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## THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL CRINGE ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN CHINA

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THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL CRINGE ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN CHINA

BY

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2014

## **ABSTRACT**

China's market with huge demand and limited supply has become attractive to many international companies since 1976. This study examines the impact of cultural cringe on consumer behavior in China by using Nike, an American sports brand, and Li-Ning, a Chinese sports brand as examples. An online questionnaire survey with 36 questions is conducted in a comprehensive college in the People's Republic of China. Participants are 314 students from different majors. Results show that the increase of cultural cringe leads to the increasing likelihood of buying Nike's products. Limitations of the study and the direction for future research are also discussed.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis project is a journey of exploring the areas of intercultural communication and organizational communication in the context of Chinese and American cultures. It also provides a great opportunity to understand research methods and learn from professionals and experts.

I am deeply indebted to my esteemed major professor, Dr. Guo-Ming Chen, who is always patiently providing me stimulating suggestions and greatly supporting me with his profound knowledge and great encouragement. His motivation to solve complex problems and belief to pay attention to every part of research absolutely motivates me to conduct this thesis research. This thesis would not have been possible without him.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vi
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>2</b>
CULTURAL CRINGE.....	2
CONSUMER BEHAVIOR .....	5
NIKE AND LI-NING.....	7
PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	9
<b>METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>10</b>
PARTICIPANTS .....	10
PROCEDURES .....	10
INSTRUMENTS .....	10
<b>RESULTS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
APPENDICES .....	21
REFERENCES.....	27

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
Table 1. Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Variables. ....	17
Table 2. Mean Scores of CC, Factor 1, and Factor 2 .....	19
Table 3. Pearson Correlation Coefficients for CC, Factor 1, and Factor 2 .....	19
Table 4. Mean Scores among Different Majors on Consumer Behavior .....	22

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
Figure 1. Question Structure about Cultural Cringe. ....	15



## INTRODUCTION

Since the reform and opening up in China in 1976, China's market with huge demand and limited supply has become attractive to many international companies. Moreover, discourses that depict the transformation of China's citizenry from comrades to consumers advance the view that emulative motives render Western brands desirable to Chinese consumers (Croll, 2006; Garner, 2005; Wang, 2000).

From the Chinese economic reform in 1978 more and more international companies go to China and some of them have become the leading companies in different industries, including, e.g., Ford, KFC, Nike, Starbucks, and H&M. These leading companies have made great benefits from Chinese market and kept increasing the marketing share as well. The reason behind the success of these companies is not just the products they sell, but also has something to do with cultural factors in China. In other words, the cultural factors of brands are associated with the change of consumer behavior. However, few studies have been done from this perspective. The purpose of this study is to explore this line of research by investigating the relationship between cultural cringe and consumer behavior in China.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Cultural Cringe*

Cultural cringe refers to an internalized inferiority complex which causes people in a country to dismiss their own culture as inferior to other cultures (Phillips, 2006). The term "cultural cringe" was coined in Australia after the Second World War by the Melbourne critic and social commentator Arthur Phillips. Phillips (2006) pointed out the public widely assumed that anything produced by local dramatists, actors, musicians, artists and writers was necessarily deficient when compared against the works of their British and European counterparts. As Xu (2010) indicated, cultural cringe is expressed in two ways. First, people show negative feeling about their own culture, including disappointment, inferiority, and ignorance. Second people show appreciation for other cultures, including favorable impression, enjoyment, and satisfaction.

Moreover, according to some Western scholars (e.g., Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1989; Bhabha, 1994), cultural cringe is also tightly connected with "cultural alienation", which refers to the process of devaluing or abandoning one's own culture or cultural background. A person who is culturally alienated places little value on their cultures and instead hungers for that of a colonizing nation background. Recent scholars like Kashima, Beatson, Kaufmann, Branchflower, and Marques (2014) also pointed out that in the case of Australian people; the cultural script of cringe prescribes them to evaluate their country modestly and to reject high praise of their country. This demonstrates the existent of cultural cringe.

In terms of devaluing one's own culture, Chinese people also have a similar history. From the end of 1900s to 1920s most of the Chinese had the feeling of inferiority

about their own culture and doubted or even denied their own traditional culture, which reflects the symptom of cultural cringe (Du, 2011). The defeats of the Opium War, Sino-French war and other wars in China in the 19th century have led Chinese people to realize the huge gap between Western countries and China in terms of technology, economy and political development. As Long (2010) indicated, some Chinese people were eager to abandon their traditional culture and copy or learn advanced technology from Western cultures. Moreover, the economic gap between China and European countries has become larger and larger in the early 19th century. According to Xu (2010), the Per Capital GDP of Europe increased from 2.1 times as China's to 10.5 times as China's, while the Per Capital GDP of United States grew to 15 times as China's from 1820 to 1850. Chinese people began to feel very disappointed about their country; at the same time they began to learn and appreciate Western cultures.

