

INVESTIGATING GLOBAL BRAND PREFERENCE BIAS AMONG LOW-STATUS CONSUMERS: A STUDY ON THE MECHANISMS OF ITS ACCENTUATION AND MITIGATION¹



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Objective - This study reconciles system justification theory (SJT), intersectionality awareness (IA), and dual attitudes (DA) to determine the conscious-unconscious relationship between consumer identity and global brand preference bias in low-status consumers.

Method - We performed three experimental studies: First, we observed the discrepancy between explicit/conscious and implicit/unconscious (DA) global brand attitudes according to established social order (SJT), even if a status quo bias exerts influence. Second, we propose the moderation of the disidentification, which emphasizes the rejection of local elements in this process. Lastly, we propose the mitigation of the disidentification effects through status quo awareness, or Intersectionality Awareness (IA).

Relevance/originality – The literature of low-status consumers' identity relation to brand preference is still developing when tapping multiple layers of perspectives, such as disidentification and identity awareness, and conscious and unconscious processes. The comprehension of this interaction allows a better understanding of the global brand preference bias.

Main results – We identified conflicting conscious and unconscious global brand attitudes, potentialized through disidentification with domestic values, those that represent the home country consumer, although their effect can be mitigated by intersectionality awareness.

Theoretical/methodological contributions – Theoretically, this study advances the knowledge about global brand preference, including the status quo/awareness theory to better understand the customer-brand relationship. Methodologically, we advanced by employing an unconscious-based technique to address the phenomenon.

Social/management contributions – The study explains brand preference bias through the mechanism of disidentification, and their control through social awareness, expanding practitioners' horizons beyond brand strategies, to consider deep human identity mechanisms. For the individuals and the society, the study proposes understanding on the potential side effects of consumer-brand relationships, presenting coping strategies to deal with this phenomenon, promoting more equality and inclusion.

Keywords: Global and local brands. Consumer global dispositions. System justification theory. Intersectionality awareness. Dual attitudes. Consumer disidentification.

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Introduction

Low-status consumers, such as those from emerging countries, are considered to present xenocentric tendencies in its essence (Bartsch, Riefler, & Diamantopoulos, 2016; Lawrence, 2012), since there is an inclination to a greater appreciation of foreign products and aspects than those local ones (Lawrence, 2012). Consumers make decisions based on global aspects of the product or brand, which is a habit not openly assumed in some cases (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2017). Thus, there is a tendency to reject of local elements in emerging countries' population consumers, which gradually incorporates global countries' values and lifestyles to their routine, becoming an almost unconscious status quo bias (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004).

There has been accumulated evidence of bias towards the global in recent studies (Lu, 2018) and former literature (Batra et al., 2000). There might be a tendency in developing countries for the search of uniqueness aspects for their identity (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980), as the influence of a global culture and lifestyle on consumer local/global brand preference affects consumer preference (Cucato et al., 2022). Although the consensus on brand preference theory holds that consumers prefer brands that are congruent with their identities (Zhang & Khare, 2009), some studies has challenged this general assumption by investigating certain conditions under which congruence can be more malleable, producing unexpected results. This is particularly true depending on the global/local identity accessibility (Nie et al., 2022).

This means that the specific identity made more prominent may impact the guidance of the individual towards global or local aspects. Uncertainty can also revert this assumption, as a triggering mechanism to provoke unexpected decisions towards brands, leading consumers to preferer brands with inconsistent congruence with their identities (Ng et al., 2021). Thus, the malleability of identity may drive consumer's preference for brands. Based on systems justification theory, the study follows the proposition that xenocentric consumers consider their domestic products as inferior, as a symptom of social inequality arrangements, accepted by the social group, typically from developing countries (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016). For this study, we approached low-status consumers by the combination of being an individual pertaining to a large group considered socially underprivileged (the higher institution) who exhibit higher levels of xenocentrism, as a general aspect of consumers from an emerging country, who tend to manifest this global preference bias.

This process leads to a gradual disidentification of the consumer with their country and its local products, creating a subgroup of consumers distinct from those with regular contact with global aspects (Josiassen, 2011). Consumer disidentification is defined as a way of

rejecting to brands and products of the consumers' own countries (Josiassen, 2011). At the same time, consumers from emerging countries, particularly those with low income, tend to present a more inclined identity related to their domestic country. This identity is learned through life and is marked by gaps in consumption that are gradually widening. This national identity is likely to conflict with a global identity when this habitant starts to have contact and feel represented by global brands (Micevski, Halkias, & Herz, 2018; Transue, 2007).

As a result, mechanisms of global environment evaluations, as well as global dispositions and consumer marketing responses, are likely to be affected by this conflict of identity. The attitude to global brands, ethnocentrism, and xenocentrism (Bartsch et al., 2016), among other global dispositions, are formed from the contact with elements and clues of the global world, such as brands and products. These global dispositions must lead to conflicting answers for low-status consumers from developing countries, affected by a search for control over these effects when the conflict of identity is subject to social pressure (Transue, 2007).

Emerging countries present a group of low-status consumers from developing countries that are transiting to a global economy by being exposed to strategies of global organizations focused on promoting their brands, products and services, as well as reaching new publics (Saraiva, Rezende, Reis, Inácio, Schucman, 2015). This consumer's cultural and socioeconomic transition in emerging countries brings impacts individuals' identity, which will also go through a transition. Several studies have been proposed to better understand this type of consumer and its desire for consumption. Wang et al (2020) studied the private label brand relationship with low-status consumers through power distance believes. Bizarrias et al (2023) also investigated how to include low-status consumers, high in power-distance, into the luxury consumption market. They found that social approval and social capital dual mediating mechanism is capable to insert low-status consumers into sophisticated consumption. Chen et al (2020) identified that low-status consumers tend to mimic the buying behavior of admired countries and lifestyles. Ordabayeva and Lisjak (2022) proposed a three-step framework to better understand the relationship between marketing efforts and low-status consumers. For Cai and Wang (2023), status seeking motivation of low status-consumers explains their search for uniqueness even when unfair treatment is present. The research stream on low-status consumers is increasing, as the topic of inequality is a trend of future studies in marketing and consumer research fields (Rust, 2020).

Although much is heard about the direct effects of global dispositions, research in global marketing does not explore the indirect effects in both interactions between stakeholders

and background variables (Bartsch et al., 2016; Diamantopoulos, Davydova, & Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, 2019), and cognitive processes upon which the consumers do not control (Diamantopoulos, Florack, Halkias, & Palcu, 2017). The conflict of identity arises when the identity of the low-status consumer from emerging countries start to receive influence of a global lifestyle. Most of the consumers will adopt this lifestyle in face of the influence of status quo, by creating a disidentification with local aspects of its culture and affecting its consumption patterns.

However, being aware of this implicit and subtle influence must lead the low-status consumer to reduce this preference bias, allowing a mitigation of its effects and increasing the preference for local elements. The preference for global elements is usually accepted and legitimated with no major reflections due to the status quo bias (Jost et al. 2004; Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988), and the absence of conscience over the causes of this hierarchical inferiority related to high status groups (Curtin, Stewart, & Cole, 2015).

