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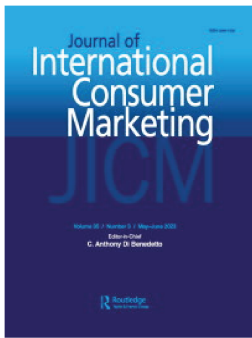
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Xenocentrism, Ethnocentrism, and Global Culture Influence on Consumer Preference for Global and Local Brands

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of ethnocentrism and xenocentric consumer dispositions, and global culture on the purchase intention of national and global brands, in a developing country, conditioned on the individual's social capital and identity. Through structural equation modeling, and a field experiment, we provide evidence that global preference bias, the cognitive duality of consumers in developing countries in choosing local or global brands, may be due to xenocentrism and global culture, and its interaction with consumer's network and self-extension. It advances the understanding of global preference bias by bringing the perspective of micro and macro levels of group influence.

Introduction

When consumers in developing countries are faced with the choice between local or global brands they weigh aspects of their individual identity in addition to the identity that the groups and networks they belong to should elicit. The vision of oneself and the vision that others should have of us are considered beyond the group itself, but also considering the continuity of relationships in a network of contacts and social interaction. In the field of international marketing, few studies evaluate conditional aspects between consumers' dispositions and their choices.

Consumer dispositions are "identities, orientations, beliefs, and attitudes toward foreign countries and globalization" (Bartsch, Riefler, and Diamantopoulos 2016, p. 2). Current literature presents evidence for explaining the preference for the global as a function of a social identity linked to ingroup (as opposed to outgroup) manifested through xenocentrism (Mueller, Broderick, and Kipnis 2009, Balabanis and Diamantopoulos 2016; Diamantopoulos, Davydova, and Arslanagic-Kalajdzic 2019) over an ethnocentric

view (Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, and Diamantopoulos 2015; Yildiz, Heitz-Spahn, and Belaud 2018).

However, in developing countries, global preference, and especially the mechanisms that shape this preference bias, has received insufficient attention in the current literature (Akram, Merunka, and Shakaib Akram 2011). Explanations for this bias suggest a preference for the global as a function of product quality (Hussein and Hassan 2018) and superior hierarchical position provided, coupled with product prestige and origin (Batra et al. 2000), or as a function of consumers' level of xenocentrism (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos 2016). In developing countries, external influence is quite significant, and cultural models exert influence on consumer constitution, and their preference for what is global (Gaur, Bathula, and Diaz 2015).

In this way, xenocentrism finds fertile ground to develop. The social model is often institutionalized and assumed as the ideal in developing countries by its individuals, and is accepted as established and unchanging, as the standard in that society in which one lives, in the social

groups one frequents, influencing people's decision making (Samuelson and Zeckhauser 1988).

This social model, where people are affected by the dominant status quo, constitutes a network of mutual influences that consumers consider in their decision-making, on a micro-level in the individual universe, and macro-level in society as a whole, shaping personal and collective identity. This study approaches network relations at two levels: at the personal level, through social capital, and at the collective level, through cultural models.

Social capital is taken as a broad set of benefits obtained by the individual in networked relationships (Bourdieu 2000). And cultural models are a set of principles that bring together a larger set of people in a network of shared experiences (Fournier and Alvarez 2019). Taking these aspects together, of an individual perspective, in the first case, and a macro point of view, in the later, the research objectives of this study are firstly to advance the understanding of global preference bias by relating consumer dispositions of ethnocentrism (as a counterpoint), xenocentrism to brand preference, and secondly, through social capital, and identity, test their mediating mechanisms of choice for global brands. To this end, two studies were developed. Study 1 compares xenocentrism and ethnocentrism of developing country consumers, and their choice of a global or local brand, with the mechanisms of identity, and social capital mediating these choices. The second study focuses on global brand preference when national or global cultural models are moderated by consumer xenocentrism.

Study 1

Brand purchase intention

Yelkur, Chakrabarty, and Bandyopadhyay (2006) propose that purchase intention for a brand may vary according to the country's degree of development, consumer preferences, product characteristics, and brand equity. Studies suggest the effect of country of origin on consumer buying behavior (Ahmed and d'Astous 1995; Insch and McBride 1999; Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran 2000).

According to Allman et al. (2016), the place of origin, the type of line extension, and the brand concept must be considered to understand how consumers perceive the global brand image and prefer it. For consumers in developing countries, global brands bring in a global lifestyle that is little or simply inaccessible otherwise.

Consumer ethnocentrism

The concept of ethnocentrism presents the propensity of individuals to idealize their group as superior, the core of everything, to characterize other groups from their group's point of view, than to prefer people who are culturally different (Shimp and Sharma 1987). The concept of consumer ethnocentrism reflects the beliefs held by native consumers about the moral propriety of purchasing products made in one's own country.

Consumer ethnocentrism is held as a propensity toward local products and brands over foreign brands (Mooij 2019). Cultural similarity encourages preference for products from the same region (Watson and Wright 2000), reinforcing the accumulating evidence for preference for domestic brands and products when consumer ethnocentrism drives their local brand choices (Yildiz, Heitz-Spahn, and Belaud 2018). Thus, the first hypothesis of this study was formulated:

> **H1:** Ethnocentrism has a positive and significant relationship with local brand purchase intention.

Consumers live in local and global worlds at the same time, having bi-cultural identities, grounded in local culture and connected to global culture. Thus, globalized brands adopt local characteristics to win over consumers, creating strong, long-term relationships (Xie et al. 2015).

