

Predicting US and Chinese consumers' purchase intention of Korean textiles and apparel related cultural products

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Abstract *This study aims to examine if a consumer's evaluations of and purchase intentions towards textiles and apparel-related cultural products are influenced by their culture, as indicated by their nationalities. Additionally, several psychological variables, such as novelty-seeking tendency, world-mindedness, and familiarity with Northeast Asian culture were included in the analyses to compare the relative importance of cultural influences with the importance of individual characteristics. To conduct a quantitative analysis, we collected data from 400 female consumers in two countries: 200 from the USA and 200 from China. Key findings showed that, nationality and novelty-seeking were found to have a strong influence on purchase intention when product evaluation variables were not included. Evaluation of appearance and Northeast Asian design emerged highly significant predictors of purchase intention for Korean cultural products, regardless of the product type. Cross cultural comparative research on cultural product evaluations is extremely rare. This study focused on groups of consumers residing in the US and China and asked them to evaluate a series of textiles and apparel-related cultural products produced in Korea.*

Key words *cultural product, nationality, novelty seeking, world-mindedness, Northeast Asian, product evaluation.*

Introduction

Cross-cultural research deals with "two or more societies that possess relatively distinct cultures" (Chick, 2000, p. 80). As individuals from the same nation typically share a dominant cultural characteristic that is often distinguishable from those of different nationalities, many cross-cultural studies in consumer behavior have focused on the role of national culture, evidencing that national culture is a major force influencing consumer-decision making. In particular, national culture has been considered a key variable in

This research was partly supported by a grant from the Seoul R&BD Program.

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studies of the global marketing of products (Ahmed and d'Astous, 2008).

It is worth noting that many culturally embedded, or cultural products, are now being marketed as global products (d'Astous *et al.*, 2008). In the past cultural products, defined as those "which embody aesthetic features and production technologies that are deeply enmeshed in the artisan's local traditions" (Littrell and Miller, 2001, p. 69), were mainly found in tourist locations, as their consumers had been predominantly tourists visiting a given area. However, the growing popularity of online shopping offers unique opportunities for producers of cultural products to market their merchandise online to anyone regardless of their physical location. The popularity of the Internet has created a new marketing venue for cultural products which had previously been marketed primarily to tourists. Accordingly, a growing number of websites are being developed to promote cultural products made by artisans around the world, allowing consumers to shop for these products without having to visit foreign countries (China.org.cn, 2009; AsiaToday, 2010; Lee and Littrell, 2003, 2005; Lee *et al.*, 2009). Studies have emerged to examine the effect of the on-line availability of souvenirs, which extends the purchase opportunity to beyond the trip's end (Abendroth, 2009) or to suggest an innovative e-commerce model for tourism products (Huang *et al.*, 2009).

When marketed to tourists, cultural products become souvenirs, serving as a reminder of the tourists' experience with the place and the people. When marketed online to those who have not traveled to the place where those products are locally sold, however, cultural products become global products as they become accessible by a global market. Littrell and Dickson (1999) explained that consumers buy cultural products for a variety of reasons. For example, some consumers seek to establish self-identity by possessing products that differentiate themselves from others. Some, driven by a sense of social responsibility, hope that their purchases will help improve the quality of artisans' lives. Consumers can also be motivated by a desire to create a special aesthetic experience or a desire to feel connected with artisans and their culture. While individuals may buy cultural products online not necessarily for the same reasons they buy souvenirs while traveling, the way they evaluate cultural products may not differ significantly, whether marketed online or to tourists on site. Because scant research exists that examines the factors influencing the evaluation of cultural products over the Internet, we have based our research largely on the existing literature on souvenir shopping.

In this study, we selected two groups of consumers residing in the United States and China and asked them to evaluate a series of textiles and apparel-related cultural products produced in Korea. One purpose of the present study was to examine if a consumer's evaluations of and purchase intentions towards textiles and apparel-related cultural products were influenced by their culture, as indicated by their nationalities. Additionally, in order to compare the relative importance of cultural influences with the importance of individual characteristics, we included several psychological variables that may influence a consumer's cross-cultural experience. The variables chosen were novelty-seeking tendency, world-mindedness, and familiarity with Northeast Asian culture.

Literature review

Theoretical Frameworks

Several theoretical models were used to explain the relationships amongst the selected variables. A framework of the EKB model asserts that, when making a decision, a consumer typically goes through seven major stages: need recognition, information search, pre-purchase evaluation, purchase, consumption, post-consumption evaluation, and divestment (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006). This model has been applied to a wide range of buying situations, including online shopping (Liang and Lai, 2002; Sheu *et al.*, 2008; Teo and Yeong, 2003) and tourism shopping (Fodness and Murray, 1999; Kim and Littrell, 1999, 2001) and has also been used to develop different consumer typologies (Wang *et al.*, 2004; Wesley *et al.*, 2006; Westbrook and Black, 1985). The model postulates that the decision-making process of consumers is affected by external variables in the form of either environmental influences (e.g., culture, social class, family) or individual differences (e.g., values, personality, knowledge). Schwartz (1994) identified novelty seeking and world-mindedness as two of the ten main motivational types of values. Values are desirable trans-situational goals that motivate action and serve as guiding principles in any form of decision-making (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1994). According to the Schwartz value-dimensions model (Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987, 1990), values can be conceptually organized along two bipolar dimensions: 1) openness to change versus conservatism and 2) self-transcendence versus self-enhancement. Novelty seeking and world-mindedness are two distinct types of motivational values representing two different yet contiguous higher-order dimensions, the openness to change domain and the self-transcendence domain.