To capture the subtlety of the conflicting effects of identity formation, the use of implicit techniques of investigation must be more suitable than those based in auto-declaration, in order to allow a more complete investigation (Diamantopoulos et al., 2017; Dimofte, 2010; Gawronski & Payne, 2010). This research focused on three literature gaps of global marketing, represented by the following research questions: RQ1: To what extent low-status consumer's strategy by adopting the preference bias for global aspects influences their identity transition in dealing with global brands? RQ2: What is the moderation effect of disidentification, and later the intersectional awareness, on the relationship between consumer's dual attitudes guidance and global brand purchase intention? RQ3: How does implicit techniques, complementary to the explicit ones, enables a better investigation of global brand preference bias phenomena?

The study of the indirect effects through consumer's strategies in global marketing responses also becomes another important contribution of this study. We aimed to investigate the mechanisms of accentuation and mitigation of preference bias through global elements in low-status consumers from developing countries with tendency to xenocentrism. This phenomenon was investigated through the moderation effect of disidentification in interaction with global dispositions to produce marketing responses in low-status consumers from developing countries from emerging countries, with consumer identity in transition.

We also evaluated the mitigation of this bias through greater awareness of the elements of inferior identity formation. As a global disposition, we evaluated the attitude and purchase intention of the global brand and the xenocentrism. To carry out this work, we elaborated on

three studies. Firstly, we identified the conflict between explicit and implicit attitudes to the global brand in low-status consumers from developing countries. Secondly, we identified the moderating effect of disidentification over the relationship between global disposition and marketing responses. Lastly, we evaluated the control over the phenomena by attenuating the effect of disidentification through the moderation of intersectional consciousness.

This approach aims to pioneer a better explanation of the phenomenon, from its formation, increase and control. Studies on xenocentrism have opted to measure the phenomenon (Mueller et al., 2020, Rojas-Méndez & Chapa, 2020) and to directly explain global brand preference (Mahmoud et al., 2021, Nguyen & Pham, 2021, Centeno, 202, Venugopal et al., 2022, Zhang et al., 2022), not their underlying mechanisms, as some recent researches have proposed (Arora & Arora, 2020, Jiang & Christian, 2022, Cucato et al., 2022).

Study 1 – Divergence basis between attitudes to global brand

Theoretical development and hypotheses formulation

The status quo bias establishes that people's decision-making usually drives them to choose the current order of things, in face of a psychological feeling of comfort and security in face of new options. Social pressures and the mere acquaintance with something more familiar exert pressure on the individual. In the real world, the individual often does not even recognize that there is a decision to be made, leading to a continuity of the status quo (Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988), even if he or she has a major inclination to a new choice.

A major loss aversion can justify the status quo bias. However, even a person oriented by the gain in decision making shows preference by the usual course of things (Chernev, 2004). The issue to be discussed is that is not the loss aversion and the tendency to non-action that explain the status quo bias, but what is lost or what is gained by this action or choice.

The tendency to make no choice is less uncomfortable, since to choose something requires a task of information process based on a psychological motivation (Gal & Rucker, 2018). This is how the preference for global aspects in low-status consumers from developing countries works. The xenocentrism establish that people are attracted by foreign elements, favoring other groups in detriment of their own (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016).

This tendency over external aspects is biased by a non-questioned vision that external things are better, even when it does not represent the reality. This preference bias is highlighted in low-status consumers from developing countries, not by choice of a group social identity, but por acceptance and internalization of behavior and lifestyle patterns of other countries,

legitimized by social and economic arrangements of a society structure (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016).

Thus, the preference bias for global aspects is likely to be an automatic process on people from emerging countries, as it is established a social order ideologically determined by high-status groups (Jost et al., 2004). There is no rationality over the reasons why it develops a preference for elements of an external culture in detriment of those from internal culture.

Low-status groups, such as low-status consumers from developing countries in emerging countries, adopts the vision of high-status groups that are legitimized by the society, even if it is unfavorable to the identity of their original group (Jost, Pelham, & Carvalho, 2002; Jost et al., 2004). The condition of the low-status consumers from developing countries leads to an identity conflict between its subgroups and the identity promoted by high-status groups, as in other social contexts (Transue, 2007).

Implicit-unconscious approach

To generate the implicit measurements, the most commonly used tool is the implicit association test (IAT), which consists in a computerized task for word and image or word and word linking. IAT measures implicit biases or attitudes that people may have towards certain social groups, concepts, or issues, or any attitude object or consequence. The test is designed to reveal inaccessible associations that individuals may hold but are not aware of or able to report explicitly. IAT reasoning establishes that by measuring the speed of participants' responses to different combinations of stimuli, the salient attitude is elicited.

The operationalization of IAT present to participants pictures of opposed images to represent the attitude object, and positive and negative words to represent the valence of the attitude towards those attitude objects, and asks participants to quickly categorize these stimuli by pressing buttons programed on a keyboard, on the right side and the other on the left side, designed to associate the central image to the respective right word or the left word exhibited in the screen. The test measures the millisecond time it takes for participants to categorize stimuli that are consistent with their implicit biases, compared to stimuli that are inconsistent with their biases. The central image is programmed to be associated to a certain set of correct-congruent answers, for example, a flower picture to the words “beautiful”, “nature”, “good”, “preservation”, “natural”. Participants speed of response is combined with the correctness of associations.

The underlying assumption of the IAT is that participants will respond more quickly to stimuli that are consistent with their implicit biases, revealing subconscious associations between certain attitude objects, such as social groups. For example, if a participant has a subconscious bias against a brand, they may respond more quickly to negative words paired with that brand stimuli, compared to negative words paired with different brands. The lower the correct association time between two categories, more salient that attitude will be unconsciously established in the individual mind. The test generates an indicator “D”, which varies between -2 (unfavorable) and 2 (favorable) related to what was programmed to be measured (Dimofte, 2010; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998).

In other knowledge areas, such as social psychology, the use of indirect research techniques brought greater gains to the knowledge of automatic or unconscious processes and mechanisms of attitude formation/change and other evaluations and predispositions than direct techniques of marketing research (Ackermann & Mathieu, 2015; Dimofte, 2010; Nevid, 2010).

These research techniques maturity allowed the better exploration of social world phenomena, in which people cannot control its feelings and unconscious evaluations (Dimofte, 2010). However, cognitive conflicts are not likely to be directly captured by deliberate processes of reflection due to the need of control of the impression and the social bias of social desirability (Steenkamp, Jong, & Baumgartner, 2010). Several studies deal with the use of implicit measurements (indirect, almost unconscious) for process investigation in which the reflection or deliberated evaluation is not possible to be measured (Ackermann & Mathieu, 2015; Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009). This is the case of the identity conflict observed in low-status consumers from developing countries that are in identity transition.