Global consumers are influenced by visual cues that symbolize the global status, prestige, and participation of a particular global group. Ethnocentric consumers have different behaviors and are less influenced by global symbolism (De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker 2015). This is then reflected in a lower global brand preference. With this understanding, the following hypothesis arises:

H1a: Ethnocentrism has a significant negative relationship with global brand purchase intention.

Social Capital

For Bourdieu, social capital refers to "all current or potential resources that are related to the possession of a sustainable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance" (Bourdieu 1980, p. 670). Insofar as social capital is the result of a network of contacts that seeks to promote relationships of solidarity and reciprocity, individuals who opt for a preference for a place, act accordingly, and promote this option to other consumers. When ties and belonging characteristics occur, social capital is generated (Coleman 1988, Holt 1998).

This is the case with members of brand communities, or of various associations (Kim et al., 2020). Place preference is a form of association, even if tacit, among consumers, who seek to defend their choices, such as brand choices, in a deliberate action of solidarity with individuals who have the same preference. This understanding leads us to the following hypothesis:

H2: Ethnocentrism has a positive and significant relationship with social capital.

Self-extension

Consumers look for products whose brands are aligned with their personality traits (Kasiri et al. 2017). Thus, consumers prize brands that are symbolic and whose attributes are congruent with their identity, both from a local and global perspective (Wallace, Buil, and de Chernatony 2017). On the other hand, consumers tend to distance themselves from brands whose features and attributes go against their values and personality (Matzler et al. 2016; Islam et al. 2019; Japutra, Ekinci, Simkin, and Nguyen 2019).

Given that consumers prefer brands that have characteristics consonant with their self-extension, and that being in their own country individuals with the ethnocentric trait will seek products that can make their view of themselves closer to the idealized one, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H3: Ethnocentrism has a positive and significant relationship with the self-extension.

Xenocentrism

The main characteristic of xenocentrism is the favoritism to groups different from the individual, combined with a preconceived negative idea about the group itself (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos 2016). Xenocentrism in the context of consumer behavior is characterized by prejudice and/or aversion to domestic products and a tendency to favor foreign products (Mueller, Broderick, and Kipnis 2009). Allied to this, consumers acquire and internalize the brand as part of their own identity, developing an emotional, stable, and harmonious connection with the brand (Astakhova, Swimberghe, and Wooldridge 2017).

Such emotional connection developed by the brand depends on the consumer's sense of belonging and/or self-esteem. Consumption will command the individual's identity and extend into other areas of his or her life (Astakhova, Swimberghe, and Wooldridge 2017). Considering that the concept of consumer ethnocentrism is primarily based on economic motives, i.e., it represents a normative belief that it is inappropriate to buy foreign products (Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, and Diamantopoulos 2015), and that consumer xenocentrism is based on the premise that consumers see the superior quality in foreign products, even when there are better quality domestic products with more attractive prices (Belk 1988; Davvetas, Sichtmann, and Diamantopoulos 2015), we expect individuals with the xenocentric trait to favor groups with the same worldview, and therefore increase the social capital of these groups.

The individual with the xenocentric trait also seeks to favor his reference groups in order to strengthen them and increase his sense of belonging to these groups, because he is actively inserted in these groups rejecting what is local, in favor of what is global, building his identity. Under these considerations, the following hypotheses arise:

H4: Xenocentrism has a positive and significant relationship with social capital.

H5: Xenocentrism has a positive and significant relationship with the extent of the self-extension.

Consumers' increased identification with the brand leads to a growing liking for the brand and the desire to obtain it because of the self-esteem associated with it, and because of the social acceptance generated by it leading to a certain desirable group (Astakhova, Swimberghe, and Wooldridge 2017). In the context of this study, individuals with xenocentric traits do not see in local brands the representation of self, but they see this in global brands. From the above, we can establish the following hypotheses:

> **H6:** Xenocentrism has a negative and significant relationship with local brand purchase intention.

> **H6a:** Xenocentrism has a positive and significant relationship with global brand purchase intention.

Mediation of the self-extension and social Capital

Social capital, as a group influence mechanism, allows network members to share their knowledge and experiences, resonating with the actions of those involved (Ngai, Tao, and Moon 2015). Social capital is associated with a series of cooperative actions and value exchanges between individuals, which generate social stability, network engagement, and social coordination (Kramer 2006).

In a network of interdependent consumers, to the extent that they share the same habitus of consumption choices, social capital is expected to generate stronger relationships among consumers themselves, whether their networks are local or global in aspect. This duality is consistent with previous studies that point out that the individual transitions between a preference for the local and the global in an increasingly integrated world (Xie et al. 2015; De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker 2015). In this sense, we expect that purchasing brands that represent symbolic capital are an action of consumers. From the above, the following hypotheses are presented:

> **H7:** Social capital has a positive and significant relationship with local brand purchase intention.

> **H7a:** Social capital has a positive and significant relationship with global brand purchase intention.

At the same time, consumers search for products whose brands are congruent with their

personality traits (Kasiri et al. 2017). Thus, consumers prize brands that are symbolic and whose attributes are congruent with their identity (Wallace, Buil, and de Chernatony 2017; Matzler et al. 2016; Japutra, Ekinci, and Simkin 2019). The existing literature brings evidence of the link between brands and self-identity as a form of consumer expression in various contexts (Wallace, Buil, and de Chernatony 2017; Jain et al. 2021; Van der Westhuizen 2018).