Although China's economy grows rapidly in the last two decades, the gap between China and the West still largely exists. For example, many Chinese companies continue to take advantage of cultural cringe by copying the design from Western countries in clothing, architectures, mobiles, restaurants, and even TV programs to satisfy the inner desire of higher social status of consumers (Long, 2010). Chinese seeking to advancing their social standing by imitating the consumption practices of Westerners to the extent their incomes allow can be explained, according to Garner (2005) and Wang (2000), by Veblen's (1925) theory of conspicuous consumption. Veblen's theory stipulates that conspicuous leisure gives way to "conspicuous consumption", but both are performed for the sole purpose of making an invidious distinction based on pecuniary strength, which demonstrates that wealth is the basis for social status. Another similar

example is that to Chinese consumers Western products represent social status, and Western brands continue to attract Chinese consumers even if the prices are high (Forney & Jin, 2004).

Li (2010) believed that cultural cringe develops based on the Linear Model, which dictates that society develops from the lower level to higher level as a single line due to the direct result of blind worship on evolutionism. The Linear Model evaluates and compares various cultures, civilizations, arts with a standard timeline by judging which is better or more developed based on time dimension. Thus, from the first Opium War in 1890s, many Chinese people began to judge cultures by using Western standards (Li, 2010).

The cultural cringe of Chinese people could be found in many aspects in their lives. Liu (2009) found that the cultural cringe of Chinese people was reflected when purchasing housing estates. Most Chinese consumers preferred housing with typical Western styles, especially French and British styles. Property developers built standard Western styles housing to satisfy consumers accordingly such as British rose mansion and French village (“British Rose Mansion”, 2012; Wang, 2013).

Meanwhile, the cultural cringe of Chinese people could be found in foods as well. For example, Beijing Snack Association gave some Beijing traditional snacks English names, such as Chinese Coke, Chinese Pizza, and Chinese hamburgers. Many of them already lost the original meanings of the snacks in order to make them “international” and be accepted by Western visitors (Fan, 2008). Moreover, Chinese people called their traditional Lovers’ Day, i.e., Qi Xi Festival, as Chinese Valentine’s Day (Fan, 2008).

Additionally, cultural cringe also can be detected in Chinese arts. Peking Opera as one of the most famous operas in China is considered the quintessence of Chinese culture. Recently, some artists performed Peking Opera by wearing bikinis. Some people believed that this combination of different cultural components in the performance would ruin traditional Peking opera; it also is a reflection of Chinese artists' inferiority on their traditional culture (Culture Cringe, 2012). Although people started to realize the impact of cultural cringe in their lives in China, Liu and Wang (2007) found that Chinese consumers continue to show preference of the Western style.

However, there are challenging ideas which disagree with the points described above. Some scholars pointed out that there are steadfast or resurgent nationalistic motives render Western brands undesirable to Chinese consumers (e.g., Wang & Wang, 2007). It is believed that Chinese consumers prefer local products compared to Western products based on their patriotism and pride of Chinese culture. Nevertheless, instead of looking at the impacts of cultural cringe on consumer behavior in China, these groups of scholars more focused on the reflection of cultural cringe in China and Chinese consumers' inner patriotism. Hence, it is important to examine the possible impact of cultural cringe on consumer behavior in China.

### *Consumer Behavior*

Homburg, Kuester, and Krohmer (2013) pointed out that consumer behavior refers to the processes individuals, groups, or organizations use to select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts of these processes on the consumer and society. One of the models of consumer behavior,

i.e., the black box model, developed by Sandhusen (2000) indicates that environmental factors and individual factors have an impact on consumer behavior.

Moreover, Raju (1980) summarized seven factors to explain consumer behavior: (1) repetitive behavior proneness - the tendency to choose the same brand/ product over time, (2) innovativeness - the eagerness to buy or know about new products of a brand, (3) risk taking - the preference for taking risk to try other brands, (4) exploration through shopping - the preference for buying products of a brand, (5) interpersonal communication - communicating with friends about purchasing, (6) brand switching - the curiosity to explore and change to different products/ brands, and (7) information seeking - interest in learning about products/brands. The seven factors used to conceptualize consumer behavior can be further simplified into three dimensions, namely, risk taking, variety seeking, and curiosity-motivated behaviors (McAlister & Pessemier, 1982; Raju, 1980). Based on the seven factors, Baumgartner and Steenkamp (1996) went one step further to classify them into a two-dimensional representation of consumer buying behavior: (1) exploratory acquisition of products (EAP) - entails the potential for sensory stimulation in product purchase through risky and innovative product choices and varied and changing purchase experiences, and (2) exploratory information seeking (EIS) - satisfies consumers' cognitive stimulation needs through the acquisition of consumption relevant knowledge out of curiosity.

Consumer behavior also has a close relationship with culture. Sandhusen (2000) identified cultural factor as a significant variable and argued that cultural differences and cultural values could affect consumer behavior. He found that cultural stimulus is one of

the environmental stimuli affecting a consumer's response in terms of product choice, brand choice, dealer choice, purchase timing, and purchase amount.

Many scholars agreed that cultural factors have a great impact on consumer behavior. For example, Mooij (2000) indicated that the values of both consumers and marketers are dictated by their cultures, thus it is important to understand cultural values in the business transaction. Other scholars (e.g., MacGregor, 1983; Samli, 1995; Terpstra & David, 1985; Wallaces, 1964) also emphasized the critical role of culture plays in consumer behavior. Unfortunately, while scholars realized the importance of cultural factors in consumer behavior, none of them have investigated the impact from the perspective of cultural cringe and seldom paid attention to the market in China, which is one of the largest markets with great population in the world. This study attempts to improve this problem by examining the relationship between cultural cringe and consumer behavior in China.