In the current study three variables were identified as important external variables potentially influencing consumer's purchase decision of cultural products: nationality represents an environmental influence whereas the two types of values (novelty seeking and world-mindedness) and familiarity with the culture from which the products originated represent individual differences.

Novelty seeking

Human curiosity drives people to seek out variety and difference. This tendency to "search for something new, strange and unknown to the seeker" (Wee *et al.*, 1995, p. 22) has been recognized as a strong motivation for traveling (Tse and Crotts, 2004). Although novelty is an essential element in the tourist experience, all tourists do not embrace an unfamiliar environment with the same intensity and readiness (Cohen, 1972). Whereas many people seek balance between the need for change and the need for security, there also exist individuals on opposite ends of the spectrum: 'venturers' who thrive in an alien environment and 'dependables' who would rather experience the predictable and dependable (Plog, 2001). Several researchers have observed individual differences in consumers' orientation toward novelty and their impacts on travel and leisure activities (Crotts, 1993; Pizam *et al.*, 2004; Plog, 2001). A number of researchers have observed that those with a strong desire for novelty, arousal, and stimulation favored adventurous or high-risk recreational activities (Bouter *et al.*, 1988; Hymbaugh and Garrett, 1974; Pizam *et al.*, 2002; Pizam *et al.*, 2004). Pizam *et al.* (2004), however, found that novelty or sensation seekers

also had a strong preference for some tourist activities that are not considered adventurous, such as frequenting bars and going to concerts. Crompton (1992) argued that the way tourists view destinations might be influenced by their predisposition toward novel experiential consumption. Recently, López-Bonilla and López-Bonilla (2008) found that online shoppers tended to score higher than non-online shoppers on sensation seeking, as measured by experience seeking, boredom susceptibility, thrill and adventure seeking and disinhibition.

Novelty-seeking individuals may seek arousal and satisfaction through the purchase of novel products. Studies have shown that they are early adopters of technologically innovative products (Dabholkar and Bagozzi, 2002; Pizam *et al.*, 2002). In addition, novelty seeking arises more easily with products with low purchase risks (Wee *et al.*, 1995). As cultural products from other countries are novel and different in nature and they are also typically low-cost merchandise, we expected that novelty-seeking tourists would be inclined more favorably toward cultural products.

Based on the above discussed theoretical frameworks and also on the review of existing literature, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: Consumers' purchase intention of textiles and apparel cultural products will be significantly influenced by their novelty-seeking tendency.

World-mindedness

Among different concepts pertaining to cross-cultural attitudes, world-mindedness has been found to affect a person's attitudes toward foreign products including souvenirs. World-minded consumers are those who favor "a world-view of the problem of humanity and whose primary reference group is humankind" (Sampson and Smith, 1957, p. 105). A review of the relevant literature identifies several similar concepts, including international mindedness, cultural openness, and cosmopolitanism. World-mindedness is not necessarily a synonym for international mindedness in that highly world-minded individuals do not limit themselves to an interest in and knowledge of international affairs but also tend to inculcate a world spirit, seeing themselves as citizens of the world (Gomberg, 1994; Sampson and Smith 1957). Although interest in other cultures and countries is often displayed by world-minded consumers (Gomberg, 1994), Shankarmahesh (2006) notes that world-mindedness should be distinguished from cultural openness. While culturally open individuals must be interested in opportunities to interact with people from other cultures and to experience some of their artifacts (Sharma *et al.*, 1995), people can be considered world-minded even without interacting with other cultures as long as they favor a world view on problems (Shankarmahesh, 2006). Hannerz (1990), however, defines a world-minded person as someone who reflects both cultural openness and cultural adaptability. Cosmopolitanism is another related concept referring to a person who maintains a broad network of personal contacts beyond their local community (Nijssen and Douglas, 2008). Hannerz (1990) argues that openness toward divergent cultural experiences is inherent in the nature of a cosmopolitan. Nijssen and Douglas (2008) observed that consumers' exposure to foreign cultures has increased the overall level of consumer world-mindedness.

Although world-mindedness has been found to be negatively correlated with ethnocentrism (Smith, 1955) and nationalism (Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989), researchers observe that individuals can display both characteristics to varying degrees (Rawwas *et al.*, 1996). Rawwas *et al.* (1996) found that world-

minded consumers paid less attention than their less world-minded counterparts to country of origin cues when evaluating products and gave higher quality ratings for foreign products. In their study of US tourists traveling to Mexico, Kim and Littrell (1999) found that world-mindedness influenced tourists' likelihood to participate in ethnic tourism by engaging in activities such as visiting ethnic communities, attending ethnic festivals, and meeting interesting people different from themselves. A tendency to favor ethnic tourism, in turn, predicted a tourist's favorable attitudes toward the aesthetic qualities of Mexican textile and apparel souvenirs. In Nijssen and Douglas's (2008) study of Dutch consumers, world-mindedness was associated with favorable attitudes toward stores selling traditional products from other countries. In the current study, similarly, we hypothesized that world-mindedness would also favorably influence the evaluation of cultural products from other countries. Thus, we posited the following hypothesis:

H2: Consumers' purchase intention of textiles and apparel cultural products will be significantly influenced by their world-mindedness.