The brand acquisition is therefore a way of expressing itself and self-extension (Rabbanee, Roy, and Spence 2020; De Vries and Fennis 2019). The consumer may be prone to one brand or the other depending on the purchase context, and the search for the identity aspects which the consumer desires or craves. In this study, an identity linked to the global or the domestic can be achieved through the consumption of global or local brands (Arnett 2002; Davvetas, Sichtmann, and Diamantopoulos 2015). Based on this understanding, the following hypotheses are established:

> **H8:** Self-extension has a positive and significant relationship with local brand purchase intention.

> **H8a:** Self-extension has a positive and significant relationship with global brand purchase intention.

Social capital should also have a mediating effect on the relationships between ethnocentrism/xenocentrism and purchase intention of global/local brands, as the groups we belong to and go through at some point in our lives influence our life choices and therefore consumption (Portes 2000; Strehlau 2007). Social groups also affect our sense of belonging. Our choices are made because we want to participate and be identified as belonging to a certain group. Among these choices, we can infer that global or local brands and lifestyles result from a process of preference construction influenced by social groups. Thus, the following mediation hypotheses were elaborated:

> **H9:** Social capital plays a mediating role between global dispositions and global/local brand purchase intention.

> **H10:** Self-extension plays a mediating role between global dispositions and global/local brand purchase intention.
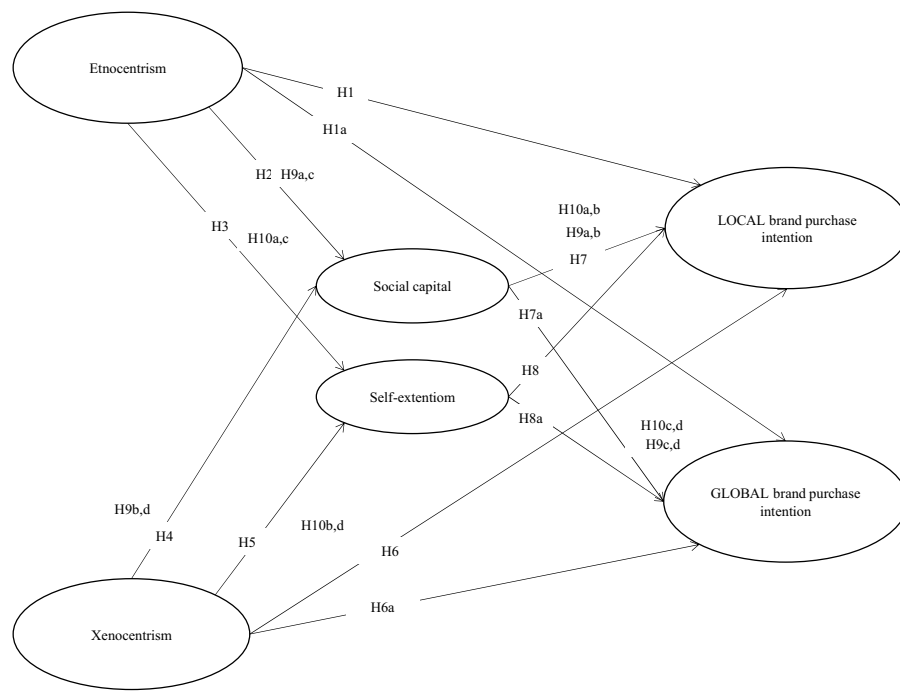
Figure 1. Conceptual model.

Theoretical model

The theoretical model of this study is represented in Figure 1.

Methods and procedures

The study was conducted with a descriptive approach by means of a survey and an explanatory approach by means of an experiment. The sample for this study was approached by people trained for the collection, without knowledge about the purposes of the study. Participants were instructed that they would be participating in a survey about brands, and those who agreed were given the link to the electronic collection. The variable items were anchored on an 11-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 - Strongly Disagree to 10 - Strongly Agree. Analysis procedures followed the recommendations of Ringle, Wende, and Will (2005) and Hayes and Montoya (2017) for determining conditional mediation processes.

Measures

To measure the ethnocentric consumer view it was used a scale proposed by Cleveland, Laroche and Papadopoulos (2009), is composed of 4 items. In order to measure the xenocentric view of the consumer, it was used a scale developed by Lawrence (2012) composed of 6 items. Self-extension was measured by the six items that compose the scale of (Sivadas and Machleit 1994). To measure the intention to purchase local and global brands, items from the scale of (Chandran and Morwitz 2005) were adapted, containing 4 items for local brand purchase intention and 4 items for global brand purchase intention. Social capital was measured using a scale developed by the authors of this study with adequate fit, χ^2=213.56, p > 5%, GFI = 0.988, CFI = 0.989, NFI =0.982, RMSEA = 0.082, AVE = 0.541, Composite Reliability = 0.821 (Cucato, Strehlau, and Bizarrias 2022).

Results of study 1

Data fit analysis

The final sample was composed of 357 valid subjects after preliminary data analysis. A total of 38 respondents were removed due to the univariate (box-plot) and multivariate (Mahalanobis distance) outlier test, of which 193 were women (54%), with an overall mean age of 30.9 years (sd = 10.1). The data distribution was identified as non-normal by

Table 1. Convergent and discriminant validity.