### *Nike and Li-Ning*

In order to examine the relationship between cultural cringe and consumer behavior, two similar brands, i.e., Nike from the US and Li-Ling from China, are used in this study. The reason for choosing the two companies is that both are popular in China with great market share and reputations among Chinese consumers. Nike with 40% market share in the US from late 90s has become a leading sports brands globally including in mainland China (Xin, 2012). Li-Ning ranks the first among all Chinese local sports brand with the greatest reputation as well (Huang, 2011). Both Nike and Li-Ning are sports brands with a focus on sports shoes, clothing and tools. The qualities of both brands are above average sports brands in Chinese market. "My Li-Ning sports shoes are

great compared to other brands and I wore them about one year, they are still working well!” as a netizen named “583357” left his comment online (“MingXieKu”, 2014). Another one named “677745” said that “I love Nike’s basketball shoes, they are comfortable and durable” (“MingXieKu”, 2014). Moreover, in terms of the price, Li-Ning used to have lower price than Nike, but from 2011 Li-Ning raised the price with 20% (Qin, 2011), which narrows the difference between the two products with Nike’s sports clothing ranging from 100 RMB to 1,200 RMB and Li-Ning’s sports clothing ranging from 80 RMB to 1,000 RMB (“Li-Ning”, 2013; “Nike”, 2013).

Nike as an American multinational corporation engages in the design, development and worldwide marketing and in the selling of footwear, apparel, equipment, accessories and services (“About Nike”, 2013). Nike entered China in 1980 by establishing an agency in Beijing, the capital of China. The sales of Nike stores in China increased 66% (about 0.3 billion) since 2003. The focus of Nike’s products is on the symbol of status and good taste. It aimed to implant American cultural values including freedom, challenges, and enjoying life to Chinese young consumers with a famous slogan of “Just Do It!” (Forney & Jin, 2004). The marketing strategies resulted in the 39.8% sales increase for Nike until the November of 2013 (Lin, 2013). In terms of advertising campaigns in China, in order to promote the cultural values embedded in products, Nike invited NBA stars, such as Kobe Brian and LeBron James, to speak for the company (Forney & Jin, 2004). Nike’s success in China led to the pressure of many local Chinese sports brands that target similar consumers of young people. Li-Ning is one of the major brands among them.



Li-Ning Company Limited (established in 1990) is a major Chinese athletic company producing athletic shoes and sporting goods. Li-Ning branded products targeted young consumers in sports such as running, basketball, badminton, football, tennis, and fitness. For many years, Nike has higher sales than Li-Ning (Forney & Jin, 2004). In order to attract more young consumers Li-Ning released a new logo and a new slogan, "Make the change" ("Li-Ning", 2013). Li-Ning also invited Chinese stars to promote its products, such as the well-known Chinese gymnast, also named Li Ning, badminton Champion, Lin Dan, and the super model, Lin Zhilin. Unfortunately, the changes were not very successful in attracting more young people and the company still experienced a decrease in sales in recent years, as the net profit decreased 15% (Chen, 2013).

#### *Problem Statement*

It is obvious that although targeting at similar consumers with similar sports products, Nike continues to grow in China, while Li-Ning is still facing the decrease in sales. Cultural cringe may be a plausible reason behind the consumers' brand choice in this case. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between cultural cringe and Chinese consumer behavior by asking the following research question:

**RQ:** Is there a relationship between cultural cringe and consumer behavior in China?

In addition to the relationship of the two concepts, the demographic information of participants, including age, gender and others, are also analyzed.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

This study was conducted in a public university in Chongqing in the southwest area of China. Chongqing is one of the major cities in China with 29.19 million populations (“Population of Chongqing”, 2014) where Nike and Li-Ning open many retail stores in different shopping malls. Three hundreds and fourteen students participated in this study on the voluntary basis. Among them, 160 were female, 151 were male, and three did not indicate their gender. The average age was 24.7. All the participants have heard and purchased the products of Nike and Li-Ning before. They were from different majors, including 175 from Arts, 25 from Science, and 93 from Engineering. Twenty one of them did not indicate their majors.

### *Procedures*

An online survey with 36 questions in the questionnaire was conducted in the study. Permission from the school administration was obtained before the survey (see Appendix B). Students who were willing to participate were directed to a professional questionnaire website named WenJuanXing ([http:// www.WenJuanXing.com](http://www.WenJuanXing.com)), where they read the consent form and privacy statement on the first page without signing names as this was an anonymous research (Appendix C). It took about 20-25 minutes for each participant to complete the survey.

### *Instruments*

The questionnaire used in this study contains two sections (see Appendix A). The first section is consisted of two parts. The first part evaluates the degree of cultural cringe and the second part measures participants’ consumer behavior. The first 12 items (items

1-12) for measuring cultural cringe in the study are based on Xu's (2010) definition of the concept (Xu, 2010) (see Figure 1), which includes (1) Chinese people's negative feelings, demonstrated by disappointment, inferior, and ignorance, about their own culture, and (2) Chinese people's appreciation, demonstrated by favorable impression, enjoyment, and satisfaction, for Western culture.

