure 2 Relative Effects of CCI vs. ACI on Purchase Intention

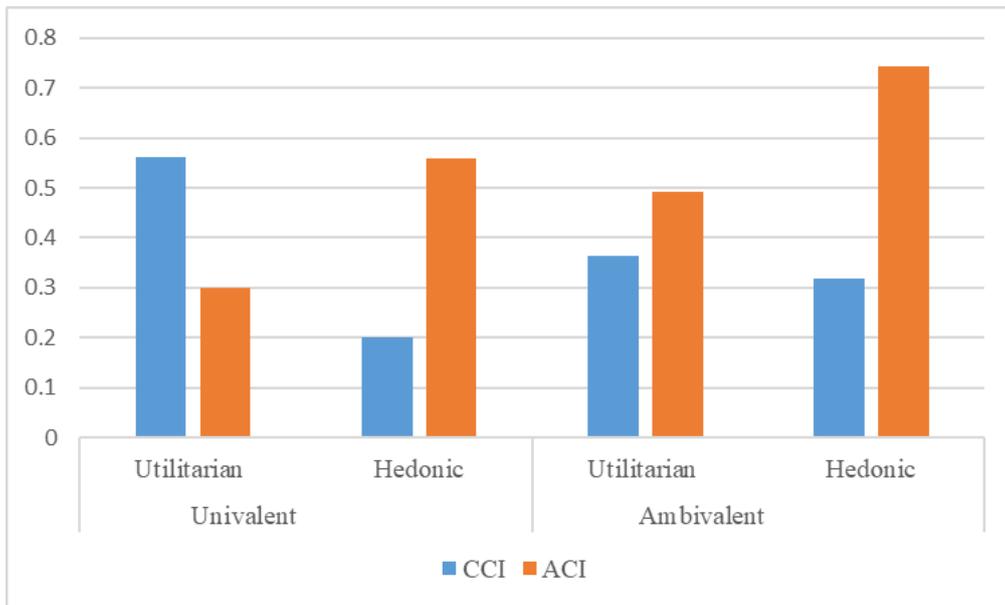


Figure 3 Indirect Effects of CCI and ACI on Purchase Intention via Cognitive Product Judgment and Affective Product Evaluation