	Construct	AVE	CR	CA	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Social capital	0.58	0.873	0.818	**0.761**					
2	Ethnocentrism	0.68	0.893	0.840	0.227	**0.822**				
3	Self-extension	0.69	0.918	0.887	0.377	0.331	**0.831**			
4	Global brand PI	0.75	0.899	0.831	0.428	−0.043	0.406	**0.865**		
5	Local brand PI	0.673	0.891	0.835	0.363	0.456	0.241	0.073	**0.820**	
6	Xenocentrism	0.592	0.897	0.861	0.422	0.152	0.473	0.742	0.026	**0.769**

Note: CR = Composite reliability; CA = Cronbach Alpha

the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p < 0.01$). The multicollinearity test of the data identified one item with a VIF above 5 (ICE4 = 5.753), which was removed from the database. The test for homoscedasticity proved adequate, with the distribution of residuals aligned with the data scatterplot. The convergent and discriminant validity of the model was achieved after eliminating items with low factor loadings, or cross-loading in more than one construct. It is shown in Table 1. To test for common method bias, the bivariate correlation between variables, controlled for social desirability (Podsakoff et al. 2003), was compared with no observed bias. The data achieved an adequate fit to the model tested, explaining 31.2% of the local brand purchase intention and 60.8% of the global brand purchase intention, through R^2.

Hypothesis testing

The hypotheses were tested in two stages. Initially, the direct relations between the constructs were observed, and then the conditional hypotheses were tested. The results of the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis procedure and the mediations can be seen in Table 2. These results point out that all hypotheses were confirmed except (H8: Γ = 0.088; $t_{(356)=}$1.597; $p = 0.111$ and H10d, effect = 0.038; CI [-0.006; 0.094).

These results support the argument that the global preference bias is established in comparison to the ethnocentric and xenocentric paths, both of which manifest themselves as significant, either directly, or mediated by identity and social capital.

Analysis and discussion of the results of study 1

This study identified significant relationships between xenocentrism, ethnocentrism, and national or global brand choices when mediated by self-extension and social capital. For consumers in general, brands are ways of expressing themselves in society. In lower socioeconomic status groups, such as from developing countries, global brands exert a great fascination as they also represent a more socially valued lifestyle in society.

There is a culturally institutionalized status quo of preference for global brands, more as a function of social pressure for individual distinction than as a result of superior product quality. The global preference bias is more manifest in developing countries (Bartsch, Riefler, and Diamantopoulos 2016). Consumers in these countries weigh in their brand choices also their origin and local identity (Yildiz, Heitz-Spahn, and Belaud 2018). Thus, we evaluate the self-extension and social capital as mediating aspects of the relationship between ethnocentrism, xenocentrism, and purchase intention of local or global brands, as we hypothesize these mechanisms as intervening in the choice of brands congruent with the construction of a self-extension with a prominent position in the social hierarchy (Zeugner-Roth, Žabkar, and Diamantopoulos 2015).

This study contributes to the accumulation of evidence on the understanding of global preference bias (Winit et al. 2014) by testing the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and global brand preference in ways that are either direct (H1a), conditional on social capital (H9c), or the self-extension (H10c). These conditional aspects present an alternative explanation to mere xenocentrism as an explanation for global outgroup preference, consistent with previous studies (Diamantopoulos, Davydova, and Arslanagic-Kalajdzic 2019).

Social capital brings a broader perspective than the outgroup-ingroup dichotomy as an explanation for consumption choices. Preferring the outgroup

Table 2. Study hypothesis.

H	Relationship	Effect	Bootstrapping	sd	t Test	p-value	Status
H1	Etnocentrism→Local brand PI	0.383	0.381	0.049	7.802	0.001	Supported
H1A	Etnocentrism→Global brand PI	−0.214	−0.213	0.039	5.391	0.001	Supported
H2	Etnocentrism→Social capital	0.166	0.170	0.053	3.123	0.001	Supported
H3	Etnocentrism→Self-extension	0.265	0.267	0.048	5.428	0.001	Supported
H4	Xenocentrism→Social capital	0.397	0.398	0.042	9.340	0.001	Supported
H5	Xenocentrism→Self-extension	0.432	0.434	0.045	9.568	0.001	Supported
H6	Xenocentrism→Local brand PI	−0.215	−0.217	0.056	3.841	0.001	Supported
H6A	Xenocentrism→Global brand PI	0.657	0.661	0.043	15.264	0.001	Supported
H7	Social capital→Local brand PI	0.333	0.335	0.051	6.450	0.001	Supported
H7A	Social capital→Global brand PI	0.158	0.158	0.039	4.058	0.001	Supported
H8	Self-extension→Local brand PI	0.089	0.089	0.0563	1.597	0.111	Not supported
H8A	Self-extension→Global brand PI	0.106	0.103	0.046	2.263	0.024	Supported

H	Relationship	Mediation	Direct effect	Indirect effect − 95% CI		Total effect	Status
H9	a.Etnocentrism lc→Local brand PI	Social capital	0.340	0.057	0.026 ; 0.094	0.397	Supported
	b.Xenocentrism→Local brand PI		−0.151	0.173	0.117 ; 0.240	0.022	Supported
	c.Etnocentrism→Global brand PI		−0.160	0.109	0.054 ; 0.117	−0.051	Supported
	d.Xenocentrism→Global brand PI		0.774	0.066	0.029 ; 0.109	0.840	Supported
H10	a.Etnocentrism→Local brand PI	Self-extension	0.363	0.033	0.004 ; 0.071	0.397	Supported
	b.Xenocentrism→Local brand PI		−0.114	0.136	0.080 ; 0.202	0.022	Supported
	c.Etnocentrism→Global brand PI		−0.209	0.158	0.096 ; 0.226	−0.051	Supported
	d.Xenocentrism→Global brand PI		0.802	0.038	−0.006 ; 0.094	0.840	Not supported