The 16 items measuring consumer behavior (items 13-28) are based on the seven categories of exploratory buying behavior specified by Raju (1980). Items for measuring consumer behavior are developed by attaching to both companies of Nike and Li-Ling. The last 8 items of the questionnaire (items 29-35) are about participants' demographic information such as gender, age, college, and grade.

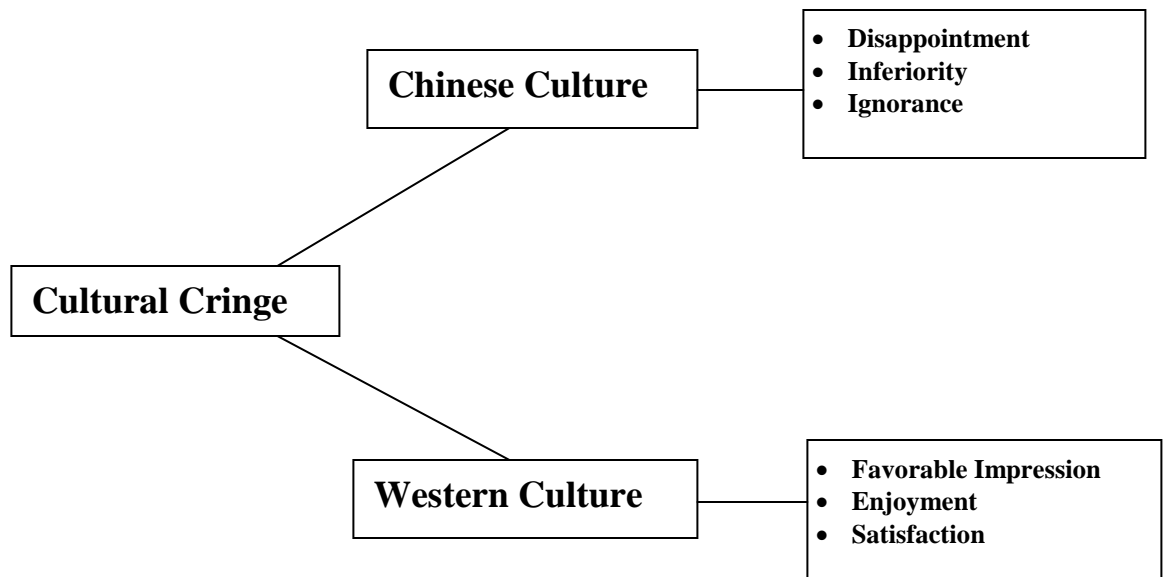


Figure 1. Question Structure about Cultural Cringe

Responses are made on a 5-point Likert scale with "5" representing strong agreement, "1" representing strong disagreement, and "3" representing undecided. Before the questionnaire was finalized, three professors and graduate students in the related

disciplines were invited to examine the questions for the improvement of the content and wordings of the items. Because all participants are Chinese natives, the questionnaire also was translated into Chinese. The translation was made by two Chinese instructors from Confucius Institute at the University of the present researcher. Both English and Chinese versions of the questionnaire were used in the survey to make sure that participants can better understand the questions (see Appendix D).

Before statistical analyses items representing the concepts were reverted, including items 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 for cultural cringe, items 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, and 28 for consumer behavior. It was found that the Cronbach's alpha for Cultural Cringe Scale is .75 and .80 for Consumer Behavior Scale. Only four dimensions of the Consumer Behavior Scale reach satisfactory level of reliability were analyzed in this study. They are Exploration through Shopping (.87), Information Seeking (.75), Innovativeness (.68), and Repetitive Behavior Proneness (.57).

To further explore the relationship between cultural cringe and consumer behavior, factor analysis was performed to the items of consumer behavior. There are two factors extracted from the factor analysis. Factor 1 (consumer behavior about Nike) includes items 15, 17, 19, 21, and 27, and Factor 2 (consumer behavior about Li-Ning) includes items 14, 18, 20, 24, and 28. The coefficient alpha for Factor 1 is .81 and .90 for Factor 2. Because all items in Factor 1 are about Li-Ning and all items in Factor 2 are about Nike, mean scores and correlations among the three categories, i.e., cultural cringe, Factor 1 (i.e., consumer behavior towards Li-Ling), and Factor 2 (i.e., consumer behavior towards Nike) are analyzed in this study.

## RESULTS

To answer the research question Pearson product-moment correlations were computed. In addition, MANOVA were used to test the differences of gender and majors on the two scales. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Variables

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. CC	.51**	.37**	.30**	.24**	.34 **	.00
2. CB		.59**	.58**	.50**	.71**	-.02
3. IN			.36**	.13*	.25**	-.02
4. ES				-.21**	.63**	.04
5. IS					.05	-.04
6. RB						.05
7. AGE						---

\*\* p < .01, \* p < .05 ; N=314

Note: CC= cultural cringe, CB= consumer behavior, IN= innovativeness, ES= exploration through shopping, IS= information seeking, RB = repetitive behavior proneness.

