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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to investigate the distinct attitudes between the first and second Chinese generations in North America in relation to purchasing a product manufactured in their parental country (i.e. China). Evidence suggests that the familiarity of immigrants' birthplace is closely associated with market environment, market information and language. It is very likely that the second generation Chinese-Americans/Chinese Canadians will lose such familiarity due to the influence of the external environment (e.g. education institutions, mass media, peers and local community). The worst case scenario is that the second generation refuses to purchase products manufactured in their parental country if those products are deemed to be unsafe or of inferior quality. However, since China has become the "factory of the world", many products are manufactured in that country, leading in some cases, to the availability of very few alternatives for Chinese-Americans/Chinese Canadians to choose from. How does this affect country image amongst the different Chinese generations in North America? How are the Chinese-made products evaluated? Will the Chinese-made products have an impact on customer-perceived value, thereby influencing

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their purchase intention?

There is very little research which takes into account simultaneously whether Country of Origin (COO, hereafter) influences customer perceptions of value and other marketing variables. A model is built to demonstrate the relationships among the key elements in the paper. In the proposed model, COO plays a role as moderator, indicating that COO moderates customers' attitudes toward a product, perceived value and purchase intention. This is the gap that the proposed study aims to fill.

A mixed-methods approach will be employed in this study. In the exploratory phase of the research, in-depth consumer interviews will be conducted to gain insights into customer perceptions of COO, quality and value. Eligible participants will be Chinese-Americans/Chinese Canadians and those educated in the North America, probably having lived there for more than 10 years. Later, a survey (using snowball sampling) will be administered to a large number of first and second Chinese generations in North America.

Previous work demonstrates that the COO is widely used in determining product quality and price, and merely focuses on the single relationship between two variables. This study attempts to bring together the value, culture and COO streams of literature to reveal the richness and complexity of the hierarchical framework. By specifying the process of acculturation and product-evaluation, the insights generated from this study will significantly elaborate upon those already found in the marketing and culture literature. By so doing, the study will help to make that body of literature more complete.