Familiarity with Northeast Asian culture

One's familiarity with or knowledge of a culture, such as its language, traditions, and dominant values, affects that person's experiences in that culture. Travelers with a higher degree of knowledge of a host culture tend to have more positive regard for people from that culture and are more likely to interpret their behaviors from the host culture's perspective. Knowledge of the host culture is also found to enhance a person's adaptation to the culture (Wiseman *et al.*, 1989). Studies of foreign visitors to Korea found that exposure to the Korean culture or previous travel experience to Korea influenced tourists' destination image (Kim and Choi, 2005; Oh *et al.*, 2003). In their study of international tourism shopping, Kim and Littrell (2001) identified two variables measuring familiarity with the host culture: knowledge of the culture and previous travel experience. Although they found no impact of knowledge of the host culture on tourists' attitudes toward different aspects of souvenirs, they observed that previous travel experience decreased a recreational tourist's intention to purchase souvenirs highly representative of the tourism area. The researchers explained that those who had traveled to the area before may have already purchased these products during their previous visits or that due to their previous exposure they no longer perceived them to be new and different. However, this negative relationship was not present for ethnic tourists. In a cross-cultural study conducted with consumers from five countries, d'Astous *et al.* (2008) noted that cultural products from certain countries have received consistently poor evaluations across samples. They attributed this finding to the respondents' lack of familiarity with those countries. The researchers further asserted that as familiarity with a country increases, consumer judgments toward the country's cultural products become more objective, thereby resulting in a better appreciation of the true merits of the products. It should be noted, however, that the cultural products studied in d'Astous *et al.*'s study constituted intangible cultural art forms such as theater, opera, classical music, jazz music and movies as opposed to tangible cultural consumer products.

Based on the discussed theoretical frameworks and also on the review of existing literature, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H3: Consumers' purchase intention of textiles and apparel cultural products will be significantly in-

fluenced by familiarity with the culture from which the products originated.

Although, at an individual level, the familiarity with Northeast Asian culture may vary, whether tourists' nationality belongs to one of Northeast Asian countries or not is critical in an evaluation of cultural products. As an environmental influence that results in variance in buyer buying decision making, tourists' geographical and historical proximity to the host culture where the cultural product originated will influence the evaluation of the product attributes. Thus, we hypothesized as follows:

H4: Consumers' purchase intention of textiles and apparel cultural products will be significantly influenced by their nationality.

Evaluations of Cultural Products and Purchase Intention

A relationship between product evaluation and purchase intention is proposed in the current study. Consumption value theory views consumer choice behavior as a function of multiple consumption values: functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional value (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Consumers' decisions are regarded to be influenced by any or all of these values. For example, functional value refers to physical performance achieved through physical attributes. Emotional value is associated with the aesthetic attributes of products. Social value is defined as the value achieved when an item is associated with specific social groups such as demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural-ethnic groups.

Due to the absence of empirical studies of evaluations of cultural products the literature on souvenir shopping was reviewed to identify key dimensions of cultural product attributes and the resulting connection between product evaluation and purchase intention. Souvenir studies have recognized that based on the level of importance tourists attached to different product attributes, souvenir attributes can be categorized into several dimensions. Turner and Reisinger (2001) argued that value, product display characteristics (color, display, packaging, size) and uniqueness were three important product attributes for tourists. Kim and Littrell (1999) found that souvenir attributes, whether measured in terms of importance or perceived attributes, could be divided into three dimensions: aesthetic, uniqueness, and care. Swanson and Horridge (2004) confirmed the existence of the same three dimensions of important souvenir attributes in their study. When focused on craft souvenirs, Yu and Littrell (2003) identified four souvenir attributes: aesthetic pleasure, uniqueness and function, cultural and artisan linkage, and craftsmanship.

Kim and Littrell (1999) in their study of US female tourists traveling to Mexico, they measured tourists' attitudes toward five different types of Mexican textile and apparel souvenirs by using combined scores of important and perceived souvenir attributes. The researchers found that positive attitudes toward aesthetic aspects and uniqueness of souvenirs were significant predictors of purchase intention. Based on the results of previous studies, we proposed that product evaluations should be treated as a multi-dimensional concept and hypothesized that a consumer's product evaluations would significantly influence her intention to purchase the product.

H5: Consumers' purchase intention toward textiles and apparel cultural products would be significantly influenced by their product attribute evaluation.

world-mindedness, familiarity with Northeast Asian culture) and the environmental influence (i.e., nationality) on purchase intention of cultural products. Also, product attribute evaluation is therefore posited to influence purchase intention.