The results show that a positive relationship exists between cultural cringe and consumer behavior ( $r = .51, p < .01$ ). Positive relationships also are found between cultural cringe and the four dimensions of consumer behavior: (1) innovativeness ( $r = .37, p < .01$ ), (2) exploration though shopping ( $r = .30, p < .01$ ), (3) information seeking ( $r = .24, p < .01$ ), and (4) repetitive behavior proneness ( $r = .34, p < .01$ ). Meanwhile, a negative relationship exists between exploration through shopping and information

seeking ( $r = -.21, p < .01$ ). No significant correlation between age and other variables is found in this study.

To further explore the relationship between cultural cringe and consumer behavior, factor analysis was performed to the items of consumer behavior scale. Two factors with eigenvalues of 1.00 or higher were extracted for the 18-item consumer behavior. The two factors account for 50.6% of the variance. Items having loadings of at least .50 with secondary loadings no higher than .30 were included in the scale. Each factor contains five items. All the items in Factor 1, including 15, 17, 19, 21, and 27, are attached to consumer behavior about Nike, and all the items in Factor 2, including 14, 18, 20, 24, and 28, are attached to consumer behavior about Li-Ning.

Because the factors are based on the two separate companies, mean scores of the factors and Pearson product moment correlation were conducted to see the score differences of the variables and the relationship between cultural cringe and the consumer behavior towards the two companies, the results are shown in Table 2 and Table 3. It was found that the mean score of Factor 1 ( $M = 2.57$ ) is higher than the mean score of Factor 2 ( $M = 1.85$ ). The results also show that cultural cringe is significantly and positively correlated with Factor 1 ( $r = .27, p < .01$ ), while negatively correlated with Factor 2 ( $r = -.34, p < .01$ ). Moreover, Factor 1 and Factor 2 also has a positive relationship ( $r = .14, p < .05$ ).

Table 2. Mean Scores of CC, Factor 1, and Factor 2

\	Mean Score
CC	2.89
Factor 1	2.57
Factor 2	1.85

Note: CC= cultural cringe, Factor 1= consumer behavior about Nike, Factor 2= consumer behavior about Li-Ning.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Coefficients for CC, Factor 1, and Factor 2

Variables	2	3	4
1. CC	.27**	-.34**	.00
2. Factor 1		.14*	-.06
3. Factor 2			-.05
4. Age			----

\*\* p < .01, \* p < .05 ; N=314

Note: CC= cultural cringe, Factor 1= consumer behavior about Nike, Factor 2= consumer behavior about Li-Ning.

The results from MONOVA show that no significant difference was found between males and females and other variables. However, the results indicate significant differences among Arts, Science, and Engineering majors on consumer behavior and the dimensions of exploration through shopping, innovativeness, and repetitive behavior proneness.

First, Arts students ( $M = 3.46, p < .05$ ) scored significantly higher than Science students ( $M = 3.42, p < .05$ ) on consumer behavior. Arts students ( $M = 3.46, p < .05$ ) also score significantly higher than Engineering students ( $M = 3.28, p < .05$ ) on consumer behavior. Science students ( $M = 3.42, p < .05$ ) score significantly higher than engineering students ( $M = 3.28, p < .05$ ) on consumer behavior.

Second, Arts students ( $M = 4.20, p < .05$ ) score significantly lower than Science students ( $M = 4.26, p < .05$ ) on exploration through shopping. Arts students ( $M = 4.20, p < .05$ ) scored significantly higher than Engineering students ( $M = 4.00, p < .05$ ) on exploration through shopping. Science students ( $M = 4.26, p < .05$ ) score significantly higher than Engineering students ( $M = 4.00, p < .05$ ) on exploration through shopping.

Third, Arts students ( $M = 3.43, p < .05$ ) scored significantly higher than Science students ( $M = 3.40, p < .05$ ) on innovativeness. Arts students ( $M = 3.43, p < .05$ ) also scored significantly higher than Engineering students ( $M = 3.16, p < .05$ ) on innovativeness. Science students ( $M = 3.40, p < .05$ ) scored significantly higher than Engineering students ( $M = 3.16, p < .05$ ) on innovativeness.

Finally, Arts students ( $M = 4.17, p < .05$ ) scored significantly higher than Science students ( $M = 4.02, p < .05$ ) on repetitive behavior proneness. Arts students ( $M = 4.17, p < .05$ ) also scored significantly higher than Engineering students ( $M = 4.04, p < .05$ ) on repetitive behavior proneness. Science students ( $M = 4.02, p < .05$ ) scored significantly higher than Engineering students ( $M = 4.04, p < .05$ ) on repetitive behavior proneness.