To study the relationship between global disposition of consumers and its preferences related to brands, the focus has been primarily on approaches that evaluates the direct relationships between global dispositions and consumers responses (Bartsch et al., 2016), but the search for the evaluation of indirect (Diamantopoulos et al., 2018), and implicit effects in the field of global marketing (Diamantopoulos et al., 2017) is increasing through time. The low-status consumer of developing countries is connected to its local roots, habits and values.

They were immersed on this lifestyle for too long, so they are more susceptible to the effects of status quo bias in function of the unconscious influence of its country’s culture to create its primarily identity and intersections (Cleveland, Rojas-Mendez, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2016). When this consumer reaches an economic active stage, they will be able

to make consumption choices that will challenge the status quo in which they are inserted, promoting an identity change.

These choices must contribute to the consumers' new identity in detriment of its previous one, in the means that the environment and current social order affects the consumption choices and identity formation (Micevski et al., 2018). Three possibilities of consumer dispositions can be used to establish a new identity through consumption: the valorization of local in detriment of global aspects (ethnocentrism); the valorization of global in detriment of local aspects (xenocentrism); or a balance between both (cosmopolitanism).

There is a consensus among the researchers that the preference for global in detriment of local aspects is more common in consumers from emerging countries (Bartsch et al., 2016; Strizhakova, Coulter, & Price, 2008), however, when this consumer is emerged in its local culture and is influenced by the status quo bias, an unconscious valorization of consumption elements linked to its national identity occurs at the same time in which this consumer prefers a global lifestyle. Thus, a possible identity conflict is established: Local versus Global identity.

The global dispositions, particularly the positive ones (Bartsch et al., 2016), become suitable to a social desirability bias and leads the people to this identity conflict, since it approaches values widely accepted in the Western world due to the lifestyle disseminated by products, brands, TV series, movies and other elements of the cultural industry (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et al., 2002; Micevski et al., 2018).

Thus, in emerging countries, where the admiration for global values is bigger, it is expected a conflict between auto-declared and felt global disposition. This means that in terms of global disposition, low-status consumers from developing countries from emerging countries immersed on its local universe explicitly manifests its attitude favorable to global brands, but implicitly its evaluation is divergent and unfavorable. Based on this discussion, in an immersion context of low-status local universe, we established the following two hypotheses:

H1: Low-status consumers from developing countries from emerging countries tends to present a positive explicit attitude related to global brands.

H2: Low-status consumers from developing countries from emerging countries tends to present a negative implicit attitude related to global brands.

Experimental design

To perform the study 1, the subjects were randomly designed to four possible treatments: 2 (implicit/explicit attitudes to global brand; measured) *versus* 2 (social context or

local/global status quo; manipulated). As dependent variable, we measured the implicit and explicit global brand's purchase intention.

Stimuli definition

All stimuli were subjected to a pre-test previously to the study. For the manipulation of local/global social context, a group of people similar to the study group elaborated texts focused on: 1) the manipulation of the local status quo; and 2) the manipulation of the global status quo. We checked the manipulation through an item ("This scenario represents the social reality of my country"), anchored to a Likert-like scale from zero ("I totally disagree") to 10 ("I totally agree").

To improve the realism of the manipulation, the participants performed a debate on the status quo of their countries. In this study, an example of local manipulation is as follows: "Our country has undergone major social and economic transformations in recent years. Your parents have probably had little opportunity for higher education, unlike you who may be at this university. (...) This meant that their consumption pattern was based on national products and brands, on national values. The country has lived years of economic and social restriction. The lifestyle of our country was very precarious. But it was our lifestyle, something typically ours. So much so that the effort to overcome these difficulties is a typical value of ours, probably transferred to you and reinforced by your parents in their upbringing". All manipulations, scales and other details can be observed in the Appendix section.

Measurements

The independent variable "explicit attitude to global brand" was measured based on Steenkamp and de Jong (2010), anchored to a Likert-like scale from 1 ("I totally disagree") to 7 ("I totally agree"). The "implicit attitude to global brand" variable was elaborated based on Greenwald et al. (1998) and is also produces a D score, ranging from -2 to + 2, meaning a spectrum of unfavorable to favorable attitudes. The local/global status quo, as moderating variable, was manipulated by a descriptive text corresponding to these social orders, based on Samuelson and Zeckhauser (1988).

The dependent variable "purchase intention (explicitly)" was based on Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra (2006), with Likert-like scale of seven points, while the variable "purchase intention (implicitly)" was based on Greenwald et al. (1998). All variables were pre-tested in a consumer group like the one from the main study. We used as covariables the items

“I understand this text”, “This research looks like my reality”, “I know the brands used in this study”, “This research represents the reality of my country”, and “The pictures present good visualization quality”, “I relate well with this research” and “These pictures represent my reality”, anchored in a Likert-like scale of seven points, from “totally disagree” to “totally agree”.

Collection procedure

The participants of the study were approached in a private higher education institution in the city of São Paulo, Brazil. All participants were invited to participate in a study of global marketing, and they were conducted in the computing lab of the institution to answer the test. The computers were programmed alternately with each one of the four treatments possible. The participants choose their computers randomly, and they were better informed about the procedures of the study. Initially, it was evaluated the level of implicit and explicit xenocentrism (Greenwald et al., 1998; Lawrence, 2012) of each participant, and those with levels above the average have their results considered for the study. Before the implicit data collection, the participant answered a non-related task, just to familiarize themselves with the procedures of this kind of test. After the reading and discussion of the text on moderating variable manipulation, where it was observed the national and global brands used in this study, we started with the data collection.

Results

Sample

The valid sample was composed of 121 participants, all of them with incomplete undergraduate degrees, and 39.7% (N=48) were women. The average age was 20.38 ± 2.02 years. The level of implicit xenocentrism was elevated ($D_{\text{ImplicitXenocentrism}} = -0.48 \pm 0.51$), as well as the explicit xenocentrism ($M_{\text{ExplicitXenocentrism}} = 6.43 \pm 0.39$), characterizing all participants with xenocentric tendency. For this study and the following ones, missing data, and multivariate outliers were analyzed, with no alterations demanded.

Analysis of the results

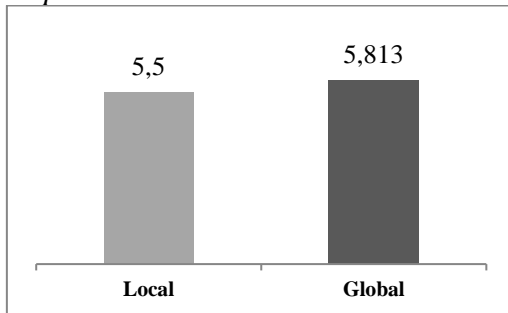
The manipulation check showed to be adequate. The consumers understood the local context manipulation as very representative of local scenario, which is significantly different

from the manipulation of the global scenario ($M_{\text{local context}}=6.50 \pm 0.62$ versus $M_{\text{global context}}=2.37 \pm 0.785$, $p<0.05$). We found no significant results for the covariates. The general hypothesis from this first study established that the consumers present an explicit attitude favorable to global brands, although it is implicitly divergent.

