



Research on the Willingness of Overseas Consumers to Purchase Chinese E-Commerce Products Based on Consumer Ethnocentrism, Product Quality Perception and Consumer Animosity

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Abstract

In recent years, a large number of global cross-border e-commerce shopping platforms have emerged, which has become an important consumption channel for residents. Compared with domestic consumers, overseas consumers are more likely to be affected by various factors when purchasing cross-border e-commerce products. This paper selects three influencing factors: consumer ethnocentrism, consumer animosity and perceptual quality, constructs a structural equation model, and explores the purchase intention of overseas consumers for Chinese cross-border e-commerce products. The research finds that: 1) Consumer animosity has a significant negative impact on the willingness of overseas consumers to purchase Chinese e-commerce products; 2) Product quality perception has a significant positive impact on the willingness of overseas consumers to purchase Chinese e-commerce products; 3) Consumer ethnocentrism has a significant negative impact on the willingness of overseas consumers to purchase Chinese e-commerce products. Based on the research results, this paper further proposes countermeasures and suggestions for the development of Chinese cross-border e-commerce, providing useful advice for enterprises to expand overseas e-commerce market on the demand side.

Subject Areas

Business Communication, Business Research Methods, Consumer Behavior

Keywords

Consumer Ethnocentrism, Product Quality Perception,
Consumer Animosity, Purchase Intention

1. Introduction

China's economy has shifted from high-speed growth to the new normal of medium-high-speed growth. Especially in 2020, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had a more serious impact on the China's economy. According to the preliminary calculation of the National Bureau of Statistics, the GDP in 2022 increased by 3% over the same period of the previous year, and the downward pressure on the economy is high. Currently, insufficient consumer demand is a major problem in China's macroeconomic operation. According to the monthly retail sales report released by the Census Bureau of the US Department of Commerce, from January to December 2022, the total retail sales of consumer goods in the United States was \$8120.769 billion. While, according to data released by the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China, from January to December 2022, the total retail sales of consumer goods were ¥439,733 billion. The gap in per capita consumption between China and the United States is huge. In the past decade, China's total consumption has shown an overall upward trend, but the rise is relatively slow, and the consumption potential is far from being fully released. In response to the current economic situation, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed at the 20th National Congress to "we should develop digital trade, promote high-level opening up, rely on the advantages of China's ultra-large-scale market, attract global resource elements with domestic circulation, enhance the linkage effect of resources in both domestic and foreign markets, and improve the quality and level of trade and investment cooperation" [1]. As an important format of digital economy in the field of international trade, the emergence and development of cross-border e-commerce adapts to the needs of trade miniaturization and flexibility. And, it is more suitable for the fast-paced modern society, while greatly reducing the threshold of international trade and allowing enterprises or individuals of different sizes to quickly connect to the global consumer market through cross-border e-commerce platforms.

According to the data of the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, the scale of import and export transactions in China's cross-border e-commerce reached 1.98 trillion yuan in 2021. Meanwhile, cross-border e-commerce has become an important part of China's import and export trade, giving birth to a large number of excellent Chinese cross-border e-commerce brands such as Shein and Anker. While enjoying the dividends of development, China's cross-border e-commerce also faces significant risks and challenges. On the one hand, the world is undergoing profound changes unseen

in a century, geopolitics are becoming increasingly complex. Due to fluctuations in international relations, commodity boycotts occur from time to time, and nationalist sentiments rise in many countries. Because of the Sino-Indian border conflict in 2020, a large number of Indian citizens boycotted Chinese products, which had a certain impact on Sino-Indian trade. On the other hand, China's cross-border e-commerce enterprises are mainly small and medium-sized enterprises, many of which have an extensive economic operation, uneven product quality and poor business stability. Also, enterprises are easily affected by the rules of cross-border e-commerce platforms. Western markets are also adopting the "China plus one" strategy, aiming to reduce their dependence on China's supply chain. The massive Amazon store lockdown incident that began in April 2021 has had a significant impact on a large number of Chinese sellers.