Table 4. Mean Scores among Different Majors on Consumer Behavior and the Dimensions

\	Arts Students	Science Students	Engineering Students
Consumer Behavior	3.46*	3.42*	3.28*
Exploration through Shopping	4.20*	4.26*	4.00*
Innovativeness	3.43*	3.40*	3.16*
Repetitive Behavior Proneness	4.17*	4.02*	4.04*

\*  $p < .05$  ; N=293

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

This study explores the relationship between cultural cringe and consumer behavior in China. Because no research has been done on this topic previously, this study provides a potential not only for better understanding the Chinese psychology of cultural cringe and its association with consumer behavior towards commercial products of major domestic and foreign companies in China, but also for enriching the literature in this specific research area. Results in this study show a significant correlation between the two concepts. It indicates that the more cultural cringe Chinese consumers have the stronger tendency they have in consuming Nike's products instead of Li-Ning's. The findings are consistent with the study of Liu and Wang (2007) that Chinese consumers continue to show preference for the Western style. It also concurs with Du's (2011) observation that most of the Chinese may have the feeling of inferiority about their own culture, which reflects the symptom of cultural cringe in many aspects of their lives.

The results of the relationship between cultural cringe and the four dimensions of consumer behavior imply that a stronger cultural cringe of a Chinese consumer would lead to a high degree of eagerness, preference, interest, and tendency in buying or knowing about Nike's products over time (Raju, 1980). This can explain why for many years Nike has higher sales than Li-Ning in China (Forney & Jin, 2004). The results as well explain why after Nike invited NBA stars, such as Kobe Brian and LeBron James, to speak for the company, it gained 39.8% sales increase in 2013 (Forney & Jin, 2004; Lin, 2013), while the stars' promotion was not successful for Li-Ning and the company continues to experience a decrease in sales in recent years (Chen, 2013).

It is surprising to see that exploration through shopping and information seeking are negatively correlated with each other. A plausible explanation is that the question for information seeking, e.g., item 21, and only dictates one way of finding more about products, which may exclude other possible and popular ways such as online shopping. This may result in that even though participants have a high level of exploration through shopping but score low in information seeking because they prefer online shopping instead of visiting physical stores. When Raju (1980) developed the seven dimensions of consumer behavior, online shopping as business transaction did not emerge yet, but today it has become a very common way for shopping in China, as demonstrated by the world's largest online population with 130 million residential broadband accounts in China (Dobbs, Chen, Orr, Manyika, Chui, & Chang, 2013). It will be interesting for future study to further explore this line of research.

In addition, findings on cultural cringe and consumer behavior about Nike and about Li-Ning may further demonstrate the impact of cultural cringe on consumer behavior. The positive relationships between cultural cringe and consumer behavior about Nike indicates that the stronger cultural cringe people have, the stronger preference on Nike's product people may have; the negative relationship between cultural cringe and consumer behavior about Li-Ning shows that the stronger cultural cringe people have, the less preference on Li-Ning's product people may have. These may also explain why Nike is increasing its sales in China, while Li-Ning continues to experience a decrease in sales.

Lastly, several limitations for this study need to be addressed. First, although Chinese instructors were asked to translate the questionnaire into the Chinese version, the back translation process was not employed in this study. Future research can further

improve the validity of Chinese version of the questionnaire through the process. Second, it is difficult to monitor the answering process of the online survey. Future research may use other ways for the data collection, such as different social media or physical questionnaire, to see if the results show differences. In-depth interview is also a good way to explore more about the inner thought of cultural cringe of Chinese people. Third, most participants in this study are seniors and graduate students. Although they are the target consumers of Nike and Li-Ning (Du, 2014), it may be interesting to compare them with those from different age levels. Moreover, only Nike and Li-Ning are used in this study. Although the two brands represent the two most successful companies in China, other brands from different countries or different industries can be employed in future research to further compare the findings and enrich the literature in this area. Finally, in order to be more representative for the participants future study can target sample in other major cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, at the same time.

## APPENDICE

### Appendix A. Cultural Cringe and Consumer Behavior Questionnaire

Below is a series of statements concerning culture and consumer behavior. There is no right or wrong answers. Please work quickly and record your first impression by indicating the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Thank you for your cooperation.

5 = strongly agree

4 = agree

3 = uncertain

(Please put the number corresponding to your answer in the

2 = disagree

blank before the statement)

1 = strongly disagree

- \_\_\_ 1. I like Chinese movies more than Western movies.
- \_\_\_ 2. I feel disappointed with Chinese culture.
- \_\_\_ 3. I admire Chinese lifestyle more than Western lifestyle.
- \_\_\_ 4. I feel more delightful for purchasing Western products than Chinese ones.
- \_\_\_ 5. I think Peking opera is better than Western opera.
- \_\_\_ 6. I think Chinese TV shows are inferior to Western ones.
- \_\_\_ 7. I feel more enjoyable to have Chinese foods than Western foods.
- \_\_\_ 8. I feel that Western housing style is more preferable than the Chinese style.
- \_\_\_ 9. I enjoy Chinese pop music more than Western popular songs.
- \_\_\_ 10. I think Western cultural values are superior to Chinese cultural values.
- \_\_\_ 11. I feel more satisfied with Chinese merchandise than Western merchandise.
- \_\_\_ 12. I feel that Chinese Qi Xi is less favorable than Western Valentine's Day.
- \_\_\_ 13. I am very cautious in trying Nike's sports clothing.
- \_\_\_ 14. Even though there are many basketball shoes, I always tend to buy Li-Ning's.
- \_\_\_ 15. I am always eager to buy Nike's sports clothing.
- \_\_\_ 16. I like to recommend Li-Ning's products to my friends.
- \_\_\_ 17. I like to browse Nike's advertisements even when I don't plan to buy anything.
- \_\_\_ 18. I am always eager to investigate any new sports clothing of Li-Ning.
- \_\_\_ 19. I always prefer to buy Nike's sports shoes.
- \_\_\_ 20. I enjoyed exploring different sports shoes of Li-Ning.
- \_\_\_ 21. I like to shop around to find out more about Nike's latest styles.
- \_\_\_ 22. I get disinterested in listening to others about Li-Ning's products.
- \_\_\_ 23. I usually skip Nike's product advertisements without reading them.
- \_\_\_ 24. If I buy sports clothing, I will only buy Li-Ning's.