Notes: H = Hypotheses; sd = standard deviation

and the derogation of the ingroup limits the perspective of an increasingly networked society, which also manifests itself in consumption. This indication of networked consumption is seen in branded communities and the sharing economy for example. So, the act of consuming is an act of supporting the network. A local and global identity can coexist in a consumer who has as a perspective the idea of networks and not just a social group. This study brought social capital as a mechanism capable of mediating ethnocentric and xenocentric traits, and accommodating local and global brand preferences at the same time, which did not occur with the self-extension, in order to understand the bias of preference for the global.

The direct relationships of ethno and xeno with the mediating variables were all confirmed. The higher the ethnocentric trait, the higher the social capital (H2: Γ= 0.166; $t_{(356)}$=3.123; p < 0.001), as well as the self-extension (H3: Γ= 0.265; $t_{(356)}$=5.428; p < 0.001). The same occurred with the xenocentrism trait, which raises the degree of social capital (H4: Γ= 0.397; $t_{(356)}$=9.340; p < 0.001), and of self-extension (H5: Γ= 0.432; $t_{(356)}$=9.568; p < 0.001). These results indicate that both paths, ethnocentrism, and xenocentrism, are important antecedents of tacit consumer networking and self-extension, consistent with a view of self that can be both local and global at the same time, as already indicated by Arnett (2002).

The direct path of local/global brand consumption from xenocentrism, in a manner consistent with the existing literature, points to a rejection of local brands (H6: Γ= −0.256; $t_{(356)}$=3.841; p < 0.005) and acceptance of global brands (H6a: Γ= 0.657; $t_{(356)}$=15.264; p < 0.001). That is, when guided by a trait of xenocentrism, consumers will prefer global brands, and when guided by a trait of ethnocentrism, consumers will prefer local brands.

However, when evaluating the conditional processes of mediation, new insights presented themselves as a perspective for theoretical discussion regarding the role of brands in the extension of identity, and through the lens of social capital through the sense of power obtained by networked relationships. This perspective from social capital brings a contribution not yet observed in the current literature. It is observed that social capital has a direct and significant relationship with local brand PI (H7: Γ= 0.333; $t_{(356)}$=6.450; p < 0.001), and at the same time, guides preferences to global brands (H7a: Γ= 0.158; $t_{(356)}$=4.058; p < 0.001).

The main findings of this study contribute to the accumulation of evidence on a relationship consistent with the existing literature on the relationships between local EthnoBrand and global XenoBrand, corroborating previous studies (Yelkur, Chakrabarty, and Bandyopadhyay 2006; Yildiz, Heitz-Spahn, and Belaud 2018; Balabanis

and Diamantopoulos 2016; Diamantopoulos, Davydova, and Arslanagic-Kalajdzic 2019). And additionally, the study advances on these previous researches by proposing social capital as an element capable of eliciting both the preference for local or global brands and its ability to mediate direct relations of ethnocentrism or xenocentric traits with the preference for these brands, without self-identity conflict, in the search for a self both linked to local and global aspects (Arnett 2002).

However, this process is not repeated with self-extension, which does not seem to directly direct to local brands, although it does to global brands. The direct hypotheses for the relationship proved conflicting, with the relationship between self-extension and local brand preference not being confirmed (Self-extension→Local brand PI, H8: Γ= 0.089; $t_{(356)}$=1.597; p = 0.111), but the hypothesis of a direct relationship between self-extension and global brand preference being accepted, indicating evidence of global preference bias (Self-extension→Global brand PI, H8a: Γ= 0.106; $t_{(356)}$=2.263; p = 0.024). These results raise a weakening of the self-extension as a mechanism for explaining the preference for local brands.

Through the expansion of the social groups we participate in, which increases our social capital, the purchase intention of local and global brands can be achieved more comprehensively. This, occurs not only for the relationship Xeno→Social capital→Global brand PI (H9d: effect = 0.066, CI[0.029; 0.109]), also being significant for the other routes (Ethnocentrism →Social capital→Local brand PI, H9a: effect = 0.057; CI[0.026; 0.094], Xeno→Social capital→Local brand PI, H9b: effect = 0.173; [0.117; 0.240]; and Ethnocentrism →Social capital→Global brand PI, H9c: effect = 0.109; CI[0.054; 0.117]). Among these results, it is worth noting the possibility, even, that a pathway from ethnocentrism traits leads to global brand PI, when mediated by social capital (H9c). The results of this study point to new theoretical insights in addition to confirming findings from other studies on international marketing and global dispositions.