In view of the complex situation of cross-border e-commerce consumer market, this paper introduces three factors: consumer ethnocentrism, consumer animosity and perceptual quality. Author explores the influence of these three factors on overseas consumers' willingness to buy Chinese e-commerce products, hoping to provide beneficial suggestions and enlightenment for Chinese local brands in the field of cross-border e-commerce.

2. Literature Review

A large number of studies have discussed the influence degree and influence path of consumers' purchase intention from the perspective of consumer cognition. The existing studies mainly focus on the following two perspectives.

2.1. Emotional Bias

The research focuses on the influence of consumer ethnocentrism and consumer animosity on purchase intention.

Consumer ethnocentrism is the result of native culture. Ethnocentrism, in its narrow sense, is the belief that one's own culture is superior to other cultures. Shimp and Sharma (1987) first put forward consumer ethnocentrism, which represents a perception among consumers about whether it is ethical to buy foreign products rather than domestic products [2]. People with consumer ethnocentrism believe that the purchase of products from other countries will affect their own economy, which is immoral [2]. In the process of product selection, customers often have the feeling of patriotism and collectivism, giving priority to national factors rather than the quality of products themselves, thus resisting the purchase of products from other countries. As Powers and Hopkins (2006) pointed out, consumer ethnocentrism is a prosocial behavior [3]. Numerous empirical studies have found that ethnocentrism has a positive impact on consumers' willingness to buy domestic products and a negative impact on consumers' willingness to buy foreign products (Zhou Qin, 2013 [4]; Zhang Weiping, 2014 [5]).

Consumer animosity refers to the past or existing political, economic, mili-

tary, diplomatic conflicts that cause consumers to be hostile to the other country's products or services and to resist purchasing. Such hostility has a specific directivity and is the result of consumers' emotional perception of specific national behaviors [6]. Klein (1999) first proposed the concept of consumer animosity and divided it into war animosity and economic animosity [6]. Nes (2012) divided consumer hostility into four dimensions: war animosity, economic animosity, human animosity, and political animosity [7].

2.2. Product Cognition

The research focuses on consumers' perceived product quality.

Olson and Jacoby first defined perceived quality as the evaluation and judgment of product quality [8]. Many experts and scholars at home and abroad have conducted research on perceived quality, basically dividing it into objective and subjective categories. Jacoby, Olson and Haddock (1971) studied customers' direct perception of beer and concluded that price is a sign of product quality. Brand image and product composition have a significant impact on perceived quality [9]. Gronroos (1982) proposed the definition of customer perceived service quality: by comparing customers' expectations and actual service performance, and by comparing actual feelings and psychological expectations of services, the perceived quality of products can be determined [10]. However, in the process of research, experts and scholars found that the product quality perception is objective, that is, product quality perception is inseparable from the inherent quality and characteristics of products or services. Subsequently, Parasuraman *et al.* constructed the Service Quality Scale (servqual) and divided it into five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and sameness [11]. Through a series of studies, Li Jing (2011) found that brand personality, corporate awareness, and subjective popular cognition can affect product perceived quality [12].

In general, there have been a lot of studies on the influencing factors of consumers' purchase intentions. Existing studies mainly focus on the segmentation of factors that affect consumers' purchase intention, and rarely discuss the influence degree of related factors on consumers' purchase intention from the combination dimension. Furthermore, there is limited research regarding the impact of these factors on the purchase behavior of overseas consumers of Chinese e-commerce products.