Methodology

Sample design and data collection

We prepared three different versions of a questionnaire utilizing cross-cultural validation and back-translation procedures. The questionnaire was first completed in Korean and then cross-translated into English by a bilingual Korean translator fluent in both English and Korean and was in turn translated into Chinese by a Korean bilingual fluent in both Chinese and Korean. Both versions were then translated back into Korean by different bilingual individuals and compared to the original version for accuracy. This resulted in marginal modifications in the wording of a few questions. An online questionnaire in three languages was then prepared by a Korean market research company with access to a large number of consumer panels situated in different countries.

The data were selected from two countries comprised of 200 US and 200 Chinese females. These survey participants were recruited by the market research company which was then asked to select adult females between 20 and 50 years of age from their US and Chinese panels. This study focused on the female gender only because women are more likely purchasers of handicraft souvenirs and textiles and apparel related cultural products (Anderson and Littrell, 1995; Kim and Littrell, 1999, 2001). Additionally, this approach allowed the researchers to control for the possible bias associated with gender differences and also to eliminate the need to develop stimuli targeted at both genders. To ensure income parity as closely as possible across the two samples, all Chinese respondents were recruited from metropolitan cities, such as Beijing. Beijing, as per *onbao.com* had the highest average income level in China at the time of the study. US respondents were recruited regardless of their residential areas. 22.0% of those in the US sample were residents of rural areas of which the population was less than 5,000 and 20% were from a large city with a population of more than 300,000.

Unlike other tourism studies (e.g., Kim and Littrell, 1999, 2001; Turner and Reisinger, 2001; Yu and Littrell, 2003), participants in this study were not screened for their interests in travel nor for their intention to travel to Northeast Asian countries. The only screening tool adopted in this study was therefore the participant's ability to access the Internet.

The US sample consisted of 89 single and 111 married women whose average age was 36 years. Forty-one percent had graduated from a university. Thirteen percent attended graduate school as well. Fifty-five percent indicated a monthly household income of less than \$4,000, while 19 percent had a monthly income in excess of \$10,000. Twenty-two percent of the respondents lived in rural areas and 20 percent in large cities. Compared to the demographic characteristics of the US national population in 2008 (US Census Bureau, 2010), our sample was younger, more educated, and had a higher percentage of singles and individuals with a monthly household income of less than \$4,000.

The Chinese sample included 113 single and 87 married women with an average age of 33 years. Everyone had attended high school while slightly over half of the sample (54%) had completed

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university. Half of the sample indicated a monthly household income of \$1,300 or below and 84 percent \$4,400 or below. This sample represented a higher percentage of single women and high-income earners than the population of the city of Beijing (D&P China, 2006; National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2007). The sample could not be compared to the city's population in terms of education due to the unavailability of relevant data.

Stimuli development

Four product types (t-shirts, scarves, handheld accessories, and leather goods) were chosen as stimuli for this study due to the findings of Cho (2007), who identified them as being particularly popular shopping items of textiles and apparel-related cultural products, after interviewing numerous store owners of Korean cultural products. A Korean fashion designer then produced a variety of product designs for each product type. After consultations with several other design and fashion marketing professionals, three to twelve designs were chosen for each product type. After a prototype of each design was created, a Korean manufacturer was found who agreed to market these products at the conclusion of the study. The designs chosen for each product type carried a similar design theme or pattern and were specified to vary only in color or shape. In the category of leather goods, leather belts and leather wallets were chosen. While they might not be considered to represent the same product type, by utilizing the same material and a similar design pattern in both products, the impression was given that they were marketed as a set. Enlarged photo shots emphasizing key design themes or elements were presented as zoom shots juxtaposed with large photos of the products themselves.

Survey participants were asked to evaluate a group of products based on a careful examination and consideration of photographs depicting those products. Given that one of the objectives of this study was to examine whether those who more clearly recognized the Northeast Asian cultural design features of the products would more favorably respond to those products, all information pertaining to the country of origin and artisans was deliberately withheld.

Survey description

Novelty seeking. Eight questions were used to examine an individual's level of interest in variation and change in life. Four items (e.g., "I like continually changing activities" and "I like to experience novelty and change in my daily routine") were adapted from a short version of the widely-used Change Seeker Index, originally developed by Garlington and Shimota (1964) and modified by Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1995). The other four items (e.g., "I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands" and "I often think of the things I buy and do in terms of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image") were adapted from Tian, Bearden and Hunter's (2001) Need for Uniqueness scale. The items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). The reliability coefficients for the US and Chinese samples were .94 and .89, respectively.

World-mindedness. Six questions designed to measure world-mindedness were adapted from previous studies (Bhawuk and Brislin, 1992; Kim and Littrell, 2001; Wiseman *et al.*, 1989). Examples of the

scale items included: "It would be better to be a citizen of the global world rather than of any particular nation," "I am interested in the history and the culture of other countries," "Any healthy individual, regardless of race or religion, should be allowed to live wherever she/he wants to live in the world" (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). The reliability coefficients for the US and Chinese samples were .86 and .82, respectively.