Mediations of self-extension were also observed, being confirmed in all pathways, H10a Local Etno→ Self-extension →IC (effect = 0.033;

CI[0.004; 0.071]), H10b Xeno→ Self-extension →Local Brand PI (effect = 0.136; CI[0.080; 0.202]), H10c Etno→Self-extension →Global Brand PI effect = 0.158; CI[0.096; 0.226]), except in H10d, for the relationship Xeno→Self-extension →Global Brand PI (effect = 0.038; CI[- 0.006; 0.094]). The theoretical impacts of this study allow us to assess the accumulation of evidence suggesting that even consumers guided by an ethnocentric process may prefer the global brand. Not in a direct way (H1a), but conditioned, to social capital (H9c) and the self-extension through brands (H10c). These results support what the theory suggests regarding global preference bias in developing countries (Bartsch, Riefler, and Diamantopoulos 2016).

Study 2

Global culture

Although Study 1 assessed the influence of ethnocentrism and xenocentric traits on global preference bias, it is limited to assessing relationships between individuals' chosen reference groups, to the extent that these dispositions address an individual perspective. Further, the intermediation of social capital relegates a less far-reaching network perspective. Higher-order groups such as countries and cities are not captured in this estimation, to the extent that their classification encompasses all the subgroups observed in the social capital dimension.

To address this, study 2 seeks to broaden the group view and test how higher-dimensional groups can produce effects on global preference bias (Dholakia and Talukdar 2004). In this regard, the cultural influence exerted on various subgroups was chosen. To establish this counterpoint of cultural models, the local versus the global culture of a country, and its influence on global preference bias, also represented by xenocentrism and global brand purchase intention, was chosen. Cultural models are relatively stable cognitive networks shared by social groups who have very similar experiences, representing mental schemas evoked by individuals as they seek to make sense of the world around them. Cultural models

become institutionalized in tangible ways through cultural products, such as symbols, physical objects, cultural objects, representations, among other manifestations (Ponte and Mattoso 2014; Lebedeva 2018; Fournier and Alvarez 2019 p. 519–520).

We hypothesize that individuals from developing countries are major consumers of foreign brands and products, at the expense of local products, as a function of their social subgroups exerting pressure in this direction, as a manifestation of power (study 1), and as a function of the cultural significance of global brands and lifestyle, and desire to be culturally plural (Sankaran and Demangeot 2011) (study 2). In the latter case, we hypothesize that the interaction between a global culture, manifested through its by-products, with the xenocentrism trait, indicating a preference for the global over the local (Lawrence 2012; Cleveland and Balakrishnan 2019) is congruent and should explain the preference for global brands, configuring a global preference bias.

> **H11**: The more global the cultural model, the greater its influence on global brand purchase intention;
>
> **H11'**: The higher the xenocentrism, the higher the Global Brand Purchase Intention;
>
> **H12**: Xenocentrism will positively moderate the relationship between cultural models and global brand preference;

Stimuli

To test H11, H11', and H12, an experimental study with a factorial design was designed between subjects 2 ($global_0$/$local_1$ cultural model) vs 2 (high/low xenocentrism), with Intention to purchase global brands as the dependent variable. First, a pretest was designed to develop the stimuli for an experiment that could evaluate the relationship between cultural models and xenocentrism.

To manipulate the cultural models, a pretest revealed options for two movies, one national and one global, for social identity reference (Crane 2014). The films "Harry Potter and the Relics of Death" and "Elite Squad" (a Brazilian

film) were chosen as global and national cultural model representations, respectively, validated by another group with an item questioning this representativeness (M_{local} = 0.89, sd = 0.781 and M_{global} = 9.33, sd = 0.707 p < 5%).

Measures

To measure Xenocentrism and Intention to Buy Global Brand, the same scales as in study 1 were used after undergoing an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). To measure the cultural models, the movies were coded and measured with the same item from the pretest.

Data collection

The survey instrument was made available via an internet link to volunteers who agreed to participate anonymously in a study about brands. A total of 132 respondents participated in the study, in a balanced manner, with 63 individuals (47.7%) exposed to the global culture prime and 69 individuals exposed to the local culture prime (52.3%).

Results

The results of the performed EFA allowed identifying the dimensionality of the scale to be used in the experimental tests. The xenocentrism measure reached quite high indicators (Composite Reliability = 0.822, α = 0.851, average variance extracted, AVE = 0.577), explaining 57.69% of the xenocentrism variance. The factor solution obtained KMO = 0.827, and significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2_{(130)}$ = 317.223, p < 0.001).

The measure of the dependent variable, Intention to purchase foreign brand obtained quite high indicators (Composite Reliability = 0.926, α = 0.894, average variance extracted, AVE = 0.760), explaining 76.01% of the variance of Intention to purchase. The factor solution obtained KMO = 0.793, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was also significant ($\chi^2_{(130)}$ = 350.793, p < 0.001). Independent samples test pointed out the significant difference between Local Culture and Global Culture groups with respect to Global

Brand Purchase Intention ($M_{\text{local culture}}$ = 5.289 vs $M_{\text{global culture}}$ = 6.142, p < 0.05).

The contextual manipulation of local versus global culture also proved adequate ($M_{\text{local prime}}$ = 1.304 vs $M_{\text{global prime}}$ = 9.317, p < 0.05). The direct effect of local/global culture prime on brand purchase intention was identified (H7: β= −2.602, 95% CI [-4.090, −1.114]; $t_{(131)}$= 3.460, p < 0.05), i.e., the more local the culture, the lower the brand purchase intention. However, the direct effect of xenocentrism on global brand purchase intention was not observed (H7': β = 0.264, 95% CI [-0.190, 0.718]; $t_{(131)=}$ 1.150, p > 0.05).