- \_\_\_25. I get bored with buying Nike's sports shoes.  
\_\_\_26. I have little interest in buying Li-Ning's sports shoes.  
\_\_\_27. I always like to introduce Nike's products to my friends.  
\_\_\_28. I like to shop around to find out more about Li-Ning's latest styles.

29. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

30. College: \_\_\_\_\_

31. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

32. Grade: Freshman \_\_\_ Sophomore \_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_ Senior \_\_\_ Postgraduate \_\_\_\_\_

33. Do you know Nike's products? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

34. Do you know Li-Ning's products? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

35. Have you ever purchased Nike's products? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

36. Have you ever purchased Li-Ning's products? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix B. Agreement for Chongqing University of Posts and Telecommunications

[Cooperating Organizations Letterhead]

**Letter of Agreement**

XX XX, XXXX

To the University of Rhode Island Institutional Review Board:

I am familiar with Ms. Yue HU research project entitled *The Impact of Cultural Cringe on Consumer Behavior in China*. I understand the classes of DSP 1, DSP 2, DSP 3, and DSP 4 at Chongqing University of Posts and Telecommunications's involvement to complete the research questionnaire conducted by Ms. Yue HU and Prof. Guoming Chen from University of Rhode Island.

I understand that this research will be carried out following sound ethical principles and that participant involvement in this research study is strictly voluntary and provides confidentiality of research data, as described in the proposal.

Therefore as a representative of Chongqing University of Posts and Telecommunications, I agree that Ms. Yue HU's Research project may be conducted in the classes of DSP 1, DSP 2, DSP 3, and DSP 4 at Chongqing University of Posts and Telecommunications.

Sincerely,

XX XXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Chongqing University of Posts and Telecommunications

Email: [XXXXXXXXXXXXXX](mailto:XXXXXXXXXXXXXX)

Tel: XXXXXXXXX

## Appendix C. Anonymous Consent Form for Participants

The University of Rhode Island  
Department of Communication Studies  
Address: 10 Lippitt Rd, 313, Kingston, RI 02881

### **CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH**

You have been asked to take part in a research project described below. The online instruction on WenJuanXing will provide you with the project details. You should feel free to ask questions. If you have more questions later, please call Ms. Yue Hu (001-401-965-0922), the person mainly responsible for this study, and she will discuss them with you. You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

#### *Description of the project:*

You have been asked to take part in a study that is intended to study Chinese consumers' impressions on the sports products of Nike and Li-Ning.

#### *What will occur:*

You will be asked to fill out a questionnaire that contains 38 questions, and 8 of them are demographic questions. It will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

#### *Risks or discomfort:*

The possible risks or discomforts of the study are minimal. If you do not feel comfortable during answering the questions, you can stop at any time.

#### *Benefits of this study:*

Although there will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this study, it may help you increase the knowledge regarding the different consumer behavior.

#### *Confidentiality:*

Your participation in this study is anonymous. All answers will be confidential. All the answers of questionnaire and consent forms will be also kept by the online questionnaire website WenJuanXing with its secure system and for only three years period of time before they are removed. For more Privacy Statement, please visit <http://www.sojump.com/wjx/license.aspx>.

#### *Decision to quit at any time:*

The participation in this study is on the voluntary basis. You do not have to participate and you can stop answering the questions whenever you feel uncomfortable. If you have any questions regard the study, please contact Ms. Yue Hu (001-401-965-0922) or Professor Guo-Ming Chen (001-401- 874-4731).

#### *Rights and Complaints:*

If you have any complaints regarding the study, please feel free to anonymously contact Ms. Yue Hu (001-401-965-0922) or Professor Guo-Ming Chen (001-401- 874-4731). In addition, you may also contact the office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies, Research and Outreach, 70 Lower College Road, Suite 2, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island (phone: 401-874-4328).

**You Must be at Least 18 Years old** to be in this research project. You have read the consent form and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. Your filling out the survey implies your consent to participate in this study.

Thank you,  
Yue HU



Appendix D. Cultural Cringe and Consumer Behavior Questionnaire (English and Chinese)

Below is a series of statements concerning culture and consumer behavior. There is no right or wrong answers. Please work quickly and record your first impression by indicating the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Thank you for your cooperation.