Familiarity with Northeast Asian/Korean culture. We designed eight questions to determine US respondents' overall familiarity with Northeast Asian culture. Examples of the items included: "I am acquainted with people from Northeast Asian countries," "I can tell Northeast Asian cultures apart from other cultures" and "I am interested in Northeast Asian food, history, and language" (1 = not at all; 7 = totally). The reliability coefficient for the US sample was .87. For the Chinese sample, however, the same scale was modified to refer specifically to Korean culture. As the Chinese are part of the Northeast Asian culture, we decided that it would be more appropriate to ask about their familiarity with Korean culture. The reliability of this scale for the Chinese sample was .84.

Product evaluations. The seven-item scale measuring evaluations of fashion cultural products was derived from Littrell *et al.* (1994). Respondents viewed each of the four fashion cultural products and evaluated each in terms of a variety of product attributes, including color, design, uniqueness, functionality, care, and attributes related to Northeast Asia. All the items were measured on a seven-point scale (1 = not at all; 7 = totally).

When factor analyses with varimax rotation were performed on the product evaluation measure for each sample and for each product, a four-factor structure was confirmed. Two items involving color and design were grouped as one factor (labeled Appearance) and two items pertaining to Northeast Asian design were grouped as another factor (labeled Northeast Asian Design). One item, 'it is easy to care for and keep clean' appeared to be a distinct concept by itself, labeled Ease of Care. Two remaining items ('it is unique' and 'it can be used') were discarded because they did not have consistent results across different products and samples. All of the factors exhibited strong internal consistency for both samples (see Table 2).

Purchase intention. Respondents' intention to purchase the product was measured by two items from Kim and Littrell's (2001) study ("I intend to purchase this product to use it myself" and "I intend to purchase this product for others as a gift") and one item created by the researchers ("I intend to purchase this product"). The responses were presented on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = not at all; 7 = totally). The reliability coefficients for purchase intention were .98 and .96 for the US and Chinese samples, respectively.

Table 1.
Items

Variable	Items
Novelty seeking	I like continually changing activities
	I am continually seeking new ideas and experiences
	I like to experience novelty and change in my daily routine
	When things get boring, I like to find new and unfamiliar experiences
	I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands
	I often think of the things I buy and do in terms of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image
	Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness
World mindedness	Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image
	It would be better to be a citizen of the global world rather than of any particular nation
	Any healthy individual, regardless of race or religion, should be allowed to live wherever she/he wants to live in the world
	Our country should make it easier for foreigners to immigrate
	I like to meet foreigners
	I am interested in the history and the culture of other countries
Familiarity with Northeast Asian/Korean culture	I like to decorate my home or office with artifacts from other countries
	I have been to at least one of the Northeast Asian countries
	I can tell Northeast Asian cultures apart from other cultures
	I have a favorable impression of Northeast Asia
	I know the location of Northeast Asian countries on the map
	I am acquainted with people from Northeast Asian countries
Product evaluation	I am interested in Northeast Asian cultures
	If I hear Northeast Asian languages, I can distinguish them from other languages.
	I am interested in Northeast Asian food, history, and language
	The color is appealing
	The design is appealing
	It is unique
Purchase intention	It can be used
	It is easy to care for or clean
	The design is of a Northeast Asian image
	It is designed by a famous company or craftsman of Northeast Asia
	I intend to purchase this product to use it myself
	I intend to purchase this product for others as a gift
	I intend to purchase this product

Table 2.
Reliability coefficients

	US	Chinese
Novelty seeking	.94	.89
World-mindedness	.86	.85
Familiarity with NE Asia	.87	.84
Appearance (t-shirts)*	.67	.78
NE Asian design (t-shirts)*	.62	.79
Purchase intention (t-shirts)	.96	.92
Appearance (scarves)*	.92	.88
NE Asian design (scarves)*	.73	.80
Purchase intention (scarves)	.96	.96
Appearance (accessories)*	.91	.95
NE Asian design (accessories)*	.74	.86
Purchase intention (accessories)	.98	.97
Appearance (leather goods)*	.91	.91
NE Asian design (leather goods)*	.68	.91
Purchase intention (leather goods)	.98	.97

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* A correlation coefficient is provided instead of a reliability coefficient because the variable includes only two items.

Analyses of results

Mean Comparisons

T-tests were performed on four product-evaluation factors in addition to purchase intention, to compare means between the US and the Chinese respondents (see Table 3). With respect to t-shirts the Chinese sample exhibited significantly higher means for all variables. With respect to scarves, handheld accessories, and leather goods, the Chinese sample scored higher on average for all variables with the exception of appearance. Finally, no significant differences existed between the two groups with regard to their perceptions of the appearance of each of the three products.