3. Hypothesis

Existing research has used different methods to explore and confirm the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on purchase intentions under different circumstances. The majority of the conclusions suggest a positive correlation between consumer ethnocentrism and willingness to purchase domestic products, while showing a negative correlation between consumer ethnocentrism and willingness to purchase foreign products (Yuan Shengjun, 2013 [13]; Nijssen and

Douglas, 2003 [14]; Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2004 [15]; Song Liang, Yuan Shengjun, Hu Fagang, Wu Xue, 2014 [16]; Wang Haizhong, 2003 [17]). Some studies also found that the concept of ethnocentrism significantly affected consumers' understanding of the originality of foreign brands (Zhu Ling, Lu Xiongwen, Chu Rongwei, 2006) [18].

Therefore, this study proposes the following assumptions:

H1 consumer ethnocentrism has a significant negative impact on overseas consumers' willingness to purchase Chinese e-commerce products.

In terms of the relationship between consumer animosity and consumer purchase intention, most studies believe that consumer animosity affects the purchase intention. For example, based on the background of the Japanese War of Aggression against China, Klein (1998) tested Chinese mainland consumers' attitudes toward Japanese products, and the results showed that Chinese consumers' military animosity had a significant impact on their willingness to buy Japanese products [19]. In the study of evaluating the hostile impact of Chinese products on Indian consumers' willingness to buy Chinese products, Gupta Om Jee, *et al.* (2021) found and confirmed that consumer animosity has a significant negative impact on Indian consumers' willingness to buy Chinese products [20]. Therefore, this study proposes the following assumptions:

H2 consumer animosity has a significant negative impact on overseas consumers' willingness to purchase Chinese e-commerce products.

Overseas consumers' perception of the quality of Chinese products first comes from the brand cognition, which connects products and consumers. A complete brand conveys a lot of information. With consumer protection mechanisms becoming increasingly sound, symbolized brands are more likely to become the standard for consumers to measure [21]. Most of the existing research has found that they significantly influence consumers' purchase intentions. Akoglu Halil Erdem and Özbek Oğuz's study found that perceived quality and brand trust play an important mediating role in the relationship between customer brand experience and loyalty [22]; through a series of studies, Jiang Liangjun found that consumers' purchase intentions are positively influenced by the perceived quality of products [23]. Therefore, this study proposes the following assumptions:

H3 Product quality perception has a significant positive impact on overseas consumers' willingness to purchase Chinese e-commerce products.

To sum up, the research hypothesis model is shown in **Figure 1**.

4. Research Design

4.1. Data Source

The purchase intention of overseas consumers is the main objective of this study. Based on the three variables of consumer ethnocentrism, product quality perception and consumer animosity, author design questionnaires and collect relevant data. This survey adopts questionnaire of likert scale with 6 - 7 related

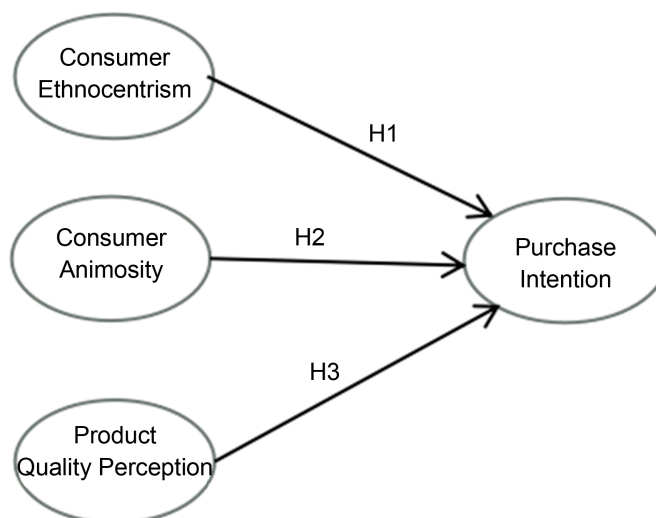


Figure 1. Research hypothesis model.

items designed for each variable. In the questionnaire, “5” is extremely willing, “4” is willing, “3” is generally willing, “2” is unwilling, and “1” is extremely unwilling. Eliminate invalid questionnaires that take too short a time to answer questions, have too many repetition options, and have inconsistent options. This survey took one month and obtained 303 valid data.