The attitude to a global brand in a local context scenario was favorable ($M=5.50$), as well as in the context of the global brand ($M=5.81$), with no significant differences ($p>0.05$), as observed in Figure 1. The implicit attitude to the global brand, in turn, was unfavorable in both local ($D_{\text{Implicit attitude to global brand}} = -0.785 \pm 0.43$) versus global ($D_{\text{Implicit attitude to global brand}} = -0.10 \pm 0.62$), with significant differences ($p<0.05$), as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1

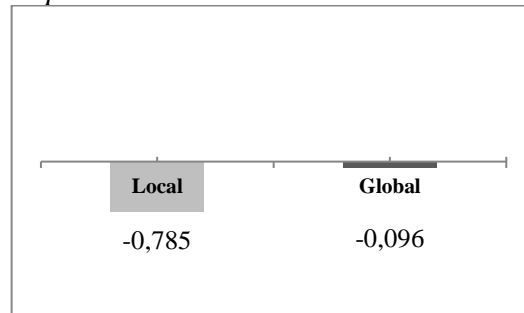
Explicit Attitude to Global Brand



Source: The research

Figure 2

Implicit Attitude to Global Brand



Source: The research

These results corroborate both hypotheses from our first study. Besides, additional tests evidence that the type of context, or status quo, has a moderating influence on the relationship between the type of attitude to the global brand. The moderation was not significant for the implicit global brand purchase intention ($F_{(2,120)}=3.63$, $p=0.06$), or for the explicit purchase intention ($F_{(2,120)}=1.15$, $p=0.285$). This result suggests that in a process of attitude to the global brand formation, the context is potentially a factor influencing the consumer response when the marketing answer is implicit. Figure 2 presents the “D” effect of the implicit test. In a local context, there’s greater negative implicit attitude towards global brands, while in a global one, the effect is very reduced.

Discussion

Our results indicated that the attitude to global brands differs when we observed the formation process of this attitude, considering the level of consciousness. When a bigger deliberation is possible, the consumer expresses favoritism to the global brand, considering both

its attitude and purchase intention. On the other hand, when this process becomes inconscient, the global disposition becomes negative and unfavorable for the predisposition to evaluate the brand, the attitude to the global brand, and to purchase intention.

Additional tests suggests that the context in which the consumer is inserted will affect it in an inconsistent process, where the consumer is less likely to control their feelings (Dimofte, 2010). However, other stakeholder variables must potentialize the global preference bias, reinforcing previous studies within social psychology and the evaluation of global marketing events (Diamantopoulos et al., 2017).

This initial investigation allowed the identification of the global disposition divergence phenomenon, according to the level of deliberation of its formation process, and of the status quo as a mechanism that explains this phenomenon. Although this social context is diverse in emerging countries, favoritism for global elements predominates. This is the investigation object of the next study.

Study 2 – The potentiating effect of disidentification

Theoretical development and hypotheses formulation

Our second study advances from the first by proposing that the social context in which the low-status group is inserted generates a process of disidentification with the domestic country by accepting the established reality and status quo (Jost et al., 2004). The disidentification consists in “a consumer’s active rejection of and distancing from the perceived typical domestic consumer” (Josiassen, 2011, p. 125). This psychological condition affects the consumption choices related to domestic products since it represents the consumption identity of the consumers’ country.

This phenomenon is like the denial of the country of origin effect when there is resistance to admitting the use of products due to their origin as a way to protect their own identity (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2017). Not only the product and its attributes are evaluated, but also the information about it and about its country of origin (Josiassen, 2011), even though in a rationally uncontrolled way. Consumer disidentification represents a distancing and repulsion of individuals in following the patterns of most of the consumers of their country. Social pressures affect this perception of local consumer distancing by establishing a model by which people is expected to follow and by punishing those who do not act to this standard model. The lower the interest of the consumer of follow this standard model, the greater will be its disidentification.

This phenomenon is distinct, although presents some similarities, to consumer animosity, where the consumer presents aversion feelings for a specific country due to political, cultural, and/or social events (Bartsch et al., 2016). However, in this case, the consumer presents aversion feelings toward their local country, and not toward a foreign one. Based on the proposition that low-status consumers from developing countries prefer foreign products and aspects over domestic ones, this study proposes that high levels of disidentification potentialize the preference for foreign products as much as the attitude to the global brand is deliberated or unconsciously formed.

This moderating effect of disidentification was not tested before in empirical studies, not even considering automatized processes of global brand evaluation (Diamantopoulos et al., 2017). Thus, this study investigates the disidentification as potentiating the effects of preference bias of a global brand, which led us to formulate the following hypotheses:

H3: The disidentification accentuates the difference between implicit attitudes to global brands, leading to a bigger global brand purchase intention;

H4: The disidentification accentuates the difference between explicit attitudes to global brands, leading to a bigger global brand purchase intention.

Sample design

To perform this second investigation, we developed a 2x2 study between subjects (implicit/explicit attitude to the measured global brand x high/low disidentification, manipulated and measured). We used here the same dependent variable used in study 1.

Stimuli definition

The manipulation of the disidentification occurred through a descriptive text of the gradual rejection feeling of the typical domestic consumer identity, followed by a debate to stimulate the manipulation reality. We used a neutral text to represent the absence of disidentification. To check the manipulation, the participants answered the following question, anchored on a Likert-like scale of eleven points, from zero (“totally disagree”) to ten (“totally agree”): “I do not feel identified with the typical Brazilian consumer, as in this scenario”.

Measurements

We used the same measurements of the first study for the attitude to a global brand and the dependent variable, except by the disidentification moderating variable, which is anchored

in a Likert-like scale of eleven points and is based on Josiassen (2011) for the explicit measurement and in Greenwald et al. (1998) for the adaptation to the implicit version. In this study, an alternative explanation to the preference bias to the global aspects is based in only one new variable, proposing an accelerating effect of disidentification on this process.

Collection procedure

We used the same procedures realized in the first study.

Results

Sample

The sample was composed of 119 participants, all of them with incomplete undergraduate degrees, and 47.1% (N=56) were women. The average age was 22.57 ± 2.93 years. The level of implicit xenocentrism was elevated ($D_{\text{ImplicitXenocentrism}} = -0.37 \pm 0.42$), as well as the explicit xenocentrism ($M_{\text{ExplicitXenocentrism}} = 6.58 \pm 0.29$), characterizing all participants as eligible to this research.