A main interaction effect was identified between cultural model and xenocentrism (H8: β = 0.383, 95% CI [0.096, 0.669]; $t_{(131)=}$ 2.647, p < 0.05), where effects occur only for medium levels of xenocentrism (Johson-Neyman point = 5.079, and less) (Hayes and Montoya, 2017). This can be observed in Figure 2. The moderation region ranges only from xenocentrism levels between 1 and 5.079. That is, for low and medium levels of xenocentrism, when the culture is global, global brand purchase intention is higher than for a local culture model.

This result indicates that xenocentrism, at low and medium levels reinforces the preference for foreign products and brands when the consumer is influenced by a global cultural model. That is, there is a malleability of preference for what is foreign as a function of an interaction between the cultural model and the consumer's level of xenocentrism.

Discussion of the results of study 2

The results of study 2 indicate that xenocentrism moderates the relationship between the proposed culture models, and global brand purchase intention, establishing a positive influence on the relationship between these models and global brand purchase intention, strengthening the global preference bias. High levels of xenocentrism do not affect the relationship between cultural models and foreign brand purchase intention.

This may be due to the sometimes questioning impact of brands on consumer thinking and consumption style, and their meanings as a cultural model. Varman and Belk (2009) suggest how a foreign brand can mean an instrument of exploitation in some cultures, as a mechanism of cultural indoctrination, overriding local identity, thus losing a normative legitimacy of value embedded in people's social lives (Fournier and Alvarez 2019). Otherwise, individuals may consume what is foreign up to a certain point, where the boundary of a local identity can be preserved. Consuming something foreign beyond this point may violate social norms learned over a lifetime. This seems to explain why the moderation of xenocentrism occurs only at low and medium levels.

Summary and conclusions

Theoretical implications

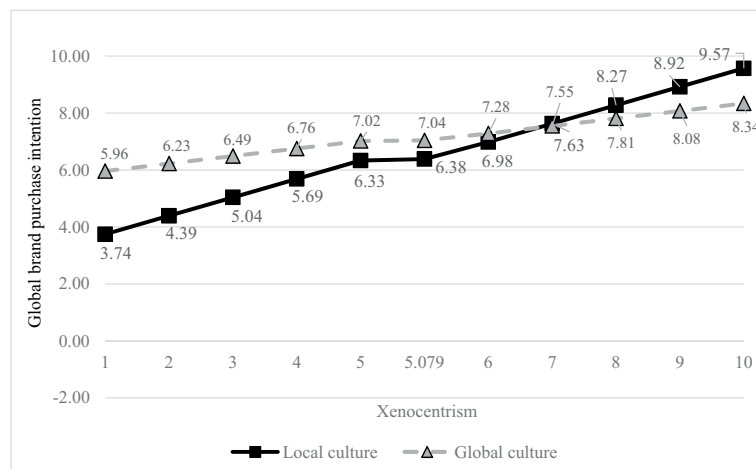Considerable effort has been undertaken in understanding aspects of global preference bias

Figure 2. Xenocentrism moderation point.

in constructs such as the country-of-origin effect (Suh and Smith 2008), consumer affinity (Nes, Yelkur, and Silkose 2014), disidentification (Josiassen 2011), and xenocentrism (Lawrence 2012). Xenocentrism has been evaluated as a key aspect in the global preference bias. The quest for understanding this phenomenon, although growing, lacks further studies in developing countries, particularly regarding its mechanisms of operation, its conditional role (Winit et al. 2014, Bartsch, Riefler, and Diamantopoulos 2016), and its consequences (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos 2016). The global preference bias appears to be conditional on the degree to which an individual is willing to prefer what is global over what is local, xenocentrism.

This study advances in considering the power of subgroups in eliciting distinction and prominence to individual members, through social capital, and on the other hand, by supplementing the group view to a larger sphere, in which broader Cultural Models, such as global culture, following the established status quo (Jost and Mahzarin 1994) can affect individual choices. In both cases, preferring and consuming the global is a sign of superiority in developing countries. The institutionalization of consumption of a product category (foreign vs local, for example, as in this study) is a result of individual choices often affected by social groups, subgroups, or higher order groups.

The bias toward a preference for what is global, in developing countries, is a manifestation of this institutionalization of consumption. This study proposed that this bias toward the global receives influence from subgroups and their by-products, such as social capital, and global cultural model groups legitimized in society.

People feel more empowered and detached when they appropriate social group strength for mutual benefit, as we propose by social capital, or as a function of massively globally propagated cultural models.

However, this is not free of questioning by consumers as to their legitimacy and congruence with their identity. Consumers, in groups not always formally organized, create and engage in narratives, spaces, and social artifacts that stimulate the consumption of a certain category of products. For example, the consumption of TV series produces groups that discuss and promote the ideology of some franchise, sharing videos, opinions, and photos of the universe of that cultural artifact. Or still, the brand community groups, or shared purchase groups, in which consumers interact even without knowing each other, but cultivate a certain common lifestyle that connects them. Thus, the global cultural model leads to a bias of preference for the global.

In study 1, the global brand preference was caused by social capital mediated by xenocentrism as a trait, and indicated positive and significant relationships only with its mediation, without a direct relationship being observed. Study 2 advanced over the first by adopting a larger group perspective, countries, or cities, under the influence of broad Cultural Models, in which brands come to have meaning in the individual's social universe. The same global brand preference was only indirectly confirmed with the moderation of xenocentrism for the relationship between cultural models and global brand preference.