4.2. Sample Overview

The total number of samples in this survey is over 300. Basic information: 137 males (45.2%) and 166 females (54.8%). The main age group was between 26 and 45 years old, including 148 people aged 26 - 30 (48.8%) and 70 people aged 31 - 45 (23.1%), accounting for 71.8% of the total. The highest education is mainly college, a total of 188 people (62%). Most of them are enterprise employees, 145 people (47.9%), whose monthly income is between \$300 and \$3000, including 115 people (38%) between \$300 and \$1000 and 102 people (33.7%) between \$1000 and \$3000. Monthly consumption of 169 people (55.8%) is less than \$500. In general, the survey population was widely distributed and the sample structure was reasonable.

4.3. Reliability and Validity Test

To test the internal consistency and stability of the scale, this paper uses SPSS 25.0 to analyze and process the collected data. As shown in **Table 1**, the Cronbach’s alpha values of observed variables are all greater than 0.8, indicating good internal consistency of the questionnaire. The KMO values of the observed variables are all greater than 0.7, indicating good validity of the measurement items. The standardized factor loading coefficients are all within the range of 0.685 - 0.773, which basically meets the standard requirement. The composite reliability (CR) value of consumer animosity is 0.871, the CR value of consumer ethnocentrism is 0.868, and the CR value of perceived quality is 0.887, all of

Table 1. Variable measurements and indicator results.

variables	Question items	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha	KMO	CR	AVE
Product Quality Perception	PQ1 There are a variety of e-commerce products in China that can meet the shopping needs.	0.745	0.887	0.926	0.887	0.529
	PQ2 China's e-commerce products are of good quality and low price	0.734				
	PQ3 Purchase channels of Chinese e-commerce products are convenient	0.749				
	PQ4 The after-sales service of China's e-commerce products is satisfied	0.685				
	PQ5 The service attitude of overseas customer service of Chinese e-commerce is satisfying	0.741				
	PQ6 logistics service of China's e-commerce products is good	0.725				
	PQ7the brand awareness of Chinese e-commerce products is relatively high	0.711				
Consumer Ethnocentrism	EC1 Under the same price, will you give priority to domestic products or brands	0.725	0.868	0.876	0.868	0.568
	EC2 I'd like to spend more time to support domestic products	0.764				
	EC3 It is a good behavior to support domestic products	0.744				
	EC4 domestic products are greener than those of other countries	0.773				
	EC5 Foreign brands are more attractive	0.760				
Consumer Animosity	CH1 Do you think China is a peaceful and friendly country	0.727	0.874	0.919	0.871	0.491
	CH2 Are you willing to have a deeper understanding of Chinese culture?	0.705				
	CH3 Do you think Chinese people are very modest and polite	0.700				

Continued

	CH4 Do you have some particularly unpleasant experiences in China?	0.716		
	CH5 Do you think that Chinese overseas enterprises have exploited their own countries?	0.669		
	CH6 Do you approve of China's political system?	0.687		
	CH7 What do you think of the negative evaluation of China by western media?	0.707		
	Y1 How many times have you bought Chinese goods	0.573		
Purchase intention	Y2 Are you willing to buy Chinese goods	0.562	0.874	0.742
	Y3 Will you recommend or show your foreign products to your friends	0.568		

which meets the requirement of a standard requirement greater than 0.6. The average variance extracted (AVE) value of consumer ethnocentrism is 0.568, and the AVE value of product quality perception is 0.529, both of which are larger than the standard requirement. The AVE value of consumer animosity is 0.491, which does not reach the ideal level but is very close to the standard value of 0.5. Overall, the reliability and validity of the questionnaire are good.

5. Structural Equation Model Analysis

Based on theoretical assumptions and research models, this study used AMOS26.0 software to draw a structural equation model diagram (Figure 2) and imported sample data obtained from a questionnaire survey for analysis.