Analysis of the results

The manipulation checking of the disidentification showed to be adequate. The consumers were disidentified from the first scenario for the manipulation of the aversion to the typical local consumer, which was significantly different from the manipulation of the neutral identification ($M_{\text{local disidentification}} = 8.645 \pm 0.60$ versus $M_{\text{neutral disidentification}} = 2.89 \pm 0.085$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, our results corroborate H1 and H2, where the explicit attitude to the brand is significantly favorable, while the implicit is unfavorable, for both scenarios of disidentification ($M_{\text{explicit attitude to the global brand}} = 6.68 \pm 0.385$ versus $M_{\text{explicit attitude to the global brand}} = 6.815 \pm 0.28$, $p < 0.05$, with and without disidentification, respectively; and $D_{\text{implicit attitude to the global brand}} = -0.74 \pm 0.43$ versus $D_{\text{implicit attitude to the global brand}} = -0.39 \pm 0.08$, $p < 0.05$, with and without disidentification, respectively).

We observed the same pattern for the purchase intention of the global brand. We identified the main effect of the attitude measurement ($\beta = 0.19$, 95%, Confidence Interval, CI [0.07, 0.37]; $t_{(120)} = 2.054$, $p < 0.05$), as well as the main effect of the identification manipulation ($\beta = 0.05$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.095]; $t_{(120)} = 2.10$, $p < 0.05$), considering implicit global disposition and implicit purchase intention.

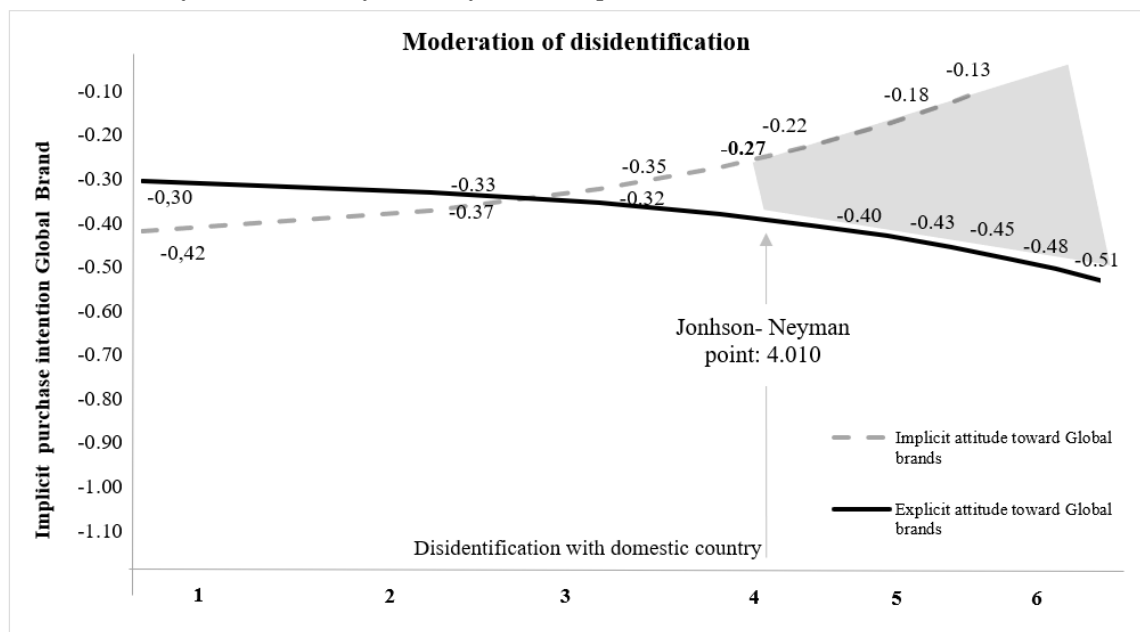
No covariates presented significant results. Considering the moderation of disidentification, the results corroborated H3, but not H4. We identified an increase of the implicit attitude effect unfavorable to the global brand over the implicit purchase intention of the global brand ($\beta = -0.07$, 95% CI [-0.10, -0.045]; $t_{(120)} = 5,14$, $p < 0.05$), with an important change on the explanation of the dependent variable ($\Delta R^2 = 11.22\%$).

However, we did not find the same pattern when the process of global disposition is explicit ($\beta = -0.04$, 95% CI [-0.09, 0.002]; $t_{(120)} = 1.87$, $p < 0.10$). We observed the effect of disidentification in an unconscious/implicit process of global dispositions. That is, the greater the attitude process to the global brand becomes explicit, the more favorable the global brand's implicit purchase intention. The disidentification moderates the implicit attitude to the global brand through the Jonhson-Neyman point = 4.01 (Figure 3). This point shows the exact moment from when moderation takes place, in terms of disidentification, and its impact on implicit purchase intention of global brand. The greater the consumer disidentification (the distancing from domestic values), the greater the implicit purchase in tension of global brands.

In practical terms, as the consumer feels more distant from its domestic country's values (increase in disidentification, x-axis), the more he gets proximal from global brands, increasing its global brand favorable bias (implicit purchase intention to global brands become more positive, y-axis).

Figure 3

Moderation of the Disidentification for the Implicit Purchase Intention



Source: The research.

From a plateau close to the average, as the disidentification with the local country elements increase, less negative is the global brand implicit purchase intention. Considering this tendency, as the disidentification increases, the global disposition to the brand and its acceptance will become unconsciously favorable. This result was not observed for explicit global dispositions.

Discussion

The first study indicated the divergence between global dispositions and pointed as a possible cause of the lifestyle of the consumer. The second study explored the social context, suggesting that it leads to a conflict of identity in low-status consumers from developing countries in function of a disidentification process.

The results from the second study indicate that this disidentification process is better captured by indirect measurement techniques, evidencing implicit mechanisms of global disposition operation, particularly the global brand attitude, and purchase intention. The disidentification moderation did not occur in all its levels. By observing the Jonhson-Neyman point (Hayes, 2022; Hayes & Montoya, 2017), we determined the level of disidentification where moderation occurs. It influences the relationship between attitude and purchase intention, implicitly, from a score equal to 4.101, which is close to the average (5,00). This means that the disidentification interacts with the attitude processes of the global brand only from this point to influence the purchase intention. The attitude to the global brand will only favor the purchase intention in levels above the disidentification average, which means that, although the attitude is positively related to implicit purchase intention ($\beta = 0.19$, 95% CI [0.07, 0.37]; $t_{(120)} = 2.05$, $p < 0.05$), it will only occur from a specific level of local aspects rejection.

Study 3 – The moderation of awareness over the causes of the established inferiority

Theoretical development and hypotheses formulation

The results of the second study showed that disidentification leads to an increase of negative attitudes related to the local brand, and favoritism of global elements in low-status consumers from developing countries. This group of consumers thus has a greater tendency towards xenocentrism in a function of its aversion to issues of its country of origin, and its disidentification. However, we propose that this tendency to the derogation of local marketing

elements by this category of consumers occurs due to the lack of evaluation of the established inferiority condition (Jost et al., 2002, Jost et al., 2004).