Table 3.
T-test results

	Chinese		US		t-value
	(n = 200) Mean	SD	(n = 200) Mean	SD	
Product evaluations (t-shirts)					
Appearance	4.56	1.22	3.91	1.63	4.55 ***
NE Asian design	4.60	1.13	3.90	1.39	5.53 ***
Care	5.29	1.15	4.57	1.54	5.30 ***
Intention	4.05	1.42	2.65	1.67	9.00 ***
Product evaluations (scarves)					
Appearance	5.11	1.16	5.09	1.77	.08
NE Asian design	4.78	1.20	4.07	1.49	5.22 ***
Care	4.87	1.27	4.15	1.53	5.12 ***
Intention	4.82	1.39	3.15	1.97	9.78 ***
Product evaluations (accessories)					
Appearance	5.22	1.25	5.23	1.62	-.05
NE Asian design	5.02	1.30	4.41	1.54	4.24 ***
Care	4.70	1.36	3.97	1.52	5.06 ***
Intention	4.87	1.46	3.39	2.02	8.36 ***
Product evaluations (leather goods)					
Appearance	4.96	1.28	5.15	1.59	-1.28
NE Asian design	4.82	1.32	4.49	1.49	2.29 *
Care	4.59	1.38	3.93	1.58	4.42 ***
Intention	4.72	1.44	3.31	1.97	8.14 ***

* $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

Regression Analyses

Multiple regression analyses were conducted for each product to examine how strongly purchase intention was predicted by nationality, novelty seeking, world-mindedness, familiarity with Northeast Asian culture and three separate factors of product evaluation (see Tables 3, 4, 5, 6). Three demographic variables (marital status, education, and age) were also included as controls. The enter method was employed to compare the influences of product-specific variables (i.e., appearance, Northeast Asian design, and care) and other more general personal variables. The three product-evaluation factors were entered into the re-

gression equation as the second block. The variance explained by the model, including all of the predictors, ranged from 59% to 64%. Novelty seeking was a significant predictor of purchase intention when the three product-evaluation factors were not included in the equation but the influence became either slightly significant or insignificant when the three variables were added. Therefore, H1, which stated a significant influence of novelty seeking on purchase intention, was partly accepted. World-mindedness significantly influenced purchase intention for t-shirts, yet its impact became insignificant when the three product-evaluation factors entered the model. Accordingly, H2, which posited a significant influence of world-mindedness on purchase intention, was rejected. Familiarity with Northeast Asian culture (familiarity with the Korean culture for the Chinese sample) was significant in predicting purchase intention for all four products when product evaluations were not considered. This variable, however, remained significant only for t-shirts when the second block of variables was included. Also, H3, which posited a significant influence familiarity with Northeast Asian culture, was partly accepted. The negative regression coefficient for nationality (1 = US) indicated that US consumers held a significantly lower purchase intention for all four products. H4, which held that nationality will influence purchase intention,

Table 4.
Regression analysis results for t-shirts

	B	Std. error	β	B	Std. error	β
Step 1						
Constant	1.68	.62		-.19	.49	
Nationality (1 = US)	-.97	.16	-.28 ***	-.72	.12	-.21 ***
Novelty seeking	.27	.07	.20 ***	.06	.06	.05
World-mindedness	.16	.08	.13 *	.00	.06	.00
Familiarity with NE Asia	.33	.07	.24 ***	.15	.05	.11 *
Marital status (1 = married)	-.16	.15	-.05	-.12	.11	-.03
Education	-.25	.08	-.13 *	-.06	.06	-.03
Age	.00	.01	.02	.00	.01	.00
Step 2						
Appearance				.55	.04	.48 ***
NE Asian design				.42	.05	.32 ***
Care				-.15	.05	-.13 **
R ²			.35			.64

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 5.
Regression analysis results for scarves

	B	Std. error	β	B	Std. error	β
Step 1						
Nationality (1 = US)	-1.11	.18	-.30 ***	-1.20	.14	-.31 ***
Novelty seeking	.39	.08	.26 ***	.12	.07	.08
World-mindedness	.16	.09	.10	.07	.07	.04
Familiarity with NE Asia	.24	.08	.16 *	.08	.06	.05
Marital status (1 = married)	.02	.17	.01	-.19	.13	-.05
Education	-.20	.09	-.09 *	-.08	.07	-.04
Age	-.01	.01	-.04	-.01	.01	-.02
Step 2						
Appearance				.50	.05	.39 ***
NE Asian design				.40	.06	.30 ***
Care				-.02	.05	-.02
R ²			.35			.62

* $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

Table 6.
Regression analysis results for handheld accessories

	B	Std. error	β	B	Std. error	β
Step 1						
Constant	2.36	.71		-.72	.58	
Nationality (1 = US)	-.94	.18	-.25 ***	-.97	.14	-.25 ***
Novelty seeking	.40	.08	.26 ***	.14	.07	.09 *
World-mindedness	.13	.09	.08	-.02	.07	-.01
Familiarity with NE Asia	.31	.08	.20 ***	.11	.06	.07
Marital status (1 = married)	.20	.17	.05	-.02	.13	.01
Education	-.28	.10	-.13 *	-.04	.08	-.02
Age	-.01	.01	-.04	-.01	.01	-.02
Step 2						
Appearance				.47	.06	.36 ***
NE Asian design				.30	.06	.23 ***
Care				.20	.05	.16 ***
R ²			.33			.60

* $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

was accepted. Education significantly predicted purchase intention in the initial model but after the second block of variables were entered, its impact became insignificant. Both appearance and Northeast Asian design were significant at the level of $p = .000$ for all four products, indicating that those who held more favorable perceptions of the appearance and Northeast Asian design features of the products were more likely to intend to purchase the products. Care was a significant predictor of purchase intention for all products but scarves. When the three product-evaluation factors were entered into the equation, the R^2 coefficient increased significantly. We accepted H5 that product attribute evaluation influences purchase intention.