Through structural equation model analysis, the obtained fit indices are as follows (Table 2).

The analysis results in the above table indicate that the structural equation model meets the requirements of model analysis. In structural equation model, Chi-square Freedom Ratio (CMIN/DF) is $2.469 < 3$, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is less than 0.08, and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is greater than 0.90, which meets the requirements of structural equation model. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) was 0.858, and the Normed Fit Index (NFI) was 0.851. Although these two indexes did not reach the ideal value of 0.90, they were both greater than 0.85, which was in the acceptable range. Therefore, the Fit Degree of the structural equation model was generally considered acceptable.

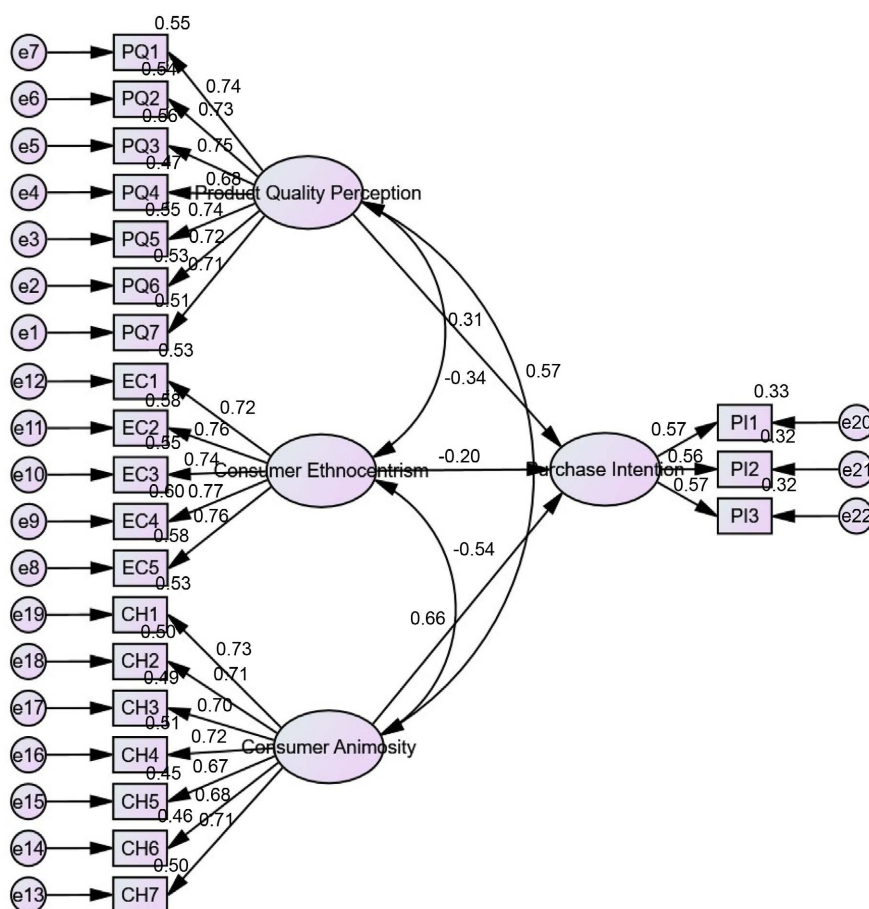


Figure 2. Model of structural equations.

Table 2. Fitted index of the structural equation model.

INDEX	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	GFI	NFI	CFI
SCORE	2.469	0.070	0.858	0.851	0.905

The test results of the theoretical hypothesis proposed in this study are as follows (Table 3).

The standardization coefficient of the influence path of consumer ethnocentrism on overseas consumers’ purchase intention is -0.20 . It indicates that consumer ethnocentrism has a significant negative impact on overseas consumers’ purchase intention of Chinese e-commerce products. Therefore, it supports the original hypothesis H1. Under the same quality conditions, overseas consumers will prefer domestic products.