This acceptance of an established social structure has its roots in the status quo bias explored by the first study, accentuated by the process of disidentification treated in the second study. This third study focus on the evaluation of how the negative evaluation of local elements (and preference bias to global aspects) by low-status consumers from developing countries with a tendency to xenocentrism can be mitigated by a major consciousness of its multiple identities as a low-status consumer of an emerging country, which lead to an inferior condition than the high-status consumers. This inferiority is ideologically established by structural elements from our society, such as the cultural industry and the status quo bias, creating several identities which establish accepted social hierarchies (Curtin et al., 2015; Greenwood, 2008).

Based on the intersectionality theory, we propose that a major consciousness of the low-status consumers from developing countries over the elements of this inequality can reduce the tendency to the derogation of national elements, such as xenocentrism and disidentification. Intersectionality is understood as a tool to better understand people's identity formation based not only on its singular definitions but also on its multiple compositions. The individuals are "simultaneously situated socially in terms of their gender, race, sexuality, and class (among other things) [which] define social hierarchies (of status and power) that operate together in complex ways that cannot be accurately understood in isolation" (Curtin et al., 2015, p. 512).

There are intersections between several identities, each one with its own particularity. Identity cannot be understood based on a categorical definition. It is needed to understand the structures of the several identities that compose one and another. The consumer is an identity that brings a low understanding of its meaning and implications when considered in isolation. Low-status consumer of a low-status country, with a tendency to xenocentrism, is an identity full of layers, bringing much more understanding of a certain group of consumers.

However, the consumers immersed in a status quo strongly defined by high-status groups present low or no consciousness about the connections between the social categories and its implications. A citizen from Eastern European, for example, should have little knowledge about the historical process that its region lived, in and thus classified themselves as a social subgroup different from Western European. Immigrants from Arab or African countries present difficulties in integrating into the USA or European countries, even if they consume as the inhabitants of these countries (Micevski et al., 2018).

In developing countries, the cultural pressure to the adoption of the cultural model of a foreign country is strong enough to establish patterns of consumption that determine a different identity as inferior. If you do not watch the most recent TV series, or do not travel to foreign countries, or have no properties of a certain pattern, the individual can be socially categorized as inferior, since these elements are considered clues for the development of the stereotype that is considered a globalized position as superior (Jost & Banaji, 1994).

Intersectionality awareness is somehow congruent with social identity theory from Tajfel and Turner (1979), in several aspects. Both theories admits that the individual makes categorizations to identify groups. They are also similar on the assumption that the individual may categorize himself and others into identity-congruent social groups, that permits social comparison to make inferences about the individuals and the groups. Both frameworks recognize the role of identity on individuals' attitudes and behaviors. From different perspectives, both can be used to understand discrimination or prejudice.

However, social identity theory focuses how individuals derive part of their self-concept from their group membership, while intersectionality awareness acknowledges the intersection and interaction of multiple social identities. Social identity predicts an ingroup favorable bias, and the intersectionality awareness posits that the individual can contest their identity if he or she could access negative elements of its identity formation. For example, social identity predicts that socially privileged individuals may always favor their own group. Intersectionality awareness predicts that in such situation, the consciousness regarding this privilege may trigger the individual to contest his own identity.

Based on the supposition that a major intersectionality awareness (IA) allows the understanding of the inequality causes (Curtin et al., 2015), we propose that the IA leads to a reduction of the global brand preferences in the function of the disidentification since it leads to a psychological status that activates elements from the domestic culture, allowing an unconscious positive evaluation of the local elements. Based on this discussion, we propose the fifth hypothesis:

H5: Social intersectionality awareness reduces the effects of disidentification over the global brand purchase intention.

Sample design

To perform this third study, we elaborated a 2x2 study (implicit/explicit disidentification versus high/low social class intersectional awareness) with the same dependent variable from the previous studies.

Stimuli definition

For the social class intersectional awareness manipulation e, the participants joined a discussion about the country's social evolution over the last decades, with emphasis on the role of Latin identity over the world, in the perspective of the cultural industry, political scenario, and social context. For the manipulation to the intersectional awareness of Latin-American people, we used a text showing the possible role of possible structural determinants for their economic, cultural, and general inferiority condition in comparison with developed countries.

The other text does not approach the consciousness related to these structural determinants but pointed to equal conditions between countries. These texts passed by a pre-test, where was elicited the following conditions: "Latin-American" that suffer "prejudices" due to their identity, and the "negative stereotype" associated to lower income and general inferiority. To check the manipulation, the participants answered the following item anchored to a Likert-like scale of eleven points, from "totally disagree" to "totally agree": I feel more aware of the reasons for my country's social class inferiority.

Measurements

We used the same measurements of the two previous studies, except for the moderating variable of intersectional awareness of social class. This variable was adapted from Greenwood (2008), based on a pre-test that highlighted inferiority aspects from the following profile: Latin-American, low-status consumer, generally inferior. These elements replaced the identity conditions of gender and ethnicity on the Greenwood scale. The questionnaire had the variable anchored to a Likert-like scale of 11 points, from zero ("totally disagree") to ten ("totally agree").

Collection procedure

We followed the same protocol used in the previous studies, including the debate realized with the participants to increase the manipulation realism of the moderating variable.

Results

Sample

The valid sample was composed of 127 participants, all of them with an incomplete undergraduate degree, and 52% (N=66) were women. The average age was 23.09 ± 3.43 years. The level of implicit xenocentrism was elevated ($D_{\text{ImplicitXenocentrism}} = -0.34 \pm 0.40$), as well as the explicit xenocentrism ($M_{\text{ExplicitXenocentrism}} = 6.665 \pm 0.27$), characterizing all participants with xenocentric tendency.