Taken together, these studies contribute to the understanding of global preference bias, and global dispositions by proposing new antecedents, and the conditional role of xenocentrism in this process.

The study brings both theoretical and methodological contributions by presenting the influence of consumer dispositions on the purchase intention of domestic and global brands, in conditional processes, explaining the bias for the global. The study also pioneeringly presents social capital as a conditional construct, enabling global preference. A new lens to understand the phenomenon of global bias, based on the influence of social networks, that share interests and promote the network, is a different approach than the usual view of in-out group. Social capital seems to be more fine-tuned with the new economy of shared consumption, and the challenges of a world in which everyone is important, not just a few privileged ones. The concept of social capital was employed as a measured construct, and as a theoretical approach, and in this sense, another contribution of the study is given. Insofar as the mediating role of self-extension in the preference for global and local brands has been

diminished, to the detriment of a new variable, social capital, which has been empirically tested for the first time, this study also makes a second theoretical contribution.

Managerial implications

Managerially, this study points a path for companies' brand strategy in the environment of lower socioeconomic status consumers by bringing evidence that national and global brands may be preferred when organizations seek local or global markets, respectively, if they provide increased consumer social capital. Local brands face a tough challenge when suffer the competition of multinational brands. The bias toward global brands poses a benefit to these brands, as they are admired and well known, leading to consumer preference almost naturally. At the same time, local brands could benefit from the findings of this study, to foster their internationalization, as a strategy to market expansion and risk reduction (Bianchi 2009).

By following the strategy of combining internationalization and social capital, local brands will also develop a new network of stakeholders, from customers to distributors, and suppliers. Based on the concepts articulated on this study, local brands no longer may depend only on domestic markets, and are stimulated to develop a strategy based on social capital to be more successful (Urzelai and Puig 2019). Not just mimicing global brands on their expansion startegy, but otehwise building relationships with customers based on social capital may determine a new strategy, where values as solidarity and reciprocity sustain the bonds. This kind of relationship is on a more solid basis, than the mere exchange of interests.

The study also contributes to companies on signaling to better consumer segmentation, corroborating previous findings, to differentiate consumers according to more specific variables than the common demographic bases (López-Lomelí, Alarcón-del-Amo, and Llonch-Andreu 2019). Segmenting consumers is an important phase of marketing strategy, as knowing the consumer better than its competitors is a competitive advantage. The knowledge of consumers' characteristics demands a broader point of view. Brands do not compete solely on price, features, and name. They also compete on networks they build around them, to forge identities (Kozinets 2017).

Finally, the study brings to companies an explanation for global bias, a kind of barrier to local brands from the very nature of consumer-brand relationship. Local brand strategy depends on their ability to manage their relationship with the status quo that imposes a preference for global brands just by being global. The study proposes that managing consumer networks and self-extension, and also managing consumer xenocentrismo, can mitigate global brand preference bias.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study has several limitations. Although this study provides evidence about the phenomena of global brand bias, participants were induced to think about a national and foreign brand while responding the questionnaire. A wide range of brands, from different segments, were used in the study. This aspect can pose limitations on the responses, as the variability observed could represent a limitation when we observe consolidated analysis. Maybe some sectors of the economy could account for large parts of the variance. Consumers may not agree with each other when thinking about the same brand. This aspect was not controlled for in the study. Several other associations can derive when considering a specific brand, and influence responses. Attributes and features of a large range of different brands could account for part of the variance and affect results.

Second, we did not consider the heterogeneity of xenocentrism and ethnocentrism in consumers. As theory has suggested, in developing countries, both aspects of these dispositions could coexist in individuals. Because of this, it is reasonable to expect that these dispositions may vary in level in consumers from developing countries. Xenocentrism is not opposed to ethnocentrism, but some individuals must have different levels of xenocentrism, and it must influence their responses and their interaction with the other variables. The same may happen to ethnocentrism

regarding its level in consumers. This possible heterogeneity was not considered in this study, which could bring more nuanced interpretations for the results.

The study was conducted during the pandemic period, leading emotions do drive individuals and maybe responses were influenced accordingly. It was commonplace during the social restriction of mobility the comparison of domestic versus foreign measures to deal with COVID-19. This aspect could accentuate or mitigate the preference for global or domestic policies, and then influence levels of xenocentrism or ethnocentrism.

The limitations of this study are certainly many, such as the small sample size, and the absence of demographic control variables and other psychological traits not included in the model. Consumer states of mind, and specifically, the history of consumer shortages in developing countries, and the historical social divide in such regions may influence consumer brand preference.

Although we pioneered a multiple methodological approach perspective in this study, with a survey and an experimental study, the SEM considered the perspective of the social groups closest to the respondents. On the other hand, the experimental study adopted a broader social group perspective stimulus since a film may not be perceived as representative of the wide diversity of groups to which respondents belong. In other words, in the survey, the questionnaire refers to groups closer to the individual. In contrast, in the experimental study, the stimulus may refer the respondent to different social groups than theirs. Brand preference may vary across these levels of group perspective.

Further studies could address these limitations, test the proposed model in developed countries, and advance in theory by proposing mechanisms of moderation. As the study deals with group influence, new studies could test group cohesion or group conflict to explore the strengthening or even reverse effects respectively. We used a quantitative approach, and other studies could dive deep into the nuances of global brand bias through an ethnographic approach. New avenues for research can be obtained using other consumers' dispositions, such as country of origin and animosity.

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