The standardized coefficient of the impact path of consumer animosity on consumers’ purchase intention is -0.66 . It indicates that consumer animosity has a significant negative impact on overseas consumers’ willingness to purchase Chinese e-commerce products. Therefore, the original hypothesis H2 is supported. Consumer animosity generates negative emotions, guiding consumers to develop subjective aversion and reject that country’s products.

Table 3. Hypothesis test results for structural equation models.

Path	Non standardized path coefficient	Standardized path coefficient	T-values	Inspection results
Consumer Animosity → purchase intentions	-0.63	-0.66	-5.020	establish
Consumer Ethnocentrism → purchase intentions	-0.15	-0.20	-2.267	establish
Product Quality Perception → purchase intentions	0.27	0.31	3.388	establish

The standardization coefficient of the influence path of perceived product quality on overseas consumers' purchase intention is 0.31. It indicates that product quality perception has a significant positive impact on overseas consumers' willingness to buy Chinese e-commerce products. Therefore, the original hypothesis H3 is supported. Consumers will make positive evaluations of products with good quality and performance and their purchasing willingness will also increase.

6. Inspiration

This paper takes overseas consumers as the perspective to discuss their purchase intention of China's export products. The study found that overseas consumers' animosity and ethnocentrism had a negative impact on their intention to buy Chinese e-commerce products, while the product quality perception had a positive impact. This is basically consistent with previous scholars' research results on Chinese consumers' purchase intention (Wu Jianlin, Zhu Ning, 2012 [24]; Rao Fang, 2019 [25]). With the development of globalization, Chinese cross-border e-commerce enterprises should pay attention to the influencing factors of foreign consumption demand and formulate targeted development strategies.

6.1. Explore Overseas Markets, Integrate Cultural Background

Ethnocentrism will influence overseas consumers to preferentially choose domestic products at the same price and quality. Cross-border e-commerce enterprises should give full play to the advantages of multinational enterprises, using existing products and local characteristics to create international products. By collaborating with local companies with high brand awareness, we can quickly increase product awareness and establish our corporate image. In order to expand market share, companies need to actively integrate local cultural characteristics to achieve brand localization. Delivering positive corporate values is beneficial to increasing consumer loyalty, which in turn increases repeat purchase rates. Therefore, enterprises should also take the initiative to shoulder social responsibilities, shape their own positive image, and enhance public visibility.

6.2. Optimize Marketing Strategies, Alleviate Consumer Animosity

Multinational companies should be careful about the words they use when producing and marketing their products to avoid the hostile associations brought about by bilateral conflicts, which would lead to massive consumer boycotts of their products. Therefore, Chinese cross-border e-commerce enterprises need to attach great importance to the cultural and emotional factors of overseas consumers in the shopping process. These factors include the cultural characteristics of overseas consumers, such as their values, beliefs and lifestyles, which play a crucial role in enterprises' cross-border e-commerce business and improve their market share. At the same time, enterprises should weaken the rejection emotion of target customers and apply effective product strategies. Different consumer groups have different consumption habits. Multinational enterprises should respect the cultural soft environment of their target customers in the process of "going global", and do a good job in consumer-oriented and product-oriented segmentation.

6.3. Create Niche Products, Clarify Brand Positioning

Understanding the needs and problems of the mass market, enterprises should look for niche markets with a certain scale that has not been fully developed and form the unique selling point of self-owned brand. Cross-border e-commerce enterprises should not only strictly control all aspects of production, but also actively inspect the quality of products. It is necessary to respond to consumer complaints positively, self-check product problems and look for solutions. Attract professional talents to analyze competitive products and build the differentiation advantage of brand. In the process of publicity, avoid the blurring of brand positioning which might make the product lose its core competitiveness. Active use of live broadcasting and other new ways to promote goods can make overseas consumers clearly understand the advantages of our product.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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