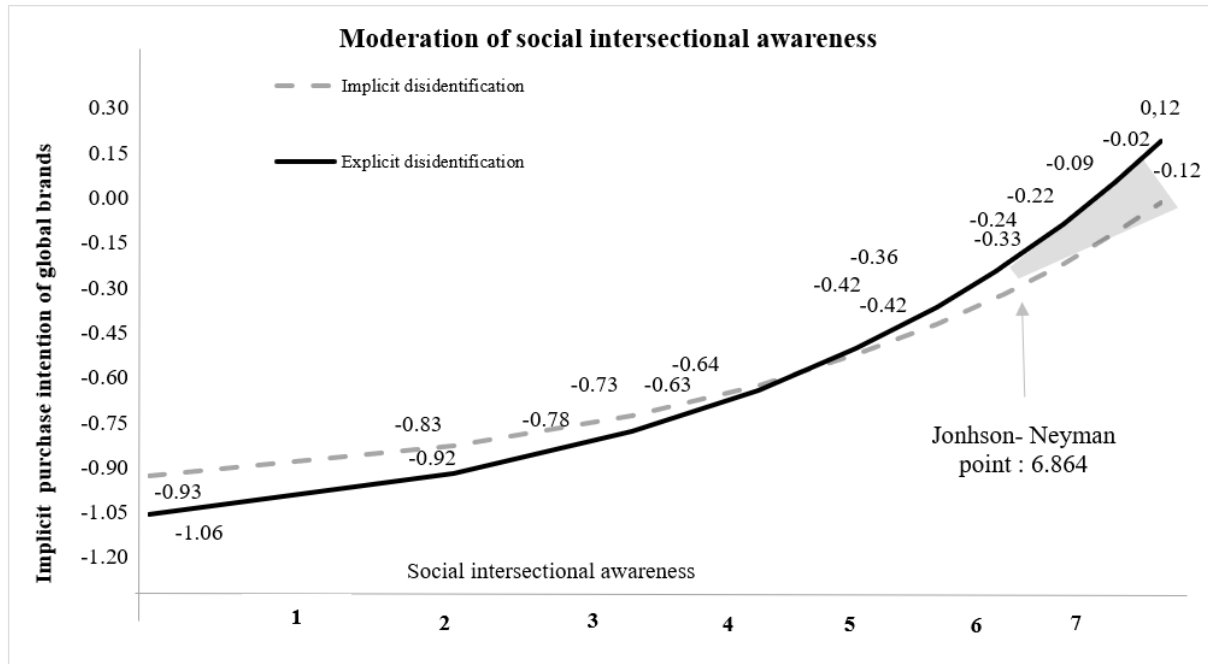
Analysis of the results

The manipulation checking of the disidentification level showed to be adequate. The consumers understood the first scenario as the most susceptible to social consciousness for the manipulation of the intersectional awareness of social class, which is significantly different from the manipulation of the scenario with no awareness ($M_{\text{intersectional awareness of social class}} = 7.82 \pm 0.90$ versus $M_{\text{without intersectional awareness}} = 2.29 \pm 0.722$, $p < 0.05$). As well as the first two studies, the level of xenocentrism was reached, so all the participants were eligible for the study.

This study proposes to decrease the level of low-status consumer disidentification by increasing the intersectional awareness of social class, considering the causes of the low-status categorization. We identified the main effect of the disidentification ($\beta = 0.165$, 95% CI [0.01; 0.32]; $t_{(126)} = 2.09$; $p < 0.05$), as well as the main effect of the intersectionality ($\beta = 0.14$, 95% CI [0.10; 0.175]; $t_{(126)} = 7.58$, $p < 0.05$) in a context of implicit disidentification and purchase intention of the global. Besides, as shown in Figure 4, we observed the intersectionality moderation ($\beta = -0.04$, 95% CI [-0.06, -0.01]; $t_{(126)} = 3.13$, $p < 0.05$), from a score of 6.86 in social intersectional awareness through the calculation of the Jonhson-Neyman point (6.68), which corroborates H5. No covariate presented significant results.

Figure 4

Moderation of Intersectional Awareness of Social Class for the Implicit Purchase Intention



Source: The authors.

These results indicate that the more implicit the disidentification with the local aspects, the greater is the purchase intention of the global brand ($\beta= 0.165, p<0.05$). However, the increase in the intersectional awareness of the social class reduces the strength of this relationship ($\beta= -0.04, p<0.05$), which leads to a subtle change in the dependent variable explanation ($\Delta R^2=2,92\%$). When the disposition process is explicit, we found no significant moderating effect of the intersectional awareness ($\beta= -0.06, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.13; 0.01]; t_{(126)}= 1.69; p<0.10$). In real-world settings, these results indicate we can expect that the greater the intersectional awareness, the less favorable the consumer is to global brands in terms of purchase intention (there is an increase in negative implicit purchase intention, y-axis), when guided by implicit processes of attitude to global brands.

Discussion

The results of this third study corroborate that a major awareness of the social structure promotes a higher hierarchy in high versus low-statusgroups, leading to a decrease in the purchase intention of the global brand. This process occurred only when the global dispositions were implicit. If we consider that there is a discrepancy between the dispositions of purchase

intention when evaluated consciously and unconsciously, these results indicate that there is a cognitive conflict in the evaluation of global aspects, which can be observed and reduced according to the scenario to which the individual was exposed.

Recent studies point to similar phenomena about global disposition, indicating mechanisms of dissimulation and control of evaluations that the consumer does about the global and local aspects, seeking to control its responses (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013; Diamantopoulos et al., 2017; Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2017). To the extent to which the consumers prefer global aspects, which is potentialized by the repulsion to local aspects, this third study highlight ways to mitigate these effects implicitly.

The fact that we did not recover significant results considering the explicit global dispositions in studies two and three indicates that low-status consumers from developing countries are managing to control their responses as expected socially, as established by SJT (Jost et al., 2004). This hypothesis depends on the person's cognitive ability to recover an explicit attitude and replace it with an implicit one (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). It also depends on the ability of the individual into managing socially undesirable impressions by activating elements in a social knowledge network, which becomes accessible only in an implicit way (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2014).

General discussions and theoretical implications

The goal of this study was to investigate the identity conflicts that emerges in the relationship between explicit and implicit global dispositions through mechanisms of accentuation and reduction of the preference bias for global elements in low-status consumers from developing countries with an inclination to xenocentrism, such as those from emerging countries, which, although its history, are in a moment of socioeconomic transition. The study employed a combined methodology with conscious self-reports, attitude declaration of opinion, versus implicit, unconscious responses with an implicit association test. IAT compares the congruence between images and words, to represent the attitude towards those images. The test produces a valence indicator of attitude towards the association, representing the biased of the individual.

The relevance of the study is based on its contributions to the open debate about the duality of attitudes concerning local-global brands preference bias. The local-global brand bias attitude duality is also manifested for domestic products, which signals the importance of more studies on this topic. For Tseng et al. (2018), the ethnically of the brand explains implicit-

explicit incongruencies towards domestic brands. Dimantopoulos et al (2017) proposes to address the duality of attitudes towards brand preference through country stereotype as predictor and mechanism to explain brand purchase intention. Zhang et al. (2019) explored implicit motivations to buy luxury brands, and found that social goals are prominent in enabling purchase intention. Harwood and Drake (2020) explored automatic associations for organic food purchase intention. The use of implicit cognition to better understand social phenomena, as consumption, is still prominent (Greenwald & Lai, 2020).

Our study contributes to advance the existing knowledge on global brand preference bias twofold: first, by proposing the potentializing effect of disidentification, and second, by proposing intersectionality awareness as the mechanism able to mitigate global brand preference bias.

The first study indicates that there is a conflict between global dispositions of attitude and purchase intention of the global brand, and it can be stimulated by the status quo under which the individual observes its country. The results corroborated H1 and H2 by presenting the divergence on the global disposition sense. The global dispositions were explicitly favorable to the global brand, independently of the observed status quo ($M_{\text{local status quo}}=5.50$, versus $M_{\text{global status quo}}=5.81$, $p>0.05$). However, implicitly the global dispositions were unfavorable ($D_{\text{Implicit attitude to the global brand in a local context}} = -0.785$, versus $D_{\text{Implicit attitude to the global brand in a global context}} = -0.10$, $p<0.05$), with the moderation of the status quo for the implicit purchase intention of the global brand of 10% ($F_{(2,120)}=3.63$, $p=0.06$), but more distant in an explicit process ($F_{(2,120)}=1.15$, $p=0.285$).