(您好! 本次调查的主题是文化与消费行为的关系, 答案没有正确与错误之分, 请根据您的第一反应快速作答, 并圈出对应的数字。谢谢! )

5 = strongly agree (很同意)

4 = agree (同意)

3 = uncertain (不确定)

2 = disagree (不同意)

1 = strongly disagree(很不同意)

(Please put the number corresponding to your answer in the blank before the statement) (请将对应数字填入空白处)

1. **I like Chinese movies more than Western movies.**  
比起西方的电影, 我更喜欢看中国的电影。
2. **I feel disappointed with Chinese culture.**  
我对中国的文化感到失望。
3. **I admire Chinese lifestyle more than Western lifestyle.**  
比起西方国家的生活方式, 我更崇尚中国的生活方式。
4. **I feel more delightful for purchasing Western products than Chinese ones.**  
比起购买中国制造的商品, 购买来自西方的商品会让我感到更开心。
5. **I think Peking opera is better than Western opera.**  
我觉得京剧比西方的戏剧更好看。
6. **I think Chinese TV shows are inferior to Western ones.**  
我觉得中国的电视节目没有西方的电视节目制作得那么好。
7. **I feel more enjoyable to have Chinese foods than Western foods.**  
比起吃西餐, 我更喜欢吃中国菜。
8. **I feel that Western housing style is more preferable than the Chinese style.**  
比起中国的住宅风格, 我更青睐西式住宅的风格。
9. **I enjoy Chinese pop music more than Western popular songs.**  
比起西方流行音乐, 我更享受中文的流行音乐。
10. **I think Western cultural values are superior to Chinese cultural values.**  
我觉得西方的文化价值观比中国的文化价值观更高端。
11. **I feel more satisfied with Chinese merchandise than Western merchandise.**  
比起西方的商品, 我更满意国货。
12. **I feel that Chinese Qi Xi is less favorable than Western Valentine's Day.**  
我觉得中国的七夕情人节没有西方的情人节 (2月14日) 有趣。
13. **I am very cautious in trying Nike's sports clothing.**  
我对购买耐克的运动服饰很慎重。
14. **Even though there are many basketball shoes, I always tend to buy Li-Ning's.**  
尽管市场上有很多不同品牌的篮球鞋, 我始终倾向于购买李宁牌的。
15. **I am always eager to buy Nike's sports clothing.**  
我非常渴望买到耐克的运动服饰。
16. **I like to recommend Li-Ning's products to my friends.**

我愿意向我的朋友推荐李宁牌的产品。

17. **I like to browse Nike's advertisements even when I don't plan to buy anything.**  
即使我不打算买东西，我还是喜欢浏览耐克的广告。
18. **I am always eager to investigate any new sports clothing of Li-Ning.**  
我总是渴望探索新款的李宁牌运动服饰。
19. **I always prefer to buy Nike's sports shoes.**  
我总是倾向于购买耐克的运动鞋。
20. **I enjoyed exploring different sports shoes of Li-Ning.**  
我很享受探索不同款式的李宁牌运动鞋。
21. **I like to shop around to find out more about Nike's latest styles.**  
我喜欢通过闲逛的逛街，来找到更多耐克的最新款式。
22. **I get disinterested in listening to others about Li-Ning's products.**  
我没兴趣听朋友向我推荐李宁牌的产品。
23. **I usually skip Nike's product advertisements without reading them.**  
我通常会跳过耐克的广告，不会去读它们。
24. **If I buy sports clothing, I will only buy Li-Ning's.**  
如果我要买运动服饰，我只会买李宁牌的。
25. **I get bored with buying Nike's sports shoes.**  
购买耐克的运动鞋让我觉得厌烦。
26. **I have little interest in buying Li-Ning's sports shoes.**  
我对买李宁的运动鞋不太感兴趣。
27. **I always like to introduce Nike's products to my friends.**  
我总是喜欢向我的朋友介绍耐克的产品。
28. **I like to shop around to find out more about Li-Ning's latest styles.**  
我喜欢通过闲逛的逛街，来找到更多李宁牌的最新款式。
29. Age 年龄: \_\_\_\_\_
30. College 专业: \_\_\_\_\_
31. Gender 性别: Male 男 \_\_\_\_\_ Female 女 \_\_\_\_\_
32. Grade 年级: Freshman 大一 \_\_\_\_\_ Sophomore 大二 \_\_\_\_\_ Junior 大三 \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior 大四 \_\_\_\_\_ Postgraduate 硕士 \_\_\_\_\_ Phd 博士 \_\_\_\_\_ Other 其他 \_\_\_\_\_
33. **Do you know Nike's products?** 你知道耐克的产品吗?  
Yes 知道 \_\_\_\_\_ No 不知道 \_\_\_\_\_
34. **Do you know Li-Ning's products?** 你知道李宁牌的产品吗?  
Yes 知道 \_\_\_\_\_ No 不知道 \_\_\_\_\_
35. **Have you ever purchased Nike's products?** 你曾经购买过耐克的产品吗?  
Yes 购买过 \_\_\_\_\_ No 没购买过 \_\_\_\_\_
36. **Have you ever purchased Li-Ning's products?** 你曾经购买过李宁牌的产品吗?  
Yes 购买过 \_\_\_\_\_ No 没购买过 \_\_\_\_\_

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