Table 7.
Regression analysis results for leather goods

	B	Std. error	β	B	Std. error	β
Step 1						
Constant	2.36	.71		-.52	.57	
Nationality (1 = US)	-.87	.18	-.23 ***	-.96	.14	-.26 ***
Novelty seeking	.38	.08	.25 ***	.14	.07	.09 *
World-mindedness	.10	.09	.07	.02	.07	.01
Familiarity with NE Asia	.29	.08	.19 ***	.04	.06	.03
Marital status (1 = married)	.12	.17	.03	.00	.13	.00
Education	-.20	.10	-.10 *	.06	.08	.03
Age	-.01	.01	-.06	-.02	.01	-.06
Step 2						
Appearance				.36	.06	.28 ***
NE Asian design				.33	.06	.25 ***
Care				.23	.06	.19 ***
R^2			.30			.59

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to compare the influences of nationality relative to three other individual characteristics (novelty seeking, world-mindedness and familiarity with Northeast Asian culture) in predicting female US and female Chinese consumers' intentions to purchase textile and apparel-related cultural

products originating in Korea. Nationality was the strongest predictor of purchase intention (except for leather goods) before the product evaluation variables were considered. When controlling for the three individual characteristics, being a US consumer, as opposed to a Chinese, predicted a lower level of purchase intention for Korean cultural products. Perhaps Chinese consumers, because of their long-shared cultural background, have a higher level of natural affinity for Korean cultural products. It is important to note that nationality maintained its predictability even when three product-evaluation factors were added to the equation.

Although novelty seeking was either only slightly significant or insignificant when the product evaluation variables were included, it was found to have a strong influence on purchase intention in the first step, when the product variables were not considered. The results of this study also indicated that those who more strongly pursued constant changes and innovative ideas in their lives were more likely to intend to purchase Korean cultural products. Most likely, those individuals found the products to be interesting and different, satisfying their desire to bring novelty into their lives regularly. World-mindedness, however, influenced purchase intention for t-shirts only. Moreover, its influence became insignificant when product evaluation variables were considered. That is, those who were more interested in other cultures and more strongly saw themselves as citizens of the global world were more likely to want to buy t-shirts with Korean cultural themes. Although the other three products (scarves, handheld accessories and leather goods) featured Korean traditional design elements, respondents may have been unsure about the usability of those products, which in turn may have impeded their favorable reactions toward these products. Familiarity with Northeast Asian culture (familiarity with the Korean culture for Chinese respondents) initially predicted purchase intention significantly for all four groups of textiles and apparel products, but upon adding product evaluation scores, it became insignificant for all products except for t-shirts, due to the high correlations between the variable and product-evaluation factors. Collinearity diagnostics, however, proved that multi-collinearity was not present in this case; therefore, we did not modify the model.

As the consumption value theory assumed the attribute performance evaluation would lead purchase intention, respondents' favorable perceptions of products, particularly in terms of appearance (color and design) and Northeast Asian design, emerged as highly significant predictors of purchase intention for Korean cultural products, regardless of the product type. In other words, those who found a cultural product to possess appealing appearance and those who believed the product to contain a Northeast Asian image and to have been created by a famous producer of Northeast Asia were more likely to purchase the product. These findings confirm previous studies that supported the link between product evaluation and purchase behavior (Kim and Littrell, 1999, 2001). While all four products contained Korean traditional designs and patterns, without supporting information consumers will believe in the authenticity of the design only to the extent that "perception is reality." Therefore, producers and marketers of cultural products should attach written information to the products describing cultural and artistic background and emphasizing the reputation of the craftsman or the producer.

Examinations of means between the two samples yielded some interesting observations. Overall, the Chinese respondents appeared to hold more favorable perceptions of cultural products than the US counterparts. When it comes to appearance such as color and design, however, the two groups did not

significantly differ in their perceptions of three of the four products. This result contradicts a commonly-held belief that different cultures, particularly Western and Eastern cultures, have different views on aesthetic value (Hart, 1991). While we should take care not to overemphasize the fact that the two groups of consumers share aesthetic views on the attractiveness of cultural products, this finding can shed some light on the possible impact of globalization on modern consumers' aesthetics. It is also noteworthy that while the two groups did not differ in their evaluations of the aesthetics of the products, they differed significantly in their perceptions of the functional aspects of the products, such as ease of care. As the regression results indicated, nationality may have played a role in forming the respondents' reactions. However, this may also be a reflection of Chinese respondents' familiarity with similar types of products. It should be noted that all four products incorporate some Korean element of traditional embroidery and that while US respondents were concerned about the care of these embroideries their Chinese counterparts, due to prior experience, were less concerned about potential difficulties with cleaning and maintaining them. Accordingly, when promoting to US consumers, marketers of Korean cultural products are advised to include a FAQ page on their website addressing care and maintenance issues, and to include detailed care labels on the physical product.

The significant role of nationality in influencing product evaluation and purchase intention indicates the importance of some knowledge of cultural differences in promoting cultural products across borders. The finding that consumer reactions to cultural products differ not only among consumers but also from country to country suggests that companies who wish to market cultural products globally must adapt their advertising and branding strategies to each local market they enter. Given the finding of less favorable perceptions among US consumers toward Korean cultural products, one may contend that the question of how cultural products could gain desirability in a foreign market assumes greater importance when marketing to consumers in distant cultural environments. Accordingly, significantly more attention should be given to finding ways to communicate the values of cultural products effectively when promoting them to consumers with differing cultural backgrounds. Unlike those travelling in Korea, US consumers viewing the websites of Korean cultural products do not experience an intercultural encounter that allows them to feel a connection with the Korean culture. Thus by providing detailed information about the cultural background of their products, such as photos and stories on the original artifacts upon which the products were based, marketers of these products may be able to simulate an intercultural encounter with the viewers of their websites. Because this study was not designed to investigate specifically how nationality operates to influence consumer attitude and behavioral intention toward cultural products, it cannot be expected to offer more specific suggestions beyond the need for cultural sensitivity. For a better understanding of the role of nationality in this context, larger studies that employ a more systematic and extensive analysis involving products with many different cultural origins are needed. As Craig and Douglas (2006) point out, cultural similarity may be more critical than geographic proximity in determining the adoption of products from one country to another. Cultural similarity is a potentially important variable that warrants attention in future research involving consumption of cultural products.

Of the two motivational types of values selected in this study, world-mindedness did not appear to be as important as novelty seeking as a predictor of purchase intention toward cultural products. Another relevant concept that may be worth exploring in relation to attitude and behavior toward cultural prod-

ucts is consumer ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is known to explain a consumer's aversion to purchasing foreign products (Shimp and Sharma, 1987) and represents the affective and normative aspects of buyer behavior. Although some scholars have found a negative relationship between world-mindedness and ethnocentrism (Rawwas *et al.*, 1996), others have observed no significant relationship between the two variables (Balabanis *et al.*, 2001). Shankarmahesh (2006) argues that world-mindedness is one of many antecedents to ethnocentrism and that these antecedents may affect product evaluation and purchase intention through the mediating role of consumer ethnocentrism. According to his model, consumer ethnocentrism may be a better predictor of product attitude and purchase behavior toward foreign products. Additionally, Kwak *et al.* (2006) observed that ethnocentrism dampened consumers' online consumption activities on a foreign website, thus making the concept relevant to the study of shopping for cultural products over the Internet.

Although demographic variables were not the focus of this study, three demographic variables were included as controls in the regression analyses. Initially, education emerged as a significant predictor of purchase intention. However, after controlling for the effects of three product-evaluation factors, its impact was no longer significant, indicating the possible mediating effects of product-evaluation factors. The consistently negative regression coefficients for this variable suggest that those with higher levels of education displayed less favorable purchase intentions for all four Korean cultural products. In partial contradiction to this finding, however, in Kim and Littrell's (2001) study, demographic variables, including education, were found to be insignificant predictors of purchase intention for textile souvenirs. It should be noted, however, that their study was conducted with female tourists traveling to Mexico. The negative impact of education on purchase intention for cultural products may appear counterintuitive given the general support in tourism research for a positive association between education and interest in culture and the arts (Barbieri and Mahoney, 2010; Hargrove, 2002; Silberberg, 1995). In the current study, however, education was negatively associated with purchase intention when controlling for world-mindedness. This suggests that amongst those having the same level of interest in other cultures and having a similar world-view, individuals with a higher educational level were less favorably inclined to purchase cultural products from Korea. More studies are needed for a better explanation of the effects of differences in demographic characteristics on the purchase behaviors of cultural products. Future cross-cultural research in this field should also seek better control of the effects of income. Income was not included in our regression analyses due to the fact that different scales were used to measure income levels for Chinese and US samples. The average Chinese household income level is significantly lower than the US level (ChinaToday.com, 2010). Thus, it was deemed appropriate to use a different scale with each category corresponding to a substantially lower monthly income level to capture the distribution of income levels properly in the Chinese sample.

This study has practical and theoretical significance in that it identifies how individual variables and cultural environment influence consumers' intentions to purchase cultural products. The role of nationality in purchasing and evaluating cultural products was found to be remarkable, which suggests that more attention should be paid to cultural differences. Further, the evaluation of appearance and Northeast Asian design emerged as highly significant predictors of the purchase intention for Korean cultural products, regardless of the product type.

The current study has several major limitations. First, controlling for the socio-economic status of the samples of the two countries was incomplete. Caution is required in interpreting the effect of nationality on purchase intention in this study. Secondly, photos of the products were shown without any product information regarding price, country-of-origin, or utility. Although this method allows us to control for the influences of factors other than those that were examined, this does not mirror a realistic purchase situation. Additionally, the issues of quality and craftsmanship were not considered in this study either, as we determined that those aspects were difficult to evaluate from the photos alone. Market price particularly is a major extrinsic cue of a product, as it activates and completes the purchase decision, and is a good indicator of quality. In order to address these issues, perhaps future studies should use a retail website with more product information, such as information about the artisans and market price to simulate realistic retailers. In so doing, studies should also be able to compare the relative attractiveness of products in influencing a customer's purchase decision.

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