We indicated that when the global disposition follows an explicit process of formation, the people search for greater management of the impression caused, which is different when the process of global disposition is implicit. It is not expected that in a Western city there will be rejection of global brands and elements. However, this ability of impression management is lower in people with a tendency to favoritism of global aspects, or rejection to local aspects.

The second study investigated this aspect and suggested that disidentification with elements of a local culture potentiates the preference for global aspects. Our results corroborate the hypothesis that a stronger mechanism than the status quo leads to the self-declared global preference bias in contrast to implicit mechanisms. When the individual is stimulated to disidentify with local aspects, it is possible that it activates domestic aspects in a structure of social knowledge that are cognitively pressured to be altered by other global elements (Greenwald et al., 2002).

This increases the cognitive conflict in a low-status consumer, which leads to an identity conflict when is declared a major aversion to local elements and favoritism to global brands ($M_{\text{Explicit attitude to global brand}} = 6.68 \pm 0.385$ versus $M_{\text{Implicit attitude to brand}} = 6.815 \pm 0.28$, $p < 0.05$). These consumers explicitly prefer the global elements, however, feels like its local culture leads to an unconscious decrease in the preference for these elements ($D_{\text{Explicit attitude to global brand}} = -0.74 \pm 0.431$ versus $D_{\text{Implicit attitude to global brand}} = -0.39 \pm 0.08$, $p < 0.05$). This result is consistent with the implicit social cognition theory, which indicates that individuals cannot access precisely traces of previous experiences non-identified introspectively (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995), which is created by associations established in memory through the exposure to aspects and clues that can evoke social categories (Fazio, 2001; Gawronsky & Payne, 2010). Once activated, the attitudes bias the perception of the object in the immediate situation, and the behavior follows from these perceptions, with no conscious reasoning. Thus, the construction or definition of the event by the individual directs their behavior (Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell, & Kardes, 1986).

Considering the global dispositions observed in this study, this means that the low-status consumers from developing countries studied here were exposed to several aspects of their local culture through life, such as music, movies, their country's image, their language, and other marketing elements, such as brands and products, which leads to introspective evaluations. These consumers only had contact with elements of a global culture after their socioeconomic rise. Thus, the implicitly established evaluations to big local categories such as brands, countries and other cultural elements are challenge by new associations proposed by global elements. The level of disidentification observed by the Jonhson-Neyman point= 4.01 (Hayes, 2022, Hayes & Montoya, 2017) indicates that the moderation of the relationship between attitude and purchase intention to a global brand is observed only from medium levels of disidentification.

The third study presented the possibility of dominance over the phenomenon by proposing a reduction of the effect of preference for a global brand bias accentuated by disidentification through a major consciousness over the status quo. We proposed that the preference for global aspects, when conflicting in the cognitive dimension, is likely to be changed since is caused by an acceptance of the established social order, with no questionings or consciousness (Jost and Banaji, 1994, Jost et al. , 2002). Thus, this theoretical approach can be conciliated with the intersectionality theory, since it suggests that the knowledge of the causes of hierarchical inferiority socially established leads to the search for prosocial behaviors.

A major sensitivity of low-status consumers from developing countries to differences between social groups came from the perception of the same social identity (to be a citizen of

a country with a certain consumption pattern), which, on the other hand, does not categorize them as equal to high-status consumers, must present a level of consciousness that causes the rejection of the legitimization of these social differences.

We indicated this relationship through the Jonhson-Neyman point of 6.68 on the social intersectional consciousness scale, from which is observed the moderation. However, this moderation was observed only considering the implicit global dispositions. This aspect suggests the indirect confirmation of the cognitive divergences presented in the first study, as in the second study, through the interaction of the stakeholder variables.

Managerial and social implications

The main implication of this work refers to the challenge in managing brands and products and their relationship with the cultural issues of each country. Each region presents cultural particularities that must be the target of detailed scrutiny by the managers on the development of marketing programs. This work highlighted issues over the low-status consumer's identity, which can be similar in countries that present the same socioeconomic transformation. Several practical impacts can be drawn from our results. Organizations that operates in multiple countries and offers different product lines in each region can better manage its marketing efforts. By identifying implicit global brand biases in each region, the company can tailor their strategies to increase sales and brand loyalty. Domestic brands, on the other hand, may consider monitoring their consumer's sense o xenocentrism, disidentification and political consciousness about its roots and social developments, it would assure to better comprehend consumers motivations and attitudes, and better segment their markets. All this, out together allow local brands to compete with global brands.

Another observed aspect that must be considered by global marketing managers is the use of research tools used by companies based on self-declaration. This can lead to erroneous conclusions about low-status consumers from developing countries with respect to its answers about global brands and to their segmentation strategies. Another suggestion is the use of the moderating variables considered in this study, since it brings a socioecological approach, while the managerial surveys usually focus on marketing variables.

The social implication of the study is that it sheds light into the potential side effects of consumer-brand relationship, when consumers are persuaded by global appeals in detriment of domestic ones, although differences at the product level does not exist. The study also helps individuals to cope with the potential disidentification with domestic values, that can lead to a

sense of disconnection or alienation from one's own culture or community, which can have negative psychological and social negative impacts. Additionally, conflicting attitudes towards global brands can reinforce cultural stereotypes and perpetuate biases and prejudices, which can contribute to social divisions and conflicts. Being aware of these phenomena can also help customers to understand their role in the market, as well as policy makers to monitor mechanisms of social divide, and prevent this to happen.

Limitations and perspectives of future studies

This study presents some limitations, such as the use of a specific low-status group. New studies can replicate this model for other low-status groups that do not involve income issues. This study evaluated a restricted group of global dispositions from the broad existent spectrum. Besides, global dispositions need a better consolidation of their definition (Bartsch et al., 2016). Thus, the construction of implicit measurements of global dispositions needs a better investigation, which does not invalidate the originality effort of this study, since other knowledge areas are trying to understand complex social phenomena (Ostafin & Brooks, 2011; Vantomme, Geuens, De Houwer, & De Pelsmacker, 2005; Zerhouni, Bègue, Duke, & Flaudias, 2016). Finally, this research highlights the importance to improve the global marketing phenomena investigation.

Authors' contribution

Contribution	Bizarrias, F. S	Strehlau, V. I	Teixeira, J. da. S	Moraes, S. G	Strehlau, S.
Conceptualization	X	X	x	X	X
Methodology	X	x	x	---	---
Software	X	---	---	---	---
Validation	X	---	---	---	---
Formal analysis	X	---	---	---	---
Investigation	X	---	---	---	---
Resources	--	---	---	---	---
Data Curation	X	---	---	---	---
Writing - Original Draft	X	X	X	---	---
Writing - Review & Editing	---	X	X	X	X
Visualization	X	---	---	---	---
Supervision	X	x	x	---	---
Project administration	X	x	---	---	---
Funding acquisition	---	---	---	